



# International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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## Lesson 11

### James 5:7-12 Commentary New International Version

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [\*International Bible Study Commentary\*](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [\*International Bible Study Forum\*](#).

**(James 5:7) Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Love is patient" (1 Corinthians 13:4). The Apostle Peter wrote that God is patient with us (2 Peter 3:9). In the Book of Revelation, John wrote of "patient endurance" and Jesus commended Christians for their "patient endurance" (Revelation 1:9; 2:2; 2:19; 3:10). The fruit of the Holy Spirit includes patience (Galatians

5:22). Patience is a virtue that we can only practice with the help of the Holy Spirit. Christians will be challenged to be patient until Christ comes again or until they meet Christ face-to-face when their body dies. As an example, James points us to the farmer. The farmer's reaping his "precious crop" means the difference between food, clothing, and shelter for his family or starvation and the loss of his farm. The farmer does his work with faith in God, and God gives the early rains to stimulate the growth of the grain and the late rains to help the grain ripen until harvest time. The farmer has learned to be patient as he waits for God to give the growth and make his field ready for harvesting.

**(James 5:8) You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.**

As Christians living between the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ, we must learn to practice patience. We need to remind ourselves of all the Bible teaches and remain patient in prayer. Just as the Jews had to wait hundreds of years before Jesus the Messiah came into the world; so, we may need to wait hundreds of years for the Lord Jesus to return visibly. We need to remember that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit indwell us as Christians, and we are the sheep of Jesus' pasture. No one and nothing can snatch us out of Jesus' hand. Jesus reigns from heaven and He also lives near and within us; therefore, we can strengthen our hearts by remembering that Jesus is near until He visibly comes again into our

world as He promised. We can strengthen our hearts through praying, through studying and believing the Bible's teachings, and through trusting in Jesus all the time no matter what our circumstances.

**(James 5:9) Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!**

Because the Father and the Son love us, and Jesus commanded us to love one another as He loves us, we must not grumble and complain against one another (see John 13:34; 13:35; 15:12; 15:17). The New Testament never shows Jesus grumbling against His disciples, but as King of kings Jesus needed to speak truthfully to Peter when Peter tempted Him not to die for the sins of the world (see Matthew 16:23). Jesus did not grumble at Peter or anyone else. Grumbling and complaining against other Christians is a form of judging and condemning them. James pointed out what Jesus warned against in His Sermon on the Mount, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (Matthew 7:1-2). Grumbling, complaining, and judging someone are far different from helping someone live the Christian life, and God the Judge sees our motivations. Grumbling can result in the complainer suffering the discipline of the Lord, and the Judge is as near as the doors to our homes: He can hear all that is said and done in our homes, in our churches, and in the world.

**(James 5:10) Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.**

Sometimes our persecutions and sufferings have become so intense that all we can do is remain faithful and trust in Jesus until He intervenes in our behalf. That may mean praying and praising the Lord until our souls depart and we join Him in heaven. Having talked about the patience of farmers, James draws our attention to the patience of the prophets. The prophets served the Lord with their words and actions in the name of the Lord. They did not suffer for their sins but for their faithfulness to God. Because of and despite their service of God, they suffered various persecutions and death. We can think of the prophet Jeremiah as one example. Of course, Jesus suffered supremely in His service of God the Father in our behalf. Jesus and the prophets suffered and served God patiently until their work was done.

**(James 5:11) As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**

Endurance is keeping on in faith and trust in Jesus despite our circumstances. Sometimes all we can do is endure and prayerfully keep believing Jesus and His precious promises to us. Job endured suffering beyond any most

have ever experienced. Yet, Job affirmed his faith in the Lord, in the future coming of the Lord into our world, and in the resurrection of the dead (his resurrection and that of others) that the Lord would make possible. Job said, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26). Job did not know how many hundreds of years would pass before Jesus was born, but he knew and believed the promises of God. The Lord chose Job with a purpose when He allowed Satan to test him. Job passed the test by continuing to trust in God even after all his earthly possessions, even his health, had been taken from him. Then, the Lord showed His compassion and mercy by restoring Job completely and by giving Job twice what he had before. In our darkest hours, we need to remind ourselves that God is compassionate and merciful, and He proved it when He sent Jesus to live and die for us while we were still sinners. In Romans 5:8-9, the Apostle Paul wrote, “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.” Should the Lord Jesus delay His Second Coming, no matter what happens to one of Jesus’ sheep, they can say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26). Having read the New Testament, in these verses we

can substitute “glorified and resurrected bodies” for “flesh.” James would agree with John, who wrote, “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

**(James 5:12) Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.**

Next, James turned to the purity, honesty, truthfulness, and trust required of Christians. Just as many today look for legal loopholes to avoid doing what is right or obey the law as they know the lawmakers intended, some Jews did the same in Jesus’ day. Some Jews created elaborate oaths to seemingly affirm that they would do as they promised but knowing they would not. It was common knowledge that if God’s name was not included in the oath, then the one making the oath did not need to keep their promise or fulfill their contractual obligation. James, in agreement with Jesus, told Christians to tell the truth. They were to say “yes” or “no” and keep their promises. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, He said, “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is

his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:33-37). To make a promise knowing you will not keep it is basic dishonesty and untruthfulness; such an attitude comes from the evil one. Christians need to be able to trust each other, and the world needs to know they can trust Christians, because from experience people need to know that Christians are honest and truthful. Dishonest Christians put a stain upon the faith. If Christians are not honest and truthful, they will suffer the condemnation of God, the condemnation of other Christians, and the condemnation of those of this world; thus bringing dishonor to God, dishonor to the Christian faith, dishonor to the Church, and dishonor to themselves.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why are farmers good examples of being patient?
2. How can Christians strengthen their hearts?
3. How are God's prophets examples of suffering and patience?
4. With what two qualities did James describe the Lord? Why are these qualities important to you and others?

## 5. How can someone who makes oaths fall under condemnation?

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