

SKY Correspondence Course

Lesson 10

Show Patience Before God

Lesson Text: James 5:7–18

In this last chapter, James warns those that are affluent about the dangers of being wealthy. Wealth has a tendency to put individuals in a cocoon of false security. When the Christian's lifestyle becomes pleasant and insulated, a need for God may be lost. The people that James is addressing not only had this false security, but they obtained their wealth through dishonest acts, fraud, and persecuting the poor (James 5:4). James is not saying that it is a sin to be rich—quite the contrary. Abraham, Job, David, and Solomon were all rich men. In addition to being rich, they were used by God. James is rebuking those who cheat people to obtain more money.

James encourages the Christian to bear up under burdens without whining and complaining. Job waited on God, and trusted Him. We are to go to God in prayer and have the confidence that He will answer us.

Wait in Patience

Read James 5:7,8—Patience is a virtue that is developed through waiting, and sometimes through hardships. Take the example of a farmer: He must wait for the early rains to till and plant. Next, the farmer must wait for the sun and the latter rains to ensure a healthy crop. While the farmer waits on nature, would it change his situation if he were to worry, or complain? No. A farmer knows all too well how he must plow, plant, and wait on the rain and sun for the harvest. He knows there is order in everything he does and that there is only so much he can do; the rest is up to God. James encourages us all to faithfully

prepare and patiently wait for the return of Jesus Christ.

The Return of Jesus

Read James 5:9—Do you groan and grumble against your friends or your family? Do you blame others for *your* troubles? If you do, it is wrong, and you will be judged for it. You are to take responsibility for *your choices* in life.

Let's pretend your parents left you a list of jobs to be done while they were away. You faithfully do the jobs on the list and more while you watch and wait for their return. This same attitude is essential as we wait for the return of Jesus.

The Example of the Prophets

Read James 5:10—James uses examples of Old Testament prophets to encourage us to have patience. These men suffered patiently in the face of great affliction.

Job's Example

Read James 5:11—James uses the word *perseverance*, not the word *patient*, when describing Job's situation. Job was steadfast. Even though Job struggled and despaired in the midst of his troubles, he still cried out to God, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). In the end, God multiplied Job's blessings because of his perseverance and patience in faith (Job 42:10).

Be a Person of Your Word

Read James 5:12—James is not speaking of swearing in the sense of foul language. He is speaking of what it takes to be a trustworthy person. James is concerned here about taking an oath. He is urging all of us to be hon-

est. If you are always honest, people will believe what you tell them to be the truth. You will grow to have a reputation of being a trustworthy person. Your yes should be yes, and your no should be no. Read Matthew 5:37 and see what Jesus said about this.

The Power of Prayer

Read James 5:13—Do you ever find it easier to pray in times of trouble than when things are going well? We should pray at all times, no matter the conditions around us. In times of trouble, it is best to pray rather than to grumble. Just as suffering leads to prayer, so should blessings bring songs of praise. Pray always.

Pray for the Sick

Read James 5:14, 15—James now addresses sickness. He does not single out one specific kind of sickness; therefore, we must conclude that he was concerned with all illnesses. Physical, mental, and spiritual health cannot be isolated from one another. At first, when we read these verses, James seems to contradict the fact that God’s promise to heal is *conditional* rather than absolute. James says that the “prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.” Note that James did not say that the prayer of faith will always *heal* the sick.

Read James 4:15—Here is the condition of whether God will heal the sick—“if it be God’s will.” When you are ill, you should look to physicians for whatever physical help they can give, but initially look to God to guide you and to do what man cannot do. Only God can supernaturally intervene, and divinely remove the illness, sickness, or disease. When we are sick, we are to call upon the elders of the church who will lay hands upon your head, pray over you, and anoint you with oil.

This ceremony is richly symbolic: (1) The oil is a symbol of God’s Holy Spirit (Exodus 30:23–25; Matthew 25:1); (2) having hands laid upon you shows your desire to be set apart by God through His Spirit for the special miracle of the divine healing of your body.

