

James 1:9-12 – The Result of Gaining Wisdom

Vincent, TSK, Lexicon, Henry, JFB, Rienecker, Clarke, Family, PNT, Geneva, Robertson, Poole, Trapp, Calvin, Gill, Arnold, Ellsworth, Gaebelein, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

In the 1st sermon you heard that **your faith must be seen in good works** – obedience, and when you obey, there are great blessings.

In the 2nd sermon you learned that **for you to understand what good works are and how to do them, you need wisdom**, and God gives wisdom liberally to those who ask.

In this 3rd sermon, you will **see the result of gaining wisdom in the lives of different people**.

Our headings are:

The poor will be exalted through Wisdom

The rich will be exalted through Wisdom

Both poor and rich will receive eternal rewards through Wisdom

Our goals are: **That you will cry out for wisdom so you can truly serve the one who redeemed you from hell's pit.**

The poor humble will be exalted through Wisdom

9 (But) Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

1. As opposed to the man who lacks wisdom to do good works to show his faith, Apostle James taught how the lowly and the rich benefit from wisdom.

2. “Lowly” referred to the poor –financially poor.

(“Lowly” is set in contrast to the “rich” next, one who is rich financially. So “lowly” refers to poverty.)

Proverbs 30:14 There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives, to **devour the poor from off the earth**,
And the needy from among men.

To the poor, this was a spiritual trial – a struggle to understand why he was in that position as God's child. The poor would struggle to make ends meet. He would want to help others, but he wouldn't have for himself. Because he was poor, he would be ignored at the big dinner parties. (Chapter 2)

3. With wisdom, the poor would learn how to be thankful when he didn't have a lot and he would learn to be patient while waiting for better.

Wisdom would **remind him his treasures would come in heaven** where none can steal.

Wisdom would remind him **he is a citizen of heaven, an heir of God**, and a joint heir with Christ.

These things would **“exalt” him – lift him up** so he would have the heart to **continue in his struggles and yet do good works**.

4. He wouldn't take credit for his uplifted feeling of hope and confidence because he would know his wisdom came from God.

5. Lessons:

a. Wisdom will give you what you need to keep fighting. It will tell you how to spiritually fight. It will tell you the benefits of spiritual fighting. This is why you need to keep asking in faith for wisdom.

b. Specifically to this passage today, if you are poor, wisdom will help you learn how to understand and to endure your poverty with patience. (It is not saying that you shouldn't try to do better financially, but it is saying that if you are poor because of providence (God does want some to be poor), then you will learn to live under those circumstances. **You are not spiritually disadvantaged because you are financially poor.** (By the way, **how much have you complained about what you didn't have these past 18 months?**)

c. Those who teach that financial prosperity is what God desires of every man don't understand God, man, the work of Christ, or the doctrine of God's providence. No one should feel bad if you work hard and well and are still poor. **You should feel bad if you are lazy and suffer from indiscipline.** You will have nothing to share with others.

The rich will be exalted through wisdom

10 but **the rich (brother glory) in his humiliation**, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a **burning heat than it withers the grass**; its **falls flower**, and its beautiful **appearance perishes**. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

1. “Rich” refers, not to those who were spiritually wealthy, that would make no sense given the context, but to those who are rich according to worldly riches.

The rich would face trials too and would need wisdom. They would face trials as the rich young ruler who came to Christ and asked how he could get eternal life...

2. What would wisdom, if it were in the heart of a rich man, teach him?

a. Wisdom would teach a rich man to rejoice even if he suffered loss of his

wealth. This was important as there would be Christians who would lose all their wealth because of persecution, or because their business would falter because they would be ostracized and not allowed to do business if they refused to join pagan unions (guilds).

b. Wisdom would teach a rich man his real treasures were waiting for him in heaven. It is true some would have died with regret wishing to make more money, their idol. But God wanted man to **save up for eternity, not just focus simply on accumulating wealth.** (Children need a spiritual inheritance more than an earthly inheritance.)

c. Wisdom would teach a rich man not to take advantage of the poor brother.
(Chapter 5)

d. Wisdom would teach a man his wealth was a gift of God and he deserved nothing.

e. Wisdom would teach a rich man that earthly riches pass away quickly, even as sun arises.

“Heat” (V11) equals “hot winds.” So “heat” refers to trials. The rich man could “dry out” under his trials if he didn’t possess wisdom.

