

# Personal Study

## JAMES PART 11 SUFFERING / COMFORT

**"IN TIMES OF SUFFERING, BELIEVERS ARE TO ENDURE WITH PATIENCE AND STEADFASTNESS, KEEPING THEIR EYES SET ON THE LORD. HE IS COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL TO HIS CHILDREN, IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE".**

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## **Introduction:**

Have you noticed lately that our culture is rapidly speeding up? It appears there is becoming less of a need to exercise patience in almost every area of our lives.

- Entertainment and content are instant and mobile.
- Information is always in the palm of our hands.
- In person stores are offering in home delivery and online access to all products.
- Two-day delivery was just too long, so one day delivery is quickly becoming the norm.

As we lose the ability to exercise patience, we can easily be completely disjointed when walking through a hard season of life, suffering, grief, or loss. In today's passage, James speaks to the idea of "long-suffering" as a Christian; and points us back to Jesus as our hope THROUGH seasons of suffering and not AROUND seasons of suffering.

**Context:** Let's keep in mind the context of this letter. James is writing to a persecuted, scattered, dying, beat up group of Christians. They are suffering, they are hurting, they are struggling with their faith.

## **Read James 5: 7-12**

**Reflect:** Have you endured a season of hardship or suffering? How did the Lord meet you in that season?

## **Patience in Suffering:**

While there are so many truths and principals to pull from this text, let's look at three main ideas.

### **1. Be Patient – The Lord is returning. Vv. 7-8**

Here James instructs the church to be patient in suffering, looking to the return of Jesus as our secure and eternal hope. Jesus loves His people and is returning for His church. In death or in the immanent return of Christ, our hope is built upon the firm foundation that is and always will be the person and power of Jesus. As we endure hardship, we have Jesus. As we live through seasons of suffering, we have Jesus. As life continues to give us trials and tribulations, we look to Jesus our coming King.

We may be suffering. But Jesus is coming.

Here, James illustrates this idea of practicing patience by pointing us to the life of a farmer. A farmer works hard, plants his fields, and trusts that the Lord will take care of and provide the

harvest. In the same way, while experiencing suffering, we trust that the Lord is near and the Lord will return for His church.

## **2. Be Patient – With one another. Vv. 9**

Here, James now points us to our relationships with one another. When enduring seasons of suffering and trials it is easy for the human heart to become hostile to the people that are around us. When suffering, often we begin to grumble, complain, tear down our brothers and sisters in Christ. James gives warning against this in verse 9.

Considering the return of Christ, James tells us to not engage in discord with one another because it will lead to improper judgement and hostility against fellow believers. Christ is the King. Christ is the Judge. Christ is returning soon, so, do not fight. Be patient with one another.

In your season of trials, are you exercising patience with those around you? Or have you allowed circumstance to make you hostile?

## **3. Be Patient- Like Job vv. 11**

James gives another example that would have connect well with this audience of Christians in this season of suffering....the book of Job. Now, we do not often look to the book of Job as a book of encouragement. But James does just that: he uses Job as a illustration of Gods grace, mercy, and compassion during seasons of suffering....and no one suffered quite like Job (outside of the person of Jesus).

If you are unfamiliar with the story of Job, please take time to read the story in its entirety. In essence, while Job suffered loss, grief, the loss of all material and relational aspects of his life, was tempted to curse God and walk away from the Lord....he stood firm. We see a powerful moment take place in Jobs story as he tears his clothes in grief and suffering and proclaims that the Lord is good. After much more suffering takes place, we see the Lord speak to Job, offer comfort, and extend mercy.

Just as the Lord speaks to Job and extends mercy in the midst of suffering, He also speaks to us and extends mercy in the midst of our suffering.

### **Conclusion:**

Exercising patience and faith through seasons of suffering is never enjoyable in the least. However, as James reminds us in James 1: 2-4, “steadfastness” when it has its full effect, leads us into Christ-like maturity in every area of our lives. As believers facing a trial, turn our hope to the return of Christ, and receive today the mercy and comfort of Christ.

