

# Personal Study

## JAMES PART 10 RICHES / CHARACTER

**"JAMES GIVES A WARNING TO THE RICH WHO OPPRESS AND EXPLOIT THE UNDERPRIVILEGED. RICHES WILL AMOUNT TO NOTHING IN THE END, BUT THE HUMBLE AND RIGHTEOUS WILL PREVAIL".**

To re-watch this weeks message visit our website



## James part 10 “Riches & Character”

### Read James chapter 5:1-6

#### Introduction:

Have you ever spent time reading your Bible and stumble upon some verses that just seem like they don't “fit” the rest of the passages around them? If so, today may be the day where you experience this.

Just to recap, James is writing about true wisdom and false wisdom (and all the many pitfalls that false wisdom lays before us as followers of Jesus). And suddenly... he switches gears in chapter 5. Now we see a break in James' previous thoughts, and we see him talking about money, rich people, and the oppression that was upon the poor.

#### Context:

It's important to note here that James does this on purpose. In this very moment (chapter 5:1-6) James pauses his letter to the Christians who are dispersed and being persecuted and writes a few lines to the non-Christians who were using their wealth to persecute Christians (the ones to whom James is writing this letter).

Why does James write a few lines to non-Christians...in the Bible? I'm glad you asked. You must remember who James is. He is the earthly brother of Jesus as well as a Pastor, missionary, church planter, and preacher. James is giving his entire life over for the sake of the gospel. So naturally, James has a heart for those who are far from Jesus. So, by the power of the Holy Spirit, James writes these inspired words so that even those far from Christ would be warned of their sinfulness and be given opportunity to repent and turn toward Christ.

So, as we unpack this text together, it is important to recognize that the audience here is particularly Jewish. Therefore, it is important to recognize how Jewish people in this context viewed money/riches and why James was compelled to write these verses in the middle of his letter to Christians. So, let's go back to the Old Testament for some help in understanding.

#### Read Deuteronomy 28:11-19. What stands out to you in this text?

Here we see a primary text that gives insight into the Jewish worldview is shaped, particularly when it comes to money and riches.

We see what appears to be a text that explains the Lord's blessing and provision over His people if they are obedient to Him and are finding favor with Him.

It is important to note here that this passage in the Old Testament is speaking to the nation of Israel as opposed to individual people. When misunderstood (or misapplied) one could think that an outward sign of someone's relationship with the Lord would result in riches, blessing,

and outward status improvement. This is of course not true. It is very possible for one to Love and know the Lord Jesus and experience hardship, persecution, etc.

The audience that James is appealing to in James 5:1-6 did not understand this. They equate favor with God as receiving abundance and riches in every way. In addition, we see these rich non-Christians being abusive with their wealth as opposed to using it for the Glory of God and the good of people.

So, while these verses (James 5:1-6) are written to non-Christians, there are certainly Biblical truths that we as Christians can pull from this text and apply to our daily lives. We will do that in 3 ways:

**1 – What does God think about money?**

**2- How we should NOT use our money.**

**3 - How we SHOULD handle our money.**

1- **What does God think about money?** Here are 3 quick thoughts to consider. Take some time and read the corresponding verses and mark down your thoughts.

- God does not care about your net worth (Job 1:1-8, Proverbs 30:7-9)
- God does care about how we obtain our money (Titus 1:7, Proverbs 19:22)
- God does care about how we use our money (Matt 6:19-21, Proverbs 11:24-25)

2- **How to NOT use our money** (as demonstrated by the rich people persecuting the Christians in James 5:1-6)

- Do not hoard our wealth (James 5:3)
- Do not “rip off” or treat workers unfairly in pursuit of selfish gain (James 5:4)
- Do not pursue luxury and deny generosity (James 5:5)
- Do not use wealth to crush those less affluent around you (James 5:5-6)

3- **How we SHOULD handle our money** (for the Glory of God and good of others). While we can make inference that doing the opposite of those James is rebuking here would be good to do, the Bible gives us some clear instruction of the use of our money found in the book of 1 Timothy 6:17-21

- If you have money, do not be arrogant in your wealth. (1 Timothy 6:17)
- If you have any sum of money, do not put your faith, trust or hope in it. (1 Timothy 17b)
- No matter your status/amount of wealth, be generous with your money. The Lord loves a generous heart. (1 Timothy 18-19).

### **Recap and application:**

So, to summarize, here are a few truths to consider this week.

1. Money is not evil. The love of money is evil.
2. Money does not give you value, Jesus gives you eternal value.
3. The way you use and give your money matters to God.
4. The purpose of money is ultimately the Glory of God and for the good of those around you.
5. God desires a generous people, eager to meet needs, give as they have been provided for, and see the Lord work by meeting tangible needs.

Questions for application.

1. Is money the ultimate pursuit of your life? Is generosity a difficult practice for you?
2. Are you giving out of a generous heart?
3. How are you seeing God glorified and needs met in the way that you use your wealth?

Pray that the Lord would continue to foster in us a heart that loves to be generous, that loves the Glory of Jesus above all else, and desires to meet the needs of those around us.