

CONNECTION Leader Notes
James 1:1-12, Proverbs 1:20-33, III John 2-8
March 6, 2011

Key Verses

God's Purpose in Trials - James 1:1-12

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Results of Not Listening to God - Proverbs 1:20-33

1 Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: 22 "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? 23 If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you. 24 Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, 25 because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, 27 when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. 28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, 30 would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, 31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. 32 For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; 33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster."

Supporting those Walking in the Truth - 3 John 2-8 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, 6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. 7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth. 9 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. 10 So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church. 11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

Additional reference verses shown below

Discussion Questions

1. What is God's purpose for trials in the believer's life? (James 1:2-4, 12, Romans 5:3-6, II Cor.1:5-7, II Cor.4:7-18)

2. How are we to respond to trials, tests and tribulation in our lives? How do we do this? (verses from Question 1 plus Hebrews 10:32-39, Prov.3:5-6)
3. Why is the character trait of “endurance” or “steadfastness” (patience, perseverance) important? (Rom.8:23-25, Rom.15:4-5, I Thes.1:2-4, Heb.12:1-3)
4. Why do we, at times, refuse to listen to God? (Proverbs 1:24-27) Who do we listen to when we do not listen to God?
5. According to Proverbs 1:28-33, what are the results when we do not listen to God?
6. What does it mean to “walk in the truth”? (3 John 3-8, 2 John 3-6, Psalms 86:11, I John 1:5-7)
7. Who are the “fellow workers for the truth” described in 3 John 8? What are some practical ways we can “support” these individuals?

Additional Supporting Scripture:

Building patience, endurance, perseverance and steadfastness in our lives

Bearing fruit - Luke 8:15 "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

Doing good - Romans 2:5-11 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.

In the Scriptures - Romans 15:4-5 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

Pursuing perseverance as a character trait, after fleeing the love of money - 1Timothy 6:11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (flee the love of money)

Sound in faith, in perseverance - Titus 2:2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

Running in the race of life - Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

How is perseverance involved with our hope in Christ?

Romans 8:23-25 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1 Thes. 1:2-4 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

Colossians 1:9-12 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us [fn] to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

2 Thes. 3:4-6 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ. 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which [fn] you received from us.

Is perseverance a result of trials and suffering or a requirement when experiencing trials and suffering? Why?

Romans 5:3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2 Corinthians 1:5-7 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. 6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; 7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

Hebrews 10:32-36 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

James 1:2-6 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

James 5:10-11 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Describe what role perseverance and endurance should have in our dealing with persecution as a Christian.

Luke 21:12-19 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. 13 It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. 14 So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. 16 But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18 Yet not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, (see 5-12)

2 Thes. 1:3-5 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

2Ti 3:10-12 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance 11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Why is perseverance not an end in itself?

Rev. 2:1-5 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 '**But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.** 5 '**Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.**

Rev. 2:18-21 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: 19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. 20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

Rev 3:7-12 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: 8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. 10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Rev 13:10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

Rev 14:12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

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