

Lessons From James

How To Handle Oppression

(Ja 5:7-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From James."
 - a. We have examined **Ja 1:1-5:6**.
 - i. Last week we noticed that some rich non-Christians were persecuting the poor Christians.
 1. **Ja 5:1-6**
 - b. This week we will see how James, inspired by God, says "How To Handle Oppression."
3. Remember the context & content of James
 - a. James is the proverbs of the N.T. because he writes concerning so many different topics all of which had one focus moving from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.
 - b. James is writing to Jews whom had become Christians that were outside of Palestine in context.
4. Thus what we find here in this section is vital for all Christian to know and understand.
 - a. How are we to handle the persecution and oppression that Satan is going to throw our way?
 - b. How can we overcome it?

I. Do Not Oppose

- A. This is found in the last section
 1. **Ja 5:4, 6** "Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth...6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you."¹
- B. Not resisting is found throughout the scriptures
 1. **Lk 6:27-30** "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back."
 2. **Ro 12:19-21** "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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3. **I Pt 2:18-23** "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"
- i. Each of these is dealing with vengeance, not protecting yourself or family.
 - ii. Why is this the case?
 - a. Because we see that God has often allowed for protection.
 1. **Ec 3:3** "A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up"
 2. **Lk 11:21** "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace."
 3. **Lk 22:35-36** "And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."
 - b. Protection is not vengeance. Vengeance desires to hurt someone else based on what they did to you, protection is defending oneself and/or family when there is no other option.
 1. Examples: 1st – Person breaks into your house and desires to hurt and/or kill you and your family. 2nd – James Bond and his encounter with the person he was studying with that landed him in the hospital but the man eventually obeyed the gospel.
- C. Not opposing is based on two things
1. An understanding that the Lord will repay.
 - i. **Ro 12:19** "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay""
 2. A willingness to let the Lord repay.
 - i. This goes against many times our first instinct which is why it is so important as Christians to change and challenge our minds to being Christ like.
 - a. **Ph 2:5** "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"

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II. Be Patient

- A. The word patient here is different than what we found earlier in James
 - 1. **Ja 1:3** uses the word "ὕπομονή" or "hy-po-mo-ne."
 - i. "Which means to bear up under trials...Which normally means to be patient in reference to THINGS or CIRCUMSTANCES" (<http://goo.gl/rpQHF>)
 - 2. **Ja 5:7** uses the word "μακροθυμέω" or "makro-thy-meo."
 - i. "Which means to suffer long...Which normally means to be patient in reference to PEOPLE (like those who oppress you)" (Ibid)
- B. Three examples are given concerning patience
 - 1. The farmer who patiently waits for the crop.
 - i. **Ja 5:7**
 - 2. The prophets who spoke patiently for God rejection after rejection.
 - i. **Ja 5:10**
 - 3. Job how patient he was with not only his circumstances but with his friends.
 - i. **Ja 5:11**
- C. Being patient is realized in two ways
 - 1. First by placing our full hope and trust in God who will reward us if not in the life the next.
 - 2. Second by controlling ourselves based on that trust in God.

III. Establish Your Hearts

- A. The word establish here has this thought behind it...
 - 1. To "strengthen, decide firmly, establish something in a firm location" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). New York: United Bible Societies.)
- B. Thus the idea here concerning establishing the heart means...
 - 1. To strengthen and establish firmly in the heart to be patient against those that persecute you.
- C. Establishing the heart in this way can only happen if we...
 - 1. Are studying God's Word to know Him and His hope.
 - i. **Ro 15:4** "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
 - 2. We can only put our full hope and trust in God if we know Him and we can only know Him if we study His Word.
 - i. **Ro 10:17** "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

IV. Do Not Complain

- A. Do not be one that complains and grumbles especially against one another
 - 1. When we are oppressed we are usually going to vent that to those closest to us.
 - i. There is nothing wrong with this if done properly.

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2. However if we take out our frustrations on those closes to us there is where the problem is found.
 - i. There is a difference between getting things off your chest so to speak and causing others problems by taking it out on them.
- B. Why is this so wrong
 1. Because James says, "so that you yourselves may not be judged" (NASB95)
 - i. The sin of grumbling and complaining is serious, it was one of the reasons the original generation out of Egyptian bondage did not enter the promise land.
 - a. **I Co 10:5, 10** "But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness...10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer."
 - ii. Don't think that alone could have kept them out?
 - a. Remember Moses did one thing wrong, he hit the rock instead of speaking to it and was not allowed to enter the promise land.
 1. **Nu 20:11-12** "Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.""
 2. The same God that will judge the rich oppressors will judge us.

V. Do Not Swear

- A. In other words do not make rash promises
 1. Remember the audience of this letter.
 - i. Jews that had converted to Christianity.
 - ii. They had long made oaths but viewed them differently ie they had different levels of required completion.
 - a. An oath made in God's name was binding and had to be done.
 - b. An oath made in man's name was not binding and did not have to be done.
 - c. An oath made in the temple's name was supposed to be fairly binding but one could find ways out of it.
 - iii. This is the idea behind what James is discussing and what Jesus discussed.
 - a. **Mt 5:37; 23:16-22**
- B. This doesn't mean one cannot make an oath ie promise
 1. When one gives their word they are making an oath. The point is that one must do what they say they are going to do. Lest they be condemned like the rich who said one thing and did another.

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VI. Pray

- A. Is anyone suffering let him pray
 - 1. **Ja 5:13a** "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray..."
- B. This is that which will help us get through persecutions
 - 1. We must start everything by studying God's Word.
 - i. If we study God's Word we will know who God is.
 - 2. We must trust God in everything.
 - i. If we know who He is it is easy to put our full trust in Him.
 - 3. We must then pray to God therefore if we are oppressed.
 - i. If we trust God we will trust what He says and communicate with Him and turn our anxieties over to Him.
 - a. **I Pt 5:6-7** "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."
- C. What we know then is this...
 - 1. When we pray God hears.
 - i. He alone is Him who can help us fully be at peace when being oppressed.
 - ii. Why, because we can do all things through Christ.
 - a. **Ph 4:13**

CONCLUSION

- 1. This life at best is difficult and at worst will cost us our lives.
 - a. Vincent Van Gogh once said, "As we advance in life it becomes more and more difficult, but in fighting the difficulties the inmost strength of the heart is developed." (<http://goo.gl/z4RF3>)
 - b. Oppression or persecution brings strength if taken on with a patient spirit. Let us all develop our hearts in righteousness with joy through difficulties.
- 2. Question: Am I taking the persecutions and oppressions as an opportunity to grow or am I grumbling and complaining about them?
- 3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**