

# James 5

## James 5:1-6

How would you describe the tone of this passage?

Who is James addressing in this section?

What is he predicting for them? Why will this happen?

Do you think this is written to all “rich” people ever, to rich people in that time and place, or just to the rich people who were guilty of exploitation?

In James 5:1, what’s the first thing James wants the “rich” people to do?

How do you think this compares with their current attitude? (Do they spend a lot of time “weeping and howling”?)

Why would this be important? What is there to weep about?

How can we use the resources we have, such as they are, to help the poor?

What can we do to make sure that poor workers are not exploited, that they get a fair wage for their work?

Where are we storing our treasure? How can we break free from the idolatry of money and all the things it buys? How can we seek first God’s kingdom?

**Read Isaiah 58.** This chapter bears a lot of similarities to the book of James. People were religious, proud of their frequent fasting. But God challenges them to a new kind of devotion—caring for the needy, treating workers fairly, etc. Then that will open up a whole new kind of relationship with God.

## **James 5:7-12**

James is talking a lot about patience (using the word four times in four verses). According to verse 7, what did people need to be patient about?

What analogy does James use there in verse 7?

Have you ever planted a vegetable garden? How long does it seem to take from when you first plant the seeds to when you get to bring in the first ripe vegetable and cook it up?

How does this experience compare to waiting for Jesus' return?

James says in verse 11 that those who persevere through suffering are "blessed." What does he mean by that?

Is suffering part of what it means to be human?

How does James 1:2–4 fill out your idea of the blessedness of suffering?

## **James 5:13-20**

How would you define prayer? What is it?

James 5:13–14 seems to give us a menu: For different situations, here's what to do. Let's parse that out. What situations are mentioned? What course of action is recommended for each one?

Let's say that all three courses of action are some form of prayer. How would these types of prayer differ from one another?

Why is it important to get the church leaders involved in prayer for a sick person?

Is there more value in praying with other believers than in praying by yourself?

Is verse 15 telling us that every physical illness has a spiritual cause? What's the connection between sickness and sin?

What do you say to God when you're sick? Is this a time when you ignore God, or pay more attention to Him?

Do you think verse 15 guarantees healing if the people praying are faithful enough? Have you found this to be the case? Is every sick person healed when they're properly prayed for?

The end of verse 16 has a sentence that many people know and often quote. "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." What do you think that means?

So let's ask the natural question: Who is righteous? Are we righteous? How do we become righteous? What distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous?

Why do you think "confessing your sins to each other" is so important for healing and answered prayers?

As you look at the last two verses of James, how do they connect to the rest of this chapter? Can you make any sense of it?

If we're right about the readers being like Pharisees—and take a glance at 4:11 to support that notion—how would they normally treat someone who "wanders from the truth"?