

Lesson Three — James Chapter One, Part I: The Joy of Trials

Day One — Observations in James Chapter One

Day Two — Observations Continued

Day Three — Testing Produces Endurance

Day Four — Poor versus Rich

Day Five — Gaining Approval

Last week you became familiar with the overall Book of James. Perhaps at first, the words of this letter seemed to be words that were jumbled and disjointed; but perhaps now, the words and phrases are making more sense and are becoming more meaningful to you. I hope that is true. In the weeks to follow, be sure to continue asking the Holy Spirit to make these words meaningful and alive to you. Ask Him to help you to have open ears, and a heart of obedience.

This week we are going to begin to do thorough observation of James chapter one. This step in Bible study — that of observation — is one of the most important steps in coming to a proper understanding for interpretation. Consider the following Proverb:

Proverbs 2

1 My son, if you will receive my sayings, And treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity and every good course.

10 For wisdom will enter your heart, And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; 11 Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, 12 To deliver you from the way of evil...

Please be diligent to seek wisdom, understanding and insight as you study the Book of James. Let's get started!

Day One — Observations in James Chapter One

This week you will need the copy of James chapter one from the Appendix. Get ready to have fun while you are doing work! Observation is such a great tool for studying God's Word, and it is pretty much fun!

We will work through the process of observation, step by step, so that it won't feel overwhelming. Just give yourself enough time to accomplish the level of study you desire.

As you observe chapter one, remember the things you learned about the setting of the letter. With the author and historical setting in mind, read through the first chapter of James now.

After this reading, we are ready to begin looking at the parts of this first chapter. Notice any repeated words (and synonyms) or phrases. **The definition of a key word (or phrase) is any word (or phrase) that is repeated and if deleted from the text, its deletion would change the meaning of the text.**

For example, you will notice that the word *trial(s)* is a repeated word throughout the book. Therefore, you will want to distinguish the word *trial* as a key word with. Then, after you have identified the word *trial(s)* and its synonyms, you will want to make a list of what you learn about *trials* in the right hand margin. Continue working through the chapter, marking all the repeated key words and making any consequent lists.

I have a very brief example below:

James 1

1 James, a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the

twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad, greetings. 2 Consider it all

joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing

that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance

have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Trials(Testings):

~ will be encountered

~ will be various

~ will produce endurance

T

Continue underlining, making marks over key words, and writing brief lists of the meanings of the key words in your right hand margin on your observation sheets of chapter one.

That's it for today. Ask the Lord to help you meditate on this chapter and to teach you throughout the day.

Day Two — Observations Continued

Begin in prayer today.

Yesterday we marked the key words and phrases and made lists in the margins. Today we will continue observing the text in chapter one, looking for and marking some of the different *forms of expression* used in chapter one. *Forms of expression* are **comparisons, contrasts, cause and effect statements, and summary statements**. There is a sheet in the Appendix entitled **Forms of Expressions**. You may want to use this sheet for this type of work for each of the five chapters of James. But for now, we will continue working in chapter one. Take out the sheet from your Appendix and work through chapter one using the suggestions on the sheet as you further observe chapter one.

Don't let this activity bog you down. Some people learn a great deal from this type of study activity; others may get frustrated with it. If you are one that tends to get frustrated, don't do this activity. Just study in the way that suits you best, but DO STUDY! Pure observation is one of the best ways to learn God's Word.

That's it for the day. You have done a great job. As you do this type of observation, you are laying a foundation through the which the Holy Spirit will be able to teach you His insights into this book. Keep up the good work! As you go about your day, meditate upon what you have observed.

Day Three — Testings Produce Endurance

Remember to pray that the Holy Spirit will be your teacher today. Ask Him to guide you into truth as you continue your observation.

Today we will begin looking at the different segments of Chapter one. Before you begin, read over the work you did yesterday making sure you didn't miss any repeated words and phrases, or forms of expressions. Try to figure out just what James' intent was as he wrote these words. In the left hand margin, make notes of the thoughts that come into your mind as you read.

OK! Are you ready? Now for the segments: To make it easier for you to handle, I have printed within our week's study pages the individual passages which we will be studying, segment by segment. Read through the various passages following the steps as they are given. Let's begin!

James 1

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad, greetings. 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

If you are working at Level 3, look up in the Appendix the definitions for the following words and write out what you learn. This is a helpful step in proper interpretation.

consider <2233>

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joy <5479>

trials <3986>

testing < 1383>

endurance <5281>

perfect <5046>

complete <3648>

Now reread the passage with the understanding of these definitions. If you have better understanding of what this passage means, write out what you have learned.

Now for a few questions:

Why were the scattered brethren to consider their trials as *all joy*?

What is the progression of growth as a result of trials?

What do you think it means to be *perfect and complete*?

Remember that the recipients of this letter were believers who were scattered from Jerusalem due to the persecution which was taking place in and around Jerusalem. After having completed the Biblical Survey study, you should have a pretty good handle on the *reward of persecution*. Below are some cross-reference verses dealing with the subject of persecution. Let's glimpse these to refresh our minds:

Matthew 5

10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

Luke 6

20 And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. **21** Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. **22** Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. **23** Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

24 But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. **25** Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. **26** Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets...”

Philippians 1

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...

1 Peter 4

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; **13** but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. **14** If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **15** By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; **16** but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? **19** Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

What have you learned from reading these passages?

In the Survey study, you studied the parable of the *Sower and the Seed* in Matthew chapter thirteen. Do you remember that one of the seeds germinated and grew, but was unable to produce fruit for the Kingdom because it was *scorched by persecution due to the word of the kingdom* (Matthew 13:20-21)? Take a moment to relate what persecution has to do with producing fruit, and what the outcome may be, both in this present age and in the age to come. Write down what you think.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four — Poor versus Rich

Today we will get back to the segment in James chapter one concerning the various trials. Remember to pray to the Holy Spirit as your Teacher. Ask Him to open your eyes.

James 1

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.. 6 But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man unstable in all his ways.

Let's talk about *wisdom*. First, look up the following words:

wisdom <4678>

doubting <1252>

double-minded <1374>

unstable <182>

Plugging these definitions into the passage, how is one to ask God for wisdom?

How will God give the wisdom to the one asking?

Verse 5 may seem to have been thrown into the passage as a parenthetical thought, but is it really parenthetical? Keeping vv. 4 and 5 together and in context, what would these Christians need wisdom for? Write out your insights:

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Staying within the context of this passage and understanding the meaning of a “double-minded” man, describe the one asking for wisdom but is doubting? What does his *doubting* imply?

What can that person expect? Why?

Continuing...

James 1

9 But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; 10 and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

Look up the following definitions:

glory <2744>

humiliation <5014>

fade away <3133>

Do you see any correlation between v. 9 and v. 2? What is it?

Comparing the rich man to the poor man in James 1:10-11, what is the rich man to glory in? Why?

A good cross-reference passage to this would be Luke 12:16-21. Read this passage and make a comparison.

Luke 12

16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 “And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”’ 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

What is the message to the rich man in this passage from Luke?

With this passage from Luke in mind, what might the message be to the rich man in James chapter one?

James seems to conclude these thoughts with v. 12:

James 1

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

approved <1384>

Compare this verse (v. 12) with vv. 2 and 9. Write out your thoughts:

Note that James uses exactly the same word in v. 2 as in v. 12 for the word trials and temptation. In v. 12, what does the trial afford the one who perseveres through it?

Tomorrow we will consider crowns. As we close today, has the Lord spoken to you in any particular way today? Write out your thoughts.

Day Five — Gaining Approval

Begin your day of study in prayer.

James 1

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Yesterday we ended on the passage in James chapter one having to do with the crown of life. We need to determine whether or not the phrase *crown of life* refers to the free gift of eternal life, or a reward earned

for endurance. Do you understand the difference? From the immediate passage, which do you think *crown of life* would relate to — the free gift or a reward for endurance? What makes you think so?

Following are a few more passages that are about crowns and rewards. Look for how one might get a crown or the prize.

2 Timothy 2

3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. **5** And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

2 Timothy 4

... **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; **8** in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Revelation 2

10 ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

I Corinthians 9

25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

1 Thessalonians 2

19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

1 Peter 5

1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **2** shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; **3** nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. **4** And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Go back over the previous passages and name each crown, noting to whom the crowns will be given:

Based upon the preceding passages, do you think crowns would have to do with our temporal life here on earth, or our life during the millennium, or during eternity future? What makes you think so?

Based upon these passages, what do you think may be necessary to do in order to receive any or all of these crowns?

We'll close with this. Jesus speaks a warnings to the churches in Revelation chapters two and three. Let's consider one of the warnings.

Revelation 3

11 "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown..."

Before we meet for class, please spend some time thinking about these crowns. Do you want to receive crowns at the judgment seat of Christ when Christ comes in His glory? What would you have to change in your life now in order for you to receive the reward of crowns? Can another man take your crown(s) away from you? How? What would this mean?

Think on these things.

If you would like, fill out the summary below.

Week's End Summary: