

## Mark Your Bible / Memory Work

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### **James 5:1-6 - The Folly of Trusting In Riches**

1. “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you*.” ([Jm. 5:1](#))
  - a. James shifts his focus upon the rich now in general
  - b. “weep and howl”
    - i. These are descriptors of lamentation, mourning, and sorrow
  - c. “miserias that shall come upon *you*”
    - i. Trouble or calamity is coming, and it is certain
2. “Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.” ([Jm. 5:2](#))
  - a. Their physical possessions have become rotten
  - b. Their garments [cloak or mantle and the tunic] succumbed to the gnawing of the moth
    - i. Significant that this is the outer garment as this would be the one the rich would use to flaunt their wealth
  - c. The attitude and use of riches is the important factor ([Mk. 10:23-24](#); [1 Tim. 6:6-10](#), [17-19](#))
    - i. The appropriate attitude toward riches ([3 Jn. 2](#))
3. “Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.” ([Jm. 5:3](#))
  - a. Here the gold and silver of the rich is said to be corroded or rusted all the way through
    - i. Not literally, as gold and silver do not rust
    - ii. In the eyes of God, their riches were rusted
  - b. This rust, a product of decay and lack of use, testified against them
    - i. If we are blessed with much, then much is required in how we use those blessings ([Lk. 12:48](#); cf. [Lk. 16:10-13](#))
  - c. “shall eat your flesh as it were fire”
    - i. These riches would consume their life as fire would flesh
    - ii. This figure was used in the Old Testament (cf. [Ezek. 15:7](#); [Isa. 10:16-17](#))
  - d. “heaped up treasure together for the last days”
    - i. Not the kind of treasure they were hoping for ([Rm. 2:5](#))

- ii. We have been living in the “last days” since Pentecost ([Acts 2:17](#); cf. [Heb. 1:1-2](#))
  - iii. We must make sure we are laying up for ourselves treasures in Heaven and not on the earth ([Mt. 6:19-21](#))
4. “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.” ([Jm. 5:4](#))
- a. Due to their greed and wickedness, the rich had been holding back wages from their workers
    - i. This was classified as stealing under the Old Law (cf. [Lev. 19:13](#); [Dt. 24:15](#); [Mal. 3:5](#))
  - b. Several other sins are said to “cry” to God including murder ([Gen. 4:9-13](#)) and homosexuality ([Gen. 19:13](#))
    - i. God listens to these cries and returns justice
  - c. “Lord of sabaoth”
    - i. Another way of saying, “Lord of hosts”
    - ii. Popular phrase in the Old Testament as it occurs some 245 times
    - iii. Indicates God is in charge of a vast army and that He is sovereign
5. “Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.” ([Jm. 5:5](#))
- a. The rich had lived delicately and luxuriously on the earth (cf. [Lk. 16:19](#))
  - b. Like the cow or pig that does not know that all the food he is getting is to fatten him up for the slaughter, so too is the rich doing to himself (cf. [Job 21:13](#))
6. “Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.” ([Jm. 5:6](#))
- a. The local and remote context of this verse indicates that “the just” is best exemplified by Jesus Christ
    - i. Jesus is called the “Just One” ([Acts 3:14](#), [7:52](#), [22:14](#))
  - b. Jesus was condemned, crucified, and in the process did not resist it
    - i. This was a subject of prophecy ([Isa. 53:7-8](#)) which was fulfilled in Christ ([Acts 8:32-35](#))
  - c. No doubt the rich, unbelieving Jews felt threatened by Jesus and wanted Him gone to which James places the blame right where it belongs

### **[James 5:7-11](#) - Necessity of Enduring**

1. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” ([Jm. 5:7](#))
- a. James engages the brethren once again encouraging them to persevere until Jesus returns
  - b. We know Jesus is coming back, but we do not know when ([Mt. 24:36](#), [25:13](#); [Mk. 13:32](#))

- c. As such, we must be longsuffering just as the farmer waits for the produce of the land
    - i. The early rain is necessary to germinate the wheat
    - ii. The latter rain is necessary to fill out the wheat
    - iii. Both are needed but both take time and trust (i.e., faith)
  - d. God will keep things going as long as He wills them to keep going ([Gen. 8:22](#))
  - e. Be patient, trust in the Lord, stay faithful ([1 Cor. 15:58](#))
2. “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” ([Jm. 5:8](#))
- a. James encourages again to be patient but this time wants the brethren to strengthen their hearts
  - b. Why? Jesus is coming back!
  - c. In a sense, the coming of Jesus is always near as we do not know when He will return (study [Mt. 25](#) especially [Mt. 25:13-15](#), [19](#), [31-33](#), [46](#))
    - i. Life is uncertain, but if we are right with the Lord it does not matter for we are ready
3. “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” ([Jm. 5:9](#))
- a. “Grudge”
    - i. Means to murmur, pass blame onto others, or generally not get along
    - ii. We must remember the intense trials the faithful went through over the ages ([Heb. 11:32-40](#))
    - iii. It would be easy to murmur, but God prohibits this destructive tendency
  - b. Such behavior brings condemnation [guilty judgment] and Christ is always near, yes at the door (cf. [Rev. 3:14-22](#))
4. “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” ([Jm. 5:10](#))
- a. James uses a familiar example for his audience: the prophets
  - b. A study of the prophets in the Old Testament reveals the suffering they went through and their patience
    - i. Jeremiah was placed in the stocks ([Jer. 20:2](#)) and thrown into a dungeon filled with mire [mud] ([Jer. 38:6](#))
    - ii. Daniel went into the lion’s den ([Dan. 6:16](#))
    - iii. Elijah had a death sentence pronounced upon him by Jezebel ([1 Kgs. 19:2](#))
  - c. Yet, these men endured and did the will of the Lord
    - i. This is one of the reasons why we must study our Old Testament (cf. [Rm. 15:4](#); [1 Cor. 10:11](#))

