

Faith and Patience in Suffering

WARM-UP

- Have you ever joined a competition? How did you prepare for it?
- What is a product or event you looked forward to for a long time? What did you do while waiting?
- Share about a time you suffered through something in the past. What happened?

WORD

¹⁰*As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

¹¹*Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.* **JAMES 5:10,11**

(Read also **JAMES 5:7-18.**)

James starts his letter to the Jewish Christians with *the testing of your faith produces steadfastness*. He concludes his letter with *Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast*. We develop steadfastness by our reactions to trials and suffering. In turn, as we remain steadfast in the faith, we show others the hope we have in the gospel. James describes the three responses we should have to suffering.

1 Be patient.

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. **JAMES 5:7,8**

For farmers, rain is money. They can only eat and sell if the rains come and their crops grow. James tells us to be patient and stay strong, for *the coming of the Lord is at hand*. The farmers wait for something uncertain; we can be patient because we are waiting for something certain. Is there something God is asking you to be patient for even through suffering? Tell us about it.

2 Look to God.

Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. **JAMES 5:11**

We remain steadfast during suffering when we look to God. James talks about Job, who went through many kinds of suffering but continued to hold fast to God. More important than Job's steadfastness, though, is who God is. God is *compassionate and merciful*, and He has a plan and purpose for our lives. How does Job respond to God in Job 42:2-6?

3 Pray in faith.

¹⁶. . . *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* ¹⁷*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.* ¹⁸*Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.* **JAMES 5:16-18**

(Read also **JAMES 5:13-15.**)

We can be patient because we know the day of the Lord is coming. We can look to God because we know He is compassionate and merciful, and that He has a plan and a purpose for us. Even so, we are not supposed to stop there. James reminds us that *the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* Even the Prophet Elijah was only a man, but his prayer stopped the rains for over three years. What does Hebrews 11:7,8 say about praying and living by faith?

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APPLICATION

- Do you believe God has a plan and a purpose for your life? How can you go deeper in your understanding of this starting today?
- Is there an area in your life that God is asking you to pray about in faith? How can you make praying for it a habit this week?
- Do you have a family member or friend who is going through suffering? How can you invite them to patiently wait upon God and step out in faith this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the plan and purpose He has for your life. Pray that He will continue to reveal it more and more to you as you trust and obey Him.
- Ask God for the grace to step out in faith in the area He is pointing out to you. Pray that you will be able to confidently pray and believe for breakthrough in that area.
- Pray for opportunities to speak to family members or friends who are currently going through suffering. Pray and invite them to place their trust in God and act in faith this week.

NOTES



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