

### Holy Endurance

1. What motivates you to complete a long term project or a difficult goal?

**Prepare Your Heart:** Lord Jesus, remove all the worldly distractions from my mind. Give me a desire to drink deeply from your Word.

In the opening paragraphs of his letter James addresses one of the most fundamental issues that face all Christians—the way in which we handle those difficult times that threaten to destroy our faith. James turns his attention now to specific elements that condition our spiritual growth and development.

2. a. **Read** James 1:1-8 to recap and continue reading through verse 12, focusing on the overall context of James 1:1-12. *Reading without knowing the context is like listening to one part of someone else's conversation—we may only understand a portion of it.*  
b. **Reread** and ponder James' paradoxical statements in 1:9-10. What relationship do you see between trials and perseverance and James' discussion of rich and poor Christians?
3. Explain what James means when he refers to the "high position" of the brother in humble circumstances (James 1:9; 2:5). See also 1 Peter 1:3-4.
4. In what "low position" should the rich believer take pride (verse 10)?

**Read** and reflect on James 1:11—the vivid picture that illuminates the truth in verse 10. (The “scorching wind” (NASB) may refer to the *sirocco*, a devastating hot wind that blows into Palestine from the southern desert at hurricane speeds. This would have been a very familiar picture to James’ first readers.)

5. a. Look for and mark each verb that applies to flowers and plants. Then summarize what James is teaching the rich believer (and us) through this powerful imagery.

b. How does this vivid illustration speak to you personally? To your lifestyle? Your attitudes? Your concept of reality?

c. How can you specifically apply the insights God has given you?

6. In what ways can riches and poverty both be trials that bring perseverance and maturity? Provide examples.

Recall the prayer of Proverbs 30:8-9:

*Give me neither poverty nor riches,  
but give me only my daily bread.  
Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you  
and say, "Who is the Lord?"  
Or I may become poor and steal,  
and so dishonor the name of my God.*

In the early church there were both wealthy and poor Christians, but the vast majority of believers were in the lower economic stratum. Testing has a way of leveling the rich and the poor. It helps all of us to get our focus on the right things—namely eternal things.

James concludes his discussion of the testing of faith by returning to the thought with which he began his letter. **Reread** James 1:2-4; compare with James 1:12.

7. What word sums up what we are supposed to do when difficulties don't let up (verse 12)? Look this word up in a dictionary.

The Greek word for *persevere* points to the idea of "remaining under." The picture is of a person successfully carrying a heavy load for a long time.

8. Has there been a time in your life when you patiently endured a difficult situation and later realized that your faith had become stronger through the process? Explain.

In verse 12 James reminds his readers that there is an endpoint to this time that will be far more glorious than we can imagine in our present circumstances.

9. What beautiful promise is given to the one who perseveres and stands firm under testing? State it simply in your own words.

*The Greek form of "crown" was the term used to describe not the metal crown but a laurel wreath that was set on the head of a victorious athlete or military leader in ancient Greek times.*

10. What spiritual reality is being depicted for the believer through this metaphorical crown? Consider also Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8 and 1 Peter 1:3-9.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. How can the truth of James 1:12 help you move from troubles to triumph this week in the situations that you are facing?

**For Thought and Discussion**

12. Do you think James is saying that perseverance is rewarded with salvation or that perseverance provides evidence that salvation is genuine? Explain your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Compare James 1:2 and 1:12 once more. How does verse 12 clarify the entire premise underlying verse 2 and show God faithful to His promises?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. How will the truths found in James 1:1-12 continue to affect your perception of every circumstance of life?

*This week pray God will work in you a "holy endurance" that reflects the heart of the Savior.*