

- □ ***As we come into the final chapter of James, he begins to deliver a section on encouragement to his church...***
 - □ *He is seeking to provide some comfort to their present sufferings...*
 - □ *Encourage them to continue with perseverance, the **Godly Living** he has laid out in the previous chapters, **despite their present circumstances...***

We really have two different audiences being addressed here:

- □ Vs. 1-6 are addressed to the wicked rich, oppressing the members of the church (non-believers). *They could be in or out of the church...*
- □ Vs. 7-11 are the encouraging words to the body, that is suffering at the hands of others.

* Just a reminder that being wealthy is not wrong – there are many scriptural examples of Godly people with loads of cash...

What the problem is, is that we can take a good thing, a blessing from God and make a toxic idol out of it:

*The first is that money is dangerous. It's not bad; it's dangerous. Money is dangerous. It's not a bad thing to have money. Think of money like fire. **Fire can keep you warm. It can cook food. It can also burn everything to the ground. Money is dangerous. It's so dangerous because the heart is deceptive. If you, in your deceptive heart, play around with the dangers of money and end up loving money, it's deadly.***

“Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you*! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. 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. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. **Vs. 1-6**

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.” **Vs. 7-11**

James 5:1-11, NKJV.

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James 5:1-3

- □ These remarks are addressed to wicked non-Christians... whether or not they attend the church in Jerusalem, by their fruit they are showing they do not love Jesus, or love their neighbors...
 - □ ***This section of text is sandwiched in between addresses to “my brethren”...***
- □ These are people who have made their hope in their wealth and power here on earth, rather than in God...
 - □ ““Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **Matthew 6:19-21 – Jesus**
- □ Paul in **Romans 2:5**, shares the same sentiments that James writes about those whose focus is wealth and riches, have stored up a treasure of wrath against themselves...
 - □ They have made their god their wallet, because they would rather trust in themselves and what they can provide for themselves...

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- □ Here James provides the natural response and path for those who love their wealth and power and position, that they would make a god out of it...
 - □ These are individuals who have turned a potential tool into a weapon against their own soul...
 - □ *This is not righteous behavior, but no one starts out trying to have everything at any cost, or ripping people off, or spending everything they can find on temporary pleasure...It always begins with small steps...*
 - □ Just like any other sin, the sin of loving money begins with us foolishly thinking we can maintain control over it...
- □ ***James and Jesus both have very strong warnings about money, because even the most sold out, Jesus loving Christians can get off track when it comes to money...***
 - □ **To those that have, even though they possess much, there will always be that desire for more... Fidelity study...**
 - □ You and I are by nature, being made in the image of God, eternal beings. We will live forever either in an ever-expanding experience of God's glory and grace or an ever-expanding experience of the right, just wrath of God for our glad rebellion against him.
 - □ We are eternal, so the temporary can never satisfy, which is why we're never ultimately satisfied. We always want a little bit more, and we always feel like if we just get a little bit more, we'll finally be satisfied, and we get on that treadmill, and we spend most of our days chasing after what we already have, thinking a little bit more of it is going to finally grant us peace.

John Piper: “Don’t waste your life”

Here's what he said. *“I am wired by nature to love the same toys the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call Earth home, and before you know it, I'm calling luxuries needs, and I'm using my money just the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don't think much about*

people perishing. Missions and unreached people drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mindset that looks first at what man can do, not at what God can do. It is a terrible sickness, and I thank God for those who have forced me again and again toward a wartime mindset."

So what is the solution to keeping money from becoming your idol?....

1.) Contentment 2.) Patient Endurance

"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." **James 5:7, 8**

- **Now the direct context of this passage is being patient while enduring injustice at the hands of the wealthy wicked, who are robbing them...**
- *But we can just as easily look here, and see that God values patience in general...*
 - A good portion of the issues that money creates is the desire to have something NOW. Even if I cannot afford it now, I need it, I must have it, now...
 - **So if I MUST HAVE THIS, but cannot, I begin to do whatever it takes, so I can obtain this thing...**Echo back to James 4 –
 - "Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures." **James 4:1-3, NKJV.**
- *When James says to "Establish your hearts" – he is saying to put and keep our trust in the only place where it will not fail us – in Jesus...*
- Let me bring this back around again to the idea that we as Christians are to be **ETERNALLY MINDED**. It's not a sin to think about or take care of things in the here and now, but like Piper's quote says- *Our job is to be focused on the things of God first and foremost...*

"Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful." **James 5:9-11**

- **The next thing we could say here is that contentment for what we do have, what God has gifted us with – is a way to reduce or prevent conflict.**
 - Grumbling, complaining, etc, is evidence that we are not content with what God has chose to bless us with...
 - **James uses the example of the prophets – Men of God who were so eternally minded, that they were willing to serve the Lord at any cost. Death or threats of harm could not hold them back from Speaking what God told them...**
 - *They didn't seek to do the will of God, just so that He would in turn bless them – most of these dudes died horrific deaths at the hand of Israel – had absolutely nothing, yet are to be our models...Because they patiently endured, they were*

stewards of the time God had given them, as well as the gifts God blessed them with...

- ***They were absolutely sold out to the mission of God... They were content with what God had prepared for them...***

Here's what actually happens, our money and how we spend it and how we feel about it and how we think about it....

You can say whatever you want to say with your mouth, and you can live however you want to live with your life, but Jesus says, "You want to know what's going on in your heart? Look at your bank statement." **This is not a way for *other* people to judge but rather for *you* to judge.**

- The whole basis of the gospel is rooted in the generosity of God. [Romans 1](#) says this is something all of us are guilty of. Everyone in this room has preferred creation to the Creator. "Forget you, God. I just want your stuff. I just want your toys. I don't necessarily want you." We're all guilty of that.
- **God's response to that is generosity. He sends. Jesus comes. He dies on the cross, absorbing God's wrath toward those of us who would believe and then grants us, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.** The gospel in and of itself is the generosity of God flowing out of the Godhead
- It is my sincere hope, that we would all become a people of God marked by such generosity. When we understand and experience how generous God was with us – **it should lead to the response of radical generosity to others...**
 - We don't give in order to get more, we don't give because of compulsion or guilt... **We give because Jesus gave everything...**

Regardless of what your zeal is and passion is in life... Maybe you want to see the sex trade shut down. Maybe you want to see kids educated and fed. It gets solved when there is a gospel-preaching, Jesus-loving church planted in a community that understands the missional call of God on their lives.

Oh that we might be an open-handed, generous group of men and women, enflamed with the zeal for the gospel. This is the great drama you've been called into. Or you can just keep collecting the stuff of future garage sales. That's a good option. I want to sacrifice, and I want to risk my life, and I want to see the kingdom come and his will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Let's pray.