Isaiah 40:6 The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?"
"All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Wealth **disappears just as quickly as grass disappears.** Wealth **disappears just as quickly as a flower withers** and dies. Its beauty becomes nothing. Where are all the tulips now? **Man is like a vapor...like grass... like a cloud...**

1 Timothy 6:17 Command **those who are rich** in this present age **not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God,** who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

All the rich man’s **colorful clothing would be rendered useless!**
All rich men would become as every other man when death reaches him.

3. Lessons:

a. So if you are rich, learn from God’s wisdom that worldly wealth withers away with alarming speed and for certain you cannot even take anything with you

when you die. Your children may squander it. The government may steal it. This is why glorifying wealth is foolish. **So don't put confidence in wealth.**

b. Did you complain over the 18 months about how much your financial reserves have gone down? I hope not. Remember how much you have in Jesus Christ. **Identify with him!**

c. There are those who may refuse to do business with you because you are Christian. This is a reality in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh -more than 25% of the world's population. And it will spread. Be prepared. But even if you lose all your wealth, you are already richer than any non-Christian in the world! Christ has already lifted you up and made you sit in heavenly places.

d. How can the things of this world be of little value when people crave them so desperately? Because the world only knows earthly things! They don't know the true value of what you have in Jesus Christ. You are adopted. Your name is in heaven's perfect record. You have a right to be there – for eternity.

Both poor and rich will receive eternal rewards through wisdom

12 Blessed is the man who **endures temptation**; for when he has been approved, he will **receive the crown of life** which the Lord has promised to **those who love Him.**

1. God would approve the man, whether poor or rich, who through wisdom, endured temptation to sin under pressure and kept doing good works.

“**Temptation**” is a word used for the “smelting” of metals to make them pure, so it is better to use the word “**affliction.**” We use the word “**temptation**” as a mild test to see if you might sin, like putting candy in front of a child. So “**temptation**” is not **strong enough.** “**Affliction**” captures the proper meaning.

2. God would show his approval of the one who used his wisdom to endure suffering and did not sin by giving him a crown of life.

The rewards of a Christian would increase if he were patient and constant during his suffering.

3. In short, the crown of life would go to one who loved the Lord and showed it by faithful living!

This language was well understood at that time.

Revelation 2:10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that

you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be **faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

1 Corinthians 9:25 And **everyone who competes for the prize** is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Remember, a crown of life was drawn from the Greek athlete. The winner of a race was given a leaf-crown and he would never have to work another day of his life! Jesus addressed the reward – a greater reward.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4. Lessons:

a. This crown of life is given to the poor, the rich, the young, the old, boys, girls, males, and females. Every Christian, when he enters heaven, will be given a crown of life!

b. The fact that God will bring rewards like the crown of life to the godly does not mean you are to be passive. God's sovereignty never takes away man's responsibility. You are to pursue good works. Go after good works like you want to conquer them! You must show good works. (See why wisdom is essential for eternal life!)

c. Is your godly life visible? If it is visible, it gives **direction to the young and spiritually young**, and it brings **glory to God**. A godly life directs others to Christ. **This will lead them to a crown of life too.**

Conclusion:

God will test everyone! That includes you! He tests poor or rich, and those in-between. Tests are for your **refinement**. Tests are for the **glory of God**. Tests will be a **guide for others to follow**.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. What would happen to you if your house burned down and you lose everything in it? Would you become depressed? What would you do if you suddenly earned \$1,000,000.00? Would you become arrogant? Would you stop worshipping God? What would happen if you are poor and then lose your job? Would you stop praying?

2. Whether you are rich and lose everything, or whether you are poor and lose

everything, you are rich, very rich! You have that sense of your richness in your heart and one day you **will receive the crown of life** that none can take away.

3. So make it your aim to be approved of God in this life by using his wisdom and living a godly life.

4. How are you approved of God and able to endure your suffering and still live obediently? Know what Jesus did for you on that bloody cross: He suffered, bled, and died, and secured for you salvation. Your salvation opened your eyes to the riches you have in Jesus. His Word teaches you how to live for him.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you are in darkness. You can't see the wealth of heaven or the crown of life that waits for Christians. God can open your eyes if you ask him to do so. Will you ask him to do so today? You will see a holy God, you will your sin, you will see the work of Christ, and you will see the crown of life.