

James

Lesson #17, Chapter 5:1-11

Please read all of Chapter 5 before beginning this lesson. And as you do so, ask the Lord for His help in studying and applying this life-transforming Word to your life.

1. James begins Chapter 5 with “Come now (NIV *Now listen*);” a phrase he used to good effect in 4:13. Who was he addressing in 4:13? And who is he addressing in 5:1?
 - a. Now consider to whom James has been addressing his comments throughout this book. What do you see from James 1:2, 16; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10; 4:11?
2. And also, throughout this book, James forthrightly deals with different sin issues to help his beloved brethren grow in their faith. In essence, the letter is a perfect example of his final words to them, “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).” Review the *previous* chapters and list the different sins of the heart James confronts in this book.
3. Look for key verses in the book that show what kind of faith James desires to build in believers and list them here.
4. As James has been tackling sin issues in his beloved brethren, it’s also helpful to see some of the other names he uses for them in order to reveal the sin in their lives. What are some of the other ways James addresses the believers in this book?

5. Many think James 5:1 introduces a new topic to a new group of people, yet that doesn't fit with the flow of the book, the way James has confronted his fellow believers, or the near context of 4:13-17, which also spoke to the believers. So, though James 5:1 *appears* to change audiences, it really doesn't; it is simply James' way of bringing to light holdover sins from their former way of life as unbelievers. Take a quick glance at 5:1-6, and consider what sin issue does James desire to root out in these precious believers?

6. Eager Beaver: How does James' forthrightness and willingness to "call-out" his brethren about sin in their lives indicate his motives? What is James more concerned about? Their holiness or their comfort? What's the purpose in calling sinners to repentance? See Luke 5:31-32; 2 Corinthians 12:19-21.

7. What specific sins have the "rich" committed that are no longer appropriate now that they have come to faith in Jesus Christ (verses 1-6)? You can almost hear James repeating, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way (James 3:10)."

8. What foundation of right thinking needs to be built in the rich now that they are believers? See James 1:9-11, 27; 2:1; 4:4-6, 11-12. Also see Luke 12:21, 29-34; Galatians 3:26-28; 1 Timothy 6:7-11; 1 Peter 1:22.

9. What does James mean when he tells the "rich" to "weep and howl?" See James 4:8-10 for your answer. Why is that an important first step in bringing to light the sins that are now plaguing them?

10. Why do the riches of the rich *rot* and *moths* eat their fine garments (verse 2)? And why does the gold and silver of the rich *rust* (verse 3)? What else does the gold and silver do according to verse 3? How does that give you insight into the motivations and focus of those who sought to amass those riches?

11. At the end of verse 3 James says, “You have laid up, hoarded, stored your treasure in the last days.” Why is that reference to “the last days” significant? See Luke 12:13-21; 2 Timothy 3:1-2; 1 John 2:15-18.

12. Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; and James 4:4-5 provide the focus for all our endeavors, no matter who we are, how much “treasure” we have, or at what point in history we live. What are we supposed to do? Why?

13. What two things witness or cry against the rich in verses 3-4? Who sees all that has gone on (verse 4)?

14. What picture is painted of the rich in verses 5-6? And while the rich were living that way, how were those in poorer circumstances living? (The answer isn’t given but is understood nonetheless.)
 - a. James brings these things up to get the believers to leave behind these sins. Peter urges much the same thing in 1 Peter 4:1-6. What do you learn there?

15. What counsel does James give to all believers, especially those who may be suffering? See verse 7. How is his illustration intended to help them obey this counsel?
 - a. Define *patient* as used in verses 7 and 8 [Strong’s #3114].

16. The coming of the Lord, and with it His judgment, is mentioned in verses 7, 8, and 9. How is that an encouragement for anyone who suffering?
- a. Second Thessalonians 1:6-10 and 2 Peter 3:9-15 both address similar circumstances. What do those authors counsel believers who are suffering trials?
17. Even while suffering, what does God desire from us according to verse 9? And again, what added motivation do we have for living out this command?
- “Christian waiting is not waiting for something, but for someone.”¹
18. Why do we all need to be reminded not to complain about each other in light of what we’ve studied in this chapter and the rest of the book?
19. Who are examples for us according to verse 10? Generally, what were their situations (cite specific ones if you would like) that reveal their *suffering and patience*?
20. Why do we count those *blessed* who endured? See verse 11. Also look back at James 1:3-4, 12 and see what we learn.

¹Peter H. Davids, “[James](#),” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1366.

- a. As usual, James barely dips his quill into this bottomless inkwell, so we'll try to plumb some of those untapped depths. Look up the following verses that add their written testimony to the one given here in James 5:11. See Psalm 86:15; Lamentations 3:22-23, 31-33; Joel 2:25-27.
21. James hasn't held back in bringing to light the sins of our heart in this section. What are some of "the rich man's sins" you've identified as being resident *in your own heart* at times? What counsel has been the most helpful in putting those sins to death?
22. Words like *patient, wait, strengthen, suffering, and endure* permeate James' repeated encouragement in verses 7-11. How does the knowledge that the Lord's return is near, or knowing that others have endured great sufferings too, or remembering the Lord's immeasurable kindness to His children help you persevere when life presses in upon you?

Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken
by Henry F. Lyte

Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition, all I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition! God and heaven are still mine own.

Let the world despise and leave me, they have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me; Thou art not, like them, untrue.
And while Thou shalt smile upon me, God of wisdom, love and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me, show Thy face and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure! Come, disaster, scorn and pain!
In Thy service, pain is pleasure; with Thy favor, loss is gain.
I have called Thee, "Abba, Father"; I have set my heart on Thee:
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather, all must work for good to me.

Man may trouble and distress me, 'twill but drive me to Thy breast.
Life with trials hard may press me; heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me while Thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me, were that joy unmixed with Thee.

Take, my soul, thy full salvation; rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;
Joy to find in every station something still to do or bear:
Think what Spirit dwells within thee; what a Father's smile is thine;
What a Savior died to win thee, child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?

Haste then on from grace to glory, armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
Heaven's eternal days before thee, God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission, swift shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope soon change to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise.