



COMMUNITY **DISCUSSION**
gr:ups **GUIDE**



SERMON PASSAGE: James 5:7-11



REVIEW THE SERMON

1. Read the prep verses (Psalm 62:5-7) and the sermon's Bible passage to recall the content
 2. Briefly review the sermon outline
 - a. Introduction
 - i. Hebrews 12:1
 - ii. Patience=active trust in God as we wait on Him
 - b. Why patience (vv. 7-8)
 - i. The Second Coming of Christ
 1. Keep the big picture in mind rather than focusing on the present
 - ii. 2 Peter 3:3-9
 - iii. 2 Corinthians 2:20
 - c. What patience does not look like
 - i. Grumbling
 - ii. Discontent
 - d. What patience looks like (vv. 7-11)
 - i. Example 1 – the farmer
 - ii. Example 2 – the prophets
 - iii. Example 3- Job
 - e. What patience produces (v. 11)
 - i. Builds our faith
 - ii. Builds our testimony
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DIGGING DEEPER

1. Patience and Passion

If you have not read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* you need to. This Christian allegory was written in a Paul-esque manner (i.e., while Bunyan was in prison) and is one of the most significant pieces of religious, theological fiction we have in literature. The book is available in original Old English as well as in contemporary modern English (and in hundreds of languages) and an abridged children's version exists.

Read the portion of *Pilgrim's Progress* that is placed in this study guide's Appendix. It will help us dig deeper into James 5:7-11.

The main character, Christian, is confronted with several lessons in the House of the Interpreter (you guessed it, the House of the Holy Spirit). Who are the two children that Christian observes?

- _____ and
- _____

The children are sitting in chairs and are told to wait for the best things to come in about a year. Christian is able to observe the children's reactions.

Who is restless and discontent and does not want to wait? _____

Who is calm and quiet and trusts that the best things will come? _____

Someone drops a bag of treasure in the room and Passion¹ instantly jumps out of the chair and gathers the treasure, scorning Patience who calmly sits in his chair. Passion quickly lavishes all the treasure away and is left with nothing but rags. Patience is not hasty or impetuous; he waits for the good that is promised. In the dialogue, Christian learns that Passion represents men of this world, whereas Patience represents men who wait for Jesus and His glory. He learns of the distinction between the temporal and the eternal perspective.

This is the main point of James 5:7-11! We live with an _____ perspective when we have patience.

¹ Passion is a word with many contemporary meanings. Passion here does not personify "an intense, driving feeling on conviction." Rather, passion refers to "a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept." That is, a deep affection or desire for the things of this world (i.e., fame, power, money, things, self, etc.).

The eternal perspective is of Jesus' second coming ("the coming of the Lord," James 5:7,8), arriving in His glory and coming back for believers. Despite the trials and tribulations (the context of James' passage) the best is really yet to come, punctuated by Jesus' second coming.

It appears that John Bunyan knew his biblical Greek when writing *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Greek word for patience in James is *markothumeo* [mak-roth-oo-meh'-o] and it is a compound word from *makros* [mak-ros'] (