Pray For One Another

Read James 5:16—To be sick is not necessarily to have sinned. Yet sickness can be the result of sin, and healing includes the forgiveness of sin. But at all times,

whether sin is involved or not, healing is a manifestation of God’s mercy and love. What is meant by “fervent prayer?” The word *pray* in the beginning of this verse does not have the same meaning as the word *prayer* at the end of the verse. Here it could be translated “fervent petition” or “fervent begging.” In other words, the impassioned petition of a righteous man is very profitable. When a friend or family member is sick, pray for them. When you are sick, ask family and friends to pray for you.

Elijah’s Example

Read James 5:17, 18—Once again, James turns to an individual the Jews were familiar with. Elijah was a human being just like us. He had the same desires as we do, yet he could pray a heartfelt prayer. His prayers were so fervent that a drought came to pass, and then three years later the rain was reestablished.

Today, our lives are controlled by the clock, the calendar, and scheduled events. However, there are things in life we become very impatient waiting for, or we become upset because our plans do not materialize the way we planned or hoped. It is interesting to consider that much of what we are impatient for won’t matter a whit a week, a month, or year from now. James is encouraging all of us to ask for God’s help in separating the important from the trivial, and then wait patiently for the answer. As Christians we are waiting patiently for the return of Jesus Christ. We must go patiently to God in prayer and have the confidence that He will answer. God *always* answers prayer—His answer is either yes, no, or wait a little while.

A verse worthy to remember:
“The effective, fervent prayer of a
righteous man avails much.”

James 5:16

Word Definitions

These definitions were taken from
Webster’s New World Dictionary

- **Patient**—Enduring provocation, pain, and trouble, without complaint or anger.
- **Perseverance**—To continue a course of action, or purpose. in spite of difficulty, opposition, or discouragement.
- **Fervent**—Ardent, passionate, or intense feeling.

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Lesson 10
Correspondence Course

Date: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State/Province: _____
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Country: _____

Questions and Answers

- In this last chapter, James warns about the
 - Dangers of being wealthy
 - Dangers of being patient
 - Dangers of perseverance
- True/False—It is a sin to be wealthy. _____
- True/False—In this last chapter, James is encouraging Christians to bear burdens without complaining. _____
- What does the word *patience* mean to you?

- What is the example the farmer gives us about patience?

- Is it a good idea to exaggerate, complain, or whine about things? Explain.

- How can you have a reputation of trustworthiness?

- True/False—Sickness is always the results of sin. _____
- True/False—Job trusted God even in great personal disaster, tragedy, and affliction. _____
- True/False—Patience is a sign of faith. _____

11. What did Job mean when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"?

12. When you or someone you love is very ill, what should you do?

13. If you go to a doctor when you are sick, does that mean you don't have faith? Explain your answer.

14. When should you pray?

- A. During times of drought and rain (James 3:4)
- B. During times of suffering and cheerfulness (James 5:13)
- C. During times of spilled milk and sad dogs (James 5:2)

15. What group of words best describes the examples of the farmer, the prophets, Job, and Elijah?

- A. Suffering, anger, pity, power, and poverty
- B. Working, swearing, sweating, despairing, and sickness
- C. Preparation, patience, perseverance, fervent prayer, and endurance

16. True/False—Trials and suffering are sure signs that God is mad at you. _____

17. Where is the scripture that Jesus discusses your *no* being no and your *yes* being yes?

- A. John 3:16
- B. Matthew 5:37
- C. James 2:15

18. The prayer of a righteous man is:

- A. Immediately answered
- B. Powerful and effective
- C. Loud and strong

19. True/False—Elijah was a man just like us. _____

20. How can you apply what you have learned in this lesson to your life today?

Answers

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1. A
2. F
3. T
4. Patience is the ability to wait for something without complaint.
5. It was the example of waiting patiently as his crop is plowed, planted and harvested.
6. No. God doesn't want us to complain or whine. Nothing is accomplished by complaining.
7. Always tell the truth. Your yes should mean yes and your no is no.
8. F
9. T
10. T
11. He was showing his faith and that he trusted that God would help him out of his troubles. God would always be there to redeem (help) him in his troubles.
12. You should be anointed, pray and ask others to pray for you.
13. No. You still have faith. God gave man the knowledge to understand how the human body works. There is nothing wrong with going to a doctor because God expects us to do our part.
14. B
15. C
16. F
17. B
18. B
19. T
20. I am going to pray in good times and bad. I will be patient while waiting for the return of Jesus. I will be trustworthy with others.