

## Theme: Trials and Wisdom

James 1:1–8<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

### Introduction

James, the apostle and half-brother of Jesus, writes a letter “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.” His original audience are Jewish believers facing persecution for their faith. This letter in our hands speaks to us too. In it, God gives *wisdom* to Christians about how to live a life that pleases Him.

### Important Information

- “James” is the Old Testament name “Jacob.”
- The word “bondservant” is the Greek word *doulos*, meaning “slave.”
- The final word of verse 1, “Greetings,” is a figure of speech in the Greek and comes from the word for “rejoice.” It is a common greeting, much like our English “Hello.”

### Consider

Read the first 8 verses. Look for the commands James gives us in 1:1–8 and list them below:

- 1:2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1:5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1:6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1:7 \_\_\_\_\_

**1:1.** Who are the twelve tribes and where are they dispersed?

- Why do you think they would have been dispersed?
- If James is writing primarily to Jewish believers, how does this affect how we read and interpret the book?

**1:3.** Why should we “count<sup>2</sup> it all joy” when we face various kinds of trials according to this verse?

**1:3–4.** What result is God seeking to produce in our lives through the circumstances we face?

What order or progression does James present?<sup>3</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_

**1:5.** What should we do when we don’t know what to do?

- How is God described in this verse?
- What does God promise to do for those who ask?

**1:6–7.** What conditions does God place on the promise in verse 5?

- What picture (analogy) does James use to describe the doubting man?
- Can you identify with this analogy? Have there been times when you felt this way because you did not ask in faith?

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<sup>2</sup> Note: the word “count” here means to “consider” or “regard” something to be true.

<sup>3</sup> To be “complete” has the idea of “meeting all expectations.”

- Do you think this warning is about someone not asking or about someone asking without faith?
- “Let not that man.” What man is he referring to here?

**1:8.** How else is this person described (the one who lacks faith)? How does this character flaw reveal itself in his life?

### Ask Yourself

How would I define the word “patience?”

What kinds of “various trials” am I facing right now?

- When I face these trials, do I consider them to be a problem that needs to go

away? Or am I considering them to be a gift from God to mature me towards Christlikeness?

- How can I see God developing *patience* in my life through my trials and circumstances.
- What does it look like to actually “count it joy” when I am faced with trials?

What hope does this passage give me about my road to spiritual maturity? (1:4)

When I don’t know what to do, where do I normally turn for help? Where should I go?

How should I pray to God? What attitude should I have when I approach him?

### Cross References

Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.

Isaiah 26:3–4

<sup>3</sup> You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose* mind is stayed on *You*, Because he trusts in *You*.

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, *is* everlasting strength.

Jeremiah 29:11–13

<sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Philippians 4:4–9

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. <sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Peter 1:6–9

<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.