

Sermon or Lesson: James 5:10-12 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Patient Endurance, Careful Words

INTRO: You arrived home from work very late, and supper is going to take awhile to prepare. Your growing, active pre-teen and teenage children are very hungry, so hungry in fact that they cannot wait for the food and they thereupon resort to making wild or exaggerated claims, predictions, threats, and statements about their inability to survive any longer without something to eat NOW! In this kind of situation, they conspicuously exhibit neither patient endurance nor choosing of their words carefully. And what do they accomplish from these behaviors? Do their behaviors thrill and delightfully incite you to reward them for these behaviors? Or instead, do these behaviors finally provoke a rebuke from you?

As you are probably surmising, we believers are instructed in the Word to respond appropriately when we are facing suffering. Let's look at what God has to say about this in James chapter 5.

The main principle in the immediate context of verses 7-9 is to be patient, stand firm in the faith, and do not grumble against others even if you are being mistreated, as you wait for the Lord to come and bring judgment. Set yourself up for a favorable judgment.

Next in verses 10-11, there is being cited "an example of patience in the face of suffering". (v.10)

v.10 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why and in what ways are the prophets an example for us believers to follow when facing suffering?]

SECTION POINT: Patiently endure suffering because of your faith, like the prophets did.

"suffering" = Strong's #2552 "suffering harm; hardship"

"patience" = Strong's #3115 "long-suffering; forbearance or fortitude"

- - As you wait upon the Lord to bring an end to your suffering, consider the example of the prophets.
- - The prophets are being highlighted here as excellent examples of being "patient in the face of suffering", for enduring prolonged suffering patiently.
- - The prophets are being recommended as worthy to be imitated.
- - The prophets "spoke in the name of the Lord", suggesting they suffered for openly taking a stand for the Lord, for verbally promoting the Kingdom of God, and for personally living righteously, all of which drew negative reactions from surrounding secular pagan societies and from local wayward religious people.
- - This implies suffering on behalf of the Kingdom or because of one's faith is common for the servants of the Lord to experience.

- - Likewise, suffering for speaking in the name of the Lord is also common for the servants of the Lord to experience.
 - - These kinds of suffering should be expected and accepted by believers.
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v.11 - READ

[Lesson Question: In this verse, explore the dynamics of the Lord's response to persevering in suffering.]

SECTION POINT: Persevering to endure suffering will bring blessings from the Lord in the end.

- - As we "look" at the lives of the prophets, we see that they 'persevered' or "stayed under and endured the suffering". (Strong's #2400, #5278)
 - - In response to their successful perseverance of suffering, the Lord blessed them at the end, in God's timing.
 - - Upon specifically considering the plight of Job in the Scriptures, we can easily comprehend his commendable endurance of devastating and excruciating sufferings.
 - - From investigating Job's experiences, we can easily see and identify "the Lord's purpose and how He richly blessed Job in the end" (*AMP*), "what the Lord finally brought about" (*NIV*).
 - - The Lord was truly caring about Job's suffering condition, his plight, and what was happening to him, having "extreme compassion and great mercy" for Job. (Richards p.180; Strong's #4184)
 - - This great compassion and empathy for Job moved the Lord to take merciful action on his behalf and set his life on a new better course, albeit in the end after much prolonged intense suffering. (Richards p.181)
 - - Notice that the Lord's compassion and mercy outpouring upon the suffering person in the end is contingent upon the person successfully persevering in righteousness.
 - - Considering the plight of the prophets and Job should bring you encouragement, add clarity to your purpose, and strengthen your fortitude.
 - - Hebrews 10:36-37 - "36. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."
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v.12 - READ

[Lesson Question: Why will we be "condemned" or fall into adverse judgment if we swear by some thing?]

SECTION POINT: Keeping in mind the impending Lord's coming and your subsequent judgment, always speak the truth and always speak with careful wording in order to avoid coming under adverse judgment.

- - "swear" = Strong's #3660 "to swear, i.e. take or declare on oath"; 'swear' - (*AHD*) "1. To make a solemn declaration, invoking a deity or a sacred person or thing, in confirmation

of and witness to the honesty or truth of such a declaration. 2. To make a solemn promise; vow."

Telling The Truth:

- - One way we "swear" is to call upon God or some thing as witness to verify that we are telling the truth in regard to a particular statement we are making or have made.
- - A problem with calling upon God or some thing to verify truth is that this approach utilizes swearing about some event or statement made in the past that can no longer be proven and thereby we accomplish nothing provable or verifiable by making this kind of assertion.
- - Furthermore, this approach swears by God or by some inanimate thing that does not or cannot defend itself or us, nor speak for itself or us.
- - From this verse, clearly God does not want us swearing by Him, nor by any of His creation, nor by "anything else" for that matter. (cf. Leviticus 19:12; Matthew 5:34-37)
- - Also, speaking in this manner pridefully and arrogantly and selfishly attempts to establish our credibility, exalt our self, and fortify our reputation.
- - We are to refrain from swearing by anything and instead always speak with complete honesty, integrity, forthrightness, appropriateness, and etc. so that our words and statements are always true.

Making Promises:

- - Another way we "swear" is to name or call upon God or some thing as witness and perhaps co-guarantor that we will take specific action in the future.
- - We do not control the future, nor God, nor who or what we are swearing by, so we have no way to make our intended co-guarantor fulfill our promise that we will take specific action in the future.
- - Additionally, circumstances can change over time, and thereby so can our perspective, thinking, and beliefs.
- - So speaking in this manner is 'presumptuous' - (*AHD*) "Going beyond what is right or proper; excessively forward; brash; sassy; overbold; flippant"; overly assertive; inappropriately self-confident.
- - Speaking in this manner is unwise and perhaps recklessness because it can potentially expose both our self and our co-guarantor to disrepute, dishonor, falseness, and reproach if we fail to keep our promise.
- - So the application here is to be very careful in what you speak, using great wisdom to say only that which you for surely can fulfill; and when you do say something you intend to do, craft your words very precisely so that you can carry through with your promised actions even if unforeseen developments occur.
- - Just be a person of your word and yours alone, no swearing by anything. "Then you will [avoid] falling under adverse judgment" when the Lord comes and condemns such 'swearing'. (from Strong's #2443, #3361, #5259, #2920, #4098)

BIG IDEA: Being mindful of your impending future judgment, patiently endure all of your sufferings and carefully word your statements about what you have done or will do.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you truly want the Lord to bless you? Long-term? Eternally?
 - - If you do, then you have to live life in the ways He prescribes.
 - - One way prescribed here is to patiently endure suffering, successfully persevering and waiting upon the Lord to one day end the suffering and bring blessings.
 - - Another way prescribed here is to carefully word your statements about what you have done or will do, and rely upon that so you do not swear by anything.
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- - These are two of the Lord's requirements for being blessed. What are you going to do with these?
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