



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Growing in Humility (James 1:9-12)

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*Humility is a virtue, essential in leadership, a requirement for public service. James draws from the proverbs of Solomon and teachings of Jesus as he urges us to develop a humble spirit.*

### INTRODUCTION

We commonly use an opposite term to clarify the meaning of a word. Pride is a counter-term of humility. Ben Franklin revealed, in his autobiography, his systematic effort to develop virtues, especially that of humility. Solomon taught: ***A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor*** (Proverbs 29:23). Jesus provided the ultimate example, who, though He was God, laid aside His mighty power and glory to become a man so that He could pay our sin debt on the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). James teaches that a humble spirit gives us perseverance for our trials, or the trials of life will work to humble us!

### TRUE RICHES

***James 1:9-11 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. 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.***<sup>1</sup>

#### **Temporary deprivation but a divine inheritance:**

The majority of early Jerusalem church members were poor, some due to occupation, others because of persecution, still others were refugees from other regions. James reminds them that they have blessings infinitely more valuable. They can rejoice in a faith that is mature and a future inheritance that is both eternal and secure. Can you look past the relatively brief sufferings in your life? Can you see the maturity gained through hardships in past years? Do you glory in eternal riches that neither decay, pestilence, or thieves can take away (Matthew 6:19)?

#### **Material wealth's impact on faith and trust:**

James appears to pose a riddle while he uses irony to show the value of suffering through the trials of life. The illustration of the spring flower shows the fleeting nature of earthly beauty and treasure. Reflect on some needs you have had that **could not** be satisfied with money or position. How can the pursuit of wealth interfere with God's purpose in a person's life? How can wealth contribute to God's purpose in lives?

### PERSEVERANCE REWARDED

***James 1:12 A man who endures trials is blessed, because when he passes the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.***<sup>2</sup>

The term "blessed" (Makarios) refers to an inner joy. It is often translated as "fortunate" or "happy" and is the same term used by Jesus in the beatitudes of Matthew, Chapter five. Remaining steadfast under trial gives us the inner confidence to endure the next trial and the next. Peter refers to this as being tested by fire as pure gold, though we are not perishable (1 Peter 1:6-7). God honors those who persevere through trials (Hebrews, Chapter eleven). This "crown" is borrowed from athletics rather than royalty. However, it is a reward for faith, not achievement. The "crown of life" is the reward of eternal life in God's presence given to those who have a saving faith in Jesus, the Christ.<sup>3</sup> How great a trial has God allowed you to be tested through?

### A PRAYER

***Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word*** (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, New American Standard Version. (Lockman Foundation) 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Holman Christian Standard Bible (Holman Bible Publishers) 2009.

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, (Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 2006. p1896.