

Spiritual Wholeness
“Endurance in Testing”

Introduction: As we learned last week, the letter of James, written by the brother of Jesus, was penned to a community of believers who were learning to live out their faith in a world/culture that was strongly antagonistic toward those who were Christ-followers.

- Temptation to cozy up to the world (friend of the world—4:4)
- Called to **SPIRITUAL WHOLENES**

PERFECT—teleios (te-lē -us) (completely brought to its end)

COMPLETE—holokeros (ho-la-klē -ros) (no part unsound, no blemish or defect)

LACKING NOTHING—leipo (lē -pō) (to leave behind, lag, or be inferior)

SPIRITUAL WHOLENES—in a pagan culture in the midst of trial, persecution, and temptation; their call and ours!

What does spiritual wholeness look like?

- **Endurance in testing** (today) first piece of the puzzle

Context is set:

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. James 1:2-3 NKJV

Similar to Paul:

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Romans 5:3-4 NKJV

And Peter:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV

- All remind us that God brings trials into our lives for a reason
- Purpose only fulfilled IF we respond the right way
- Question of undeserved suffering persists—not fully answered—God is in control

IMPORTANT CLUES

v. 2—“...count it joy when you FALL into various trials!” (per-i-pip’t)

- Unexplained events, taken off guard, takes us beyond our means
- 3 times in the New Testament

v. 2—“VARIOUS TRIALS”

TRIAL-Peirasmos (pē-’ras-mos)

NOTE: Can be trials or temptations

Temptation

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 1 Timothy 6:9 NKJV

Trial

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 1 Peter 4:12 NKJV

NOTE: Both are in this text

VARIOUS—poikilos (poy-kē-los)—variegated, various kinds

CONTEXT: How do we endure trials AND temptations that are of various kinds that come when we don’t expect them? (Sickness, loss of job, betrayal, financial loss, mistreatment, culture turning against us)

Endurance of these trials is the first component of SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS

I. Endurance in testing requires WISDOM.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5 NKJV

A. The most prized attribute as we face testing is wisdom.

1. To discern between trial and temptation and carry out God’s will
2. To avoid hot-headed response that was too often happening

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 NKJV

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. James 1:13-14 NKJV

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. James 3:13-16 NKJV

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? James 4:1 NKJV

3. The tendency for too often is to be angry, point finger, blame others or God for trials.
4. We need wisdom.

B. The wisdom we need comes from God

For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; Proverbs 2:6-7 NKJV

C. We should pray for this wisdom and God will give it

NOTE: Echos Matthew 7:7-11

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV

1. Will give it liberally (haplos) simply, frankly, with sincerity (root means single—Matthew 6:22)

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light." Matthew 6:22 NKJV

NOTE: Not so much God's generosity but his commitment to give us what we need. SINGLE-FOCUSED

2. **Without reproach** (faultless)—should not be afraid to ask—not mad we don't have it.

WE NEED WISDOM TO ENDURE TESTING

II. Endurance in testing requires CONSISTENT FAITH.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:6-8 NKJV

- A. We must ask in the same manner that God is willing to give—with a single focus—not doubting or double-minded

NOTE: God gives with singleness of intent so we must ask the same way

- B. As in faith without doubting (again words of Jesus)

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Matthew 21:21-22 NKJV

- C. Word for doubting (diakrino) to create distinctions, to judge between, here to dispute with oneself

1. No wavering

He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. Romans 4:20 NKJV

2. Abram did doubt some—strong overshadowing doubt, wavering that is spurred on
3. Over long term a CONSISTENCY OF FAITH

- D. God responds to this CONSISTENT FAITH

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6 NKJV

Not wavering, inconsistent, double-minded man

(ILL) Picture of sea waves—no anchor for soul

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil. Hebrews 6:19 NKJV

NOTE: Double-minded—di-psycho (double-souled) DRIVEN BY EMOTIONS-UNSTABLE IN ALL WAYS

WISDOM/CONSISTENT FAITH

III. Endurance in testing requires REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE.

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, 10 but the rich 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 flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. James 1:9-11 NKJV

NOTE: Some see this as random but it is actually faith.

A. The greatest trial of early Christian (Diaspora) was their economic poverty

1. Pushed from home
2. Ostracized by the Jews and pagans

B. Two Christians—poor one and the rich one

1. Poor believer is tempted to feel insignificant, uncared for, forgotten by God. Take pride in knowledge that you are seated in heavenly places with Christ.
2. Rich believer—tempted to think too much of himself because the world holds him in high esteem. But take pride that you identify with One who was despised and rejected and had no place to lay his head.

NOTE: Your riches will not last all your life only for a season

C. A call to realistic perspective—we are just pilgrims here-citizenship is in heaven

WISDOM/CONSISTENT FAITH/REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

IV. Endurance in testing requires KEEN VIGILANCE.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin,

when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. James 1:13-16 NKJV

A. Here the focus turns from the external trials to the internal temptations

1. Main point—God may test us but will never tempt us!
2. But with every test—a temptation may be attached
3. An enticement to sin

B. God does not tempt us

1. Temptation is an impulse to sin
2. Since God cannot be susceptible to any such desire—He cannot be seen desiring that be brought about in my life

C. Temptation is rather attributed from human desire

1. Taken away by own desires (literally dragged away...fishing metaphor)
2. Bait on hook entices fish
3. Fish once hooked would be dragged away
4. Satan casts the bait—our desires entice us and ultimately drag us away
5. There sin is conceived (given birth) and leads to death

NOTE: Temptation is not sin

D. But must be keenly vigilant

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. James 1:16 NKJV

WISDOM, CONSISTENT FAITH, REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE, VIGILANCE

V. Endurance in testing requires DEEPENED TRUST.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. James 1:17-18 NKJV

NOTE: The connections to the context

- ✓ Return to the singleness/integrity of God (no variation)

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- ✓ He doesn't tempt to evil—He gives good gifts
- ✓ Sin not conceived but new birth through the Word (which is the next subject)

- A. He is the giver of all good/perfect gifts
- B. Father of Lights (luminaries)
- C. No variation or shadow of turning (constant motion of heavenly bodies contrasted to His unchanging nature)
- D. Trust in the single, unchanging God as compared to our double-mindedness
- E. Greatest gift of all new birth

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. James 1:18 NKJV

Conclusion: Enduring tests (quality of spiritual wholeness)

NOTE: Comes with a blessing and a honor

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. James 1:12 NKJV