



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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James 5:1-6 Study Hints for Discussion

1. Is it wrong to be rich? Give a reason for your answer.

No. It is wrong to defraud someone or acquire wealth by illegal or immoral means. It is wrong to love money and to love money more than you love God and your neighbor. The love of money is the foundation for all kinds of evil. A rich person should use their wealth with compassion toward others.

2. What can bring contentment to rich and poor (see 1 Timothy 6:6-8)?

For those who are rich or poor, godliness can bring contentment along with choosing to live with what you have—with the good gifts of God. Paul was content having only food and clothing, and Paul worked harder than many to support himself so he could freely share the Good News of Jesus.

3. How can a Christian rightly prepare for retirement or “the last days”?

Without loving money and riches, Christians can work hard, save a portion of what they earn, and seek to express their love for God and their neighbors by sharing what they have as the Holy Spirit leads them. They should not be like the rich man who wanted to build bigger barns, saying, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; *relax, eat, drink, be merry.*” He had selfish and self-centered goals instead of God-centered goals. If the Lord Jesus has blessed us with the ability to acquire riches, we need to ask ourselves “How can I use these gifts of God to help others come to know Jesus and help the needy, especially the widows and orphans. Remember James 1:27, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

4. What did James promise those who have been cheated?

Those who have been cheated or defrauded have the assurance that when they cry out their cries reach “the ears of the Lord of hosts.” Those who have abused them and have not repented (and have tried to make amends, if possible) will face the judgment of God here and/or hereafter (see Luke 16:19-31). Those who love God will be blessed by God here and hereafter, for God knows our needs (see Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:6, 10-12).

5. In the New Testament, how was “the righteous one” condemned and murdered by the rich and powerful? Today, to increase their riches, do some still condemn and murder those who do not resist them?

Jesus is holy, loving, and true—“the righteous one”— who was condemned by the rich and powerful who murdered Him on a cross. But Jesus died so repentant sinners could be saved from their sins and believe in Him, follow Him, and love Him. Today, some who love money and power do all sorts of evil to those who do not or cannot resist them, especially to the followers of Jesus.