



Sermos Study Guide

How To Wait – James 5:7-12

April 23 & 24, 2016

Opening Question

Can you think of a time when you were mistreated for being a follower of Christ? How did you respond?

Read Together

James 5:7-12.

Big Idea

We need to practice perseverance as we wait for Christ's return.

Discussion Questions

1. Read the first 6 verses of James chapter five. What is the context into which James writes the words that are found in verses 7 through 12? What circumstances did James' readers face that would cause him to write of their need to exercise patience?
2. What is the parallel between the farmer waiting for the harvest and our waiting for the coming of the Lord? (also see Galatians 6:9)
3. When James says in verse 8 that "the coming of the Lord is near" (or at hand), does this mean that James thought that Jesus would return in his lifetime or was wrong? (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 4:7; Romans 13:11)
4. In discussing patience, why does James insert a seemingly unconnected thought about grumbling in verse 9?
5. Why does James connect suffering in verse 10 with being patient for the Lord's return? (2 Chronicles 24:20-22; Jeremiah 26:20-23; Acts 7:51-58)
6. Since you have become a follower of Christ, in what ways have you suffered for your faith? Were you patient (long suffering) with those who persecuted you?
7. Read James 5:12 and Matthew 5:33-37. Jesus was teaching people not to make a flippant oath by anything holy. Today we hear people say, "I swear to God!" to convince others that they are telling the truth. If we are an honest person, however, people will trust us to be faithful by our word alone. Given the economic climate of mistrust among the rich and poor, James encouraged them all to be trustworthy by simply known for their yes's and no's. How is not doing what you say you're going to do unloving to others and a poor witness of your faith in God? Draw your answer from your own life experiences.

Challenge

In these verses, James teaches that there is a way to live in difficult times when others are mistreating us. He offers us a number of things we can specifically do and don't do when we are walking through tough times. As you read through James 5:7-12 one more time, how would you summarize the specific things James commands and prohibits among his readers? Which one hits closest to home for you? Which one will be most difficult for you this week?

Prayer

Pray in two directions as you close. First, pray for persecuted people around the globe who are in the same spot as these 1st century Christians. This is a huge problem today - more followers of Christ died in the 20th century because of their faith than died in the nineteen centuries previous. Read Hebrews 13:3 and then pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. Second, take time to pray for each other regarding what James 5:7-12 teaches us. Have each group member share an area of need in regard to what James commands. Then pray for one another.

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Next Steps

Go online and read the stories of some modern day people who are or have experienced what those in James 5 have experienced. Go to the website for *Voice of the Martyrs* (www.vomcanada.com) and click on "Current News."