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5. “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” ([Jm. 5:11](#))
  - a. What better Old Testament example of suffering affliction than Job?
    - i. He lost all that he had, his family, and his health ([Job 1-2](#))
    - ii. Yet, the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning ([Job 42:12-17](#))
    - iii. The Bible speaks highly of Job (cf. [Ezek. 14:14, 20](#))
  - b. The words “endure” and “patience” have the meaning of bearing up under a trial
  - c. Any time we doubt God or think we are going through hard times, study the book of Job
    - i. God always looks out for the righteous (cf. [Ps. 37:25](#))

### **James 5:12 - Keeping Our Word**

1. “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.” ([Jm. 5:12](#))
  - a. “But above all things”
    - i. This indicates the seriousness of what James is getting ready to address
  - b. This is not a prohibition to legal oaths or swearing to tell the truth, rather this is a prohibition to flippant, irreverent use of God’s name (cf. [Mt. 26:63-64](#); [Rm. 1:9](#); [2 Cor. 1:23](#); [Phil. 1:8](#); [Gal. 1:20](#))
    - i. The Jews tried to skirt around the third commandment ([Ex. 20:7](#)) by swearing by God’s handiwork (Heaven, earth, sun, moon, etc.) (cf. [Mt. 23:16-22](#))
    - ii. However, to swear by these would involve God since they are His creations!
  - c. “other” (*allos* G243 al’-los)
    - i. Another of the same kind
    - ii. This would include any oath that is similar to what James has under consideration
  - d. “let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation”
    - i. May our speech be such that it can be trusted
    - ii. Let us keep our word

### **James 5:13-18 - The Power of Prayer**

1. “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” ([Jm. 5:13](#))
  - a. “afflicted”
    - i. To suffer hardships, troubles, pain
  - b. The appropriate response to affliction is prayer (cf. [Ps. 50:14-15](#), [86:7](#), [107:1-43](#))
  - c. Example: Jonah ([Jon. 2:1-2, 10](#))
  - d. “merry”
    - i. To make cheerful or to be in good spirits
  - e. The appropriate response to being merry is singing psalms ([Eph. 5:18-19](#); [Col. 3:16](#))

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- i. A psalm is a pious, reverent song (cf. book of Psalms)
  - ii. Evidence that we can sing to the Lord at other times outside of the worship assembly
  - iii. Wherever singing is done it must be done scripturally
2. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:" ([Jm. 5:14](#))
  - a. "sick"
    - i. Literally, is physically stricken with some illness
    - ii. Figuratively, would be sin sickness
    - iii. James does not have a physician in mind, but rather the elders
  - b. "let him call for"
    - i. "to call to one's self; to bid to come to one's self" (Thayer 546)
  - c. "elders"
    - i. Men who met the qualifications of [1 Tim. 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:5-9](#)
    - ii. The elders were to come to the sick person and pray over him
  - d. "anointing him with oil"
    - i. In a literal sense, this would be akin to our modern use of medicine ([Isa. 1:5-6](#); [Lk. 10:34](#))
    - ii. Figuratively speaking, anointing with oil would provide comfort or relief and would be done with God's Word and prayer
  - e. All of this was to be done "in the name of the Lord" or by the authority of the Lord ([Col. 3:17](#); cf. [Acts 4:7-10](#))
3. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." ([Jm. 5:15](#))
  - a. The effect of this prayer would be to save the sick from their illness
  - b. "The Lord shall raise him up"
    - i. Sense is to take one from a lying or sitting position to standing back on their feet
    - ii. Sin makes one weak and sickly (cf. [1 Cor. 11:30](#))
  - c. "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"
    - i. Sin is never forgiven if it is not repented of and confessed so these actions must be implied here ([Acts 8:22](#); [1 Jn. 1:9](#))
    - ii. Do not miss the main point: **prayer is powerful**
4. "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." ([Jm. 5:16](#))
  - a. James is instructing the brethren to admit or acknowledge their sins to one another and to pray for one another
  - b. Being at odds with a brother or sister in Christ directly affects our worship ([Mt. 5:23-24](#))

