



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The Virtue of Patience

MARCH 4, 2013

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### Scripture Lesson James 5:7-12

*<sup>7</sup> Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!*

*<sup>10</sup> Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. <sup>12</sup> Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.*

### Introduction

The last three studies examined three different forms of arrogance:

4:11-12 Arrogance when using words to judge.

4:13-16 Arrogance of presuming our future.

5:1-6 Arrogance of riches and power.

The next three studies will look at biblical ways we answer these problems of arrogance by practicing the corresponding forms of humility.

5:7-12 Humbly Waiting upon God's Judgment

5:13-18 Humbly Giving Ourselves to God

5:19-20 Humbly Restoring a Brother to God

### This Week's Study

*Be Patient, then, brothers...* In an earlier study we noticed that trials come in many forms, from common and everyday nuisance to severe anguish. Therefore, we are called to be patient in all circumstances—here when dealing with persecution from the arrogant. Earlier James

told us to find joy in the midst of trials, and so here he may be saying, "At least you can be patient." But, we should remember that patience is not mere stoicism, it ought to be a joyful endurance.

We can better understand this by noting three different words James uses to express this idea of patience:

1. Be patient (5:7). A passive idea
2. Stand firm (5:8). Slightly more involved and active
3. Persevere (5:11). Resolve to continue on the right course

*...until the Lord's coming.* There seems to be a parallel idea to "forgiving seventy times seven." Here we exercise patience until the Lord's coming. In other words, as there is no proper end to forgiveness, likewise, there is no proper end to patience.

*See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.*

The farmer's waiting does involve patience for period of time, but he waits for a blessing. Patience should not focus on how long we are told to endure, but to realize the end of endurance is blessing.

The Lord's coming is not merely the terminus of our time of patience. It is also the reason why we can be patient. The Lord will come to restore all things to Himself, and to bring a perfect judgment on all evil.

*You too, be patient and stand firm...*

Sometimes circumstances require us to be patient as the farmer waits for the crops. Other occasions require more than patient waiting—we must stand firm against opposition. James already told us to stand against the Devil by resisting him. Paul repeats a similar idea in Ephesians 6 as we are told in the end "to stand." Standing is a triumph!

*...because the Lord's coming is near.* It is good to know that the Lord's coming is near in ways other than the dimension of time. It is near to our hopes, it is near to hearts, it is near

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: MONDAYS, 5:00 PM, ROOM 1425, LIGHT DINNER FOLLOWING STUDY

STAFF: MONDAYS, 12:00 NOON, CHAPEL, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR LB

# North Carolina

## The Virtue of Patience

to our experience of everyday life— it should be all of these things and more.

*Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged.*

Not grumbling is one example of the virtue of patience. Impatience often blossoms into grumbling. Rather than grumbling we use words to love and edify.

Grumbling is a sin worthy of judgment. We can slip into grumbling as it seems a slight peccadillo, but we should recognize it for what it is—an outward expression of inward sin. Grumbling can spread like a fire (James 3:5,6).

*The Judge is standing at the door!*

There is a positive side to waiting for the Lord's coming, but there is also a warning that He comes as the Judge. And, the Judge is at the door! He is very close to wrapping temporal things up. We can note three things regarding His standing at the door:

1. It is near because God does not have the same measure of time as we have (2 Peter 3:8).
2. It is delayed to extend mercy to sinners (2 Peter 3:9).
3. It will come suddenly (2 Peter 3:10)

*Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

The Old Testament prophets endured terrible personal and national trials as they waited for the Lord's coming, and they never experienced any part of Christ's coming as we have.

We know the Lord has already come and we wait for Him to come again. Our position in both history and knowledge is beyond what was available to the prophets. And yet they waited. We should be more patient than they.

*As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

Those who have persevered are considered blessed because they had higher goals and loftier expectations than the pleasures of this life. James tells us there is great value in the process of patience, both for the immediate good of the soul and the eventual reward that follows.

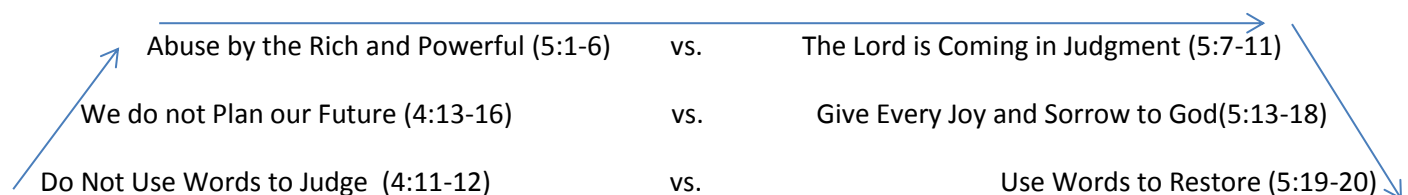
Perseverance means we are patient and we stand firm to the end. As our lives are short and "a mist" we persevere, in a sense, for a little while. But, we are called to persevere to the end.

*Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.*

Verse 12 is difficult to align in this context. Is James telling us impatience may lead to improper oaths? Is it merely an aside? Or, does it fit better with the next verse which tells us to pray? At least, we can say this is a warning about taking matters into your own hands.

In the end, improper oath making is another form of arrogance. We swear by heaven, earth, or anything other than the Lord. This is not trusting God, but another way to take things into our own hands, and make our own plans regarding what is to come.

### A Chiasm in James: Arrogance vs. Godly Humility



**ARROGANCE**

**HUMILITY**