- i. The appropriate response is to confess to those we have transgressed
- ii. Does not advocate the “confession box” [confessing to a priest] as we are to confess to one another
- iii. Confession must be specific (if I have sinned... does not cut it with man or God)
- c. “pray”
  - i. A petition to God
  - ii. Praying for one another was common in the First Century and must be now ([Acts 12:5](#); [Rm. 15:30-31](#))
  - iii. Example: Simon the sorcerer ([Acts 8:24](#))
- d. The purpose is for healing
  - i. Context would imply spiritual healing i.e., forgiveness of sins
- e. “effectual fervent” (*energeo* G1754 en-erg-eh´-o)
  - i. Greek word is where we get our English word “energy”
  - ii. There is great power or energy in this prayer! Why?
- f. This prayer has power because the person praying is righteous and our God is the awesome God!
  - i. God will hear a righteous person ([1 Pt. 3:12](#); [1 Jn. 3:22](#); cf. [Mt. 6:33](#))
  - ii. All prayer must be asked in accordance with the will of God ([1 Jn. 5:14-15](#))
  - iii. God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ([Eph. 3:20](#))
- 5. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” ([Jm. 5:17](#))
  - a. James uses Elijah to show the power of prayer
  - b. In [1 Kgs. 17:1](#), Elijah informs the wicked king Ahab that it would not rain but according to his word
    - i. Though this passage does not tell us he prayed, James does
  - c. The result of this prayer was the stopping of rain upon Israel for three and a half years
    - i. Jesus confirms this account in James and that “the earth” ([Jm. 5:17](#)) is referencing the nation of Israel ([Lk. 4:25](#))
  - d. The power of prayer!
- 6. “And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.” ([Jm. 5:18](#))
  - a. In the third year, Elijah is instructed by God to go to Ahab and rain would come upon the earth i.e., Israel ([1 Kgs. 18:1](#))
    - i. We find this was accomplished ([1 Kgs. 18:41-46](#))
    - ii. Though this passage does not say explicitly Elijah prayed, James does
    - iii. Elijah was certainly in a position to pray ([1 Kgs. 18:42](#))

- b. Was this giving of rain miraculous or providential?
  - i. We are not told explicitly, however it would appear to be providential ([1 Kgs. 18:44-45](#))
  - ii. We do know God controls the rain ([Job 5:10](#); [Mt. 5:45](#); [Acts 14:17](#))
- c. The point is this, Elijah was like us, a human with human nature and his prayer was heard
  - i. Our prayers will be heard and answered if we meet God's criteria
  - ii. **Prayer is powerful**

### **James 5:19-20 - Restoring the Lost**

- 1. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;" ([Jm. 5:19](#))
  - a. James concludes his epistle with the hope that brethren will help each other come out of sin
    - i. Apostasy is real and this passage, as well as many others, shows it is possible
    - ii. If apostasy could not happen, as once saved always saves teaches, then why the need to convert or turn one away from sin?
    - iii. Truth is, Satan is after Christians and he wants to devour us ([1 Pt. 5:8-9](#))
  - b. "err"
    - i. Means to be led astray
    - ii. A brother has wandered off the path of righteousness and must be brought back
  - c. "the truth"
    - i. This is a reference to the objective system of God's truth which can be known and sets us free from sin ([Jn. 8:31-32](#))
    - ii. This is the truth that sets us apart ([Jn. 17:17](#))
    - iii. Jesus identifies Himself as the truth ([Jn. 14:6](#))
    - iv. It is the truth we must defend from false teachers ([Gal. 2:4-5](#); cf. [Jude 3](#))
    - v. It is possible not to walk uprightly according to the truth ([Gal. 2:14](#))
  - d. "convert"
    - i. Meaning is to turn, turn back, or return
    - ii. It is the same word used in [Acts 3:19](#) that baptism accomplishes (cf. [Acts 2:38](#))
    - iii. The spiritual are to assist the brethren to get them back on the right path ([Gal. 6:1](#))
  - e. It will take the truth in order to restore a brother or sister in Christ who is in error
    - i. What is the product of this restoration?
- 2. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." ([Jm. 5:20](#))
  - a. A soul is snatched from the fires of hell and sins are hidden
  - b. "shall hide"
    - i. Means to cover (cf. [Pr. 10:12](#))

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- ii. Not covered up as under a rug, but forgiven! ([Ps. 32:1](#))
- iii. Nothing is hidden from the all-seeing eye of God ([Pr. 15:3](#))
- c. No doubt this is motivated by love (see [1 Cor. 13](#))

### James Conclusion

1. The book of James has been referred to as, “The Christian’s Book of Proverbs,” as well as, “The Gospel of Common Sense.”
  - a. The world needs a healthy dose of “common sense,” but then so does the church (cf. [Mt. 7:21-27](#))
  - b. In our study we have learned many practical lessons
2. James teaches practical Christian living regardless of when we live
  - a. Christianity is meant to be understood and applied ([Jm. 1:21-27](#); cf. [Acts 1:1](#))
  - b. Let us apply these great truths to our lives as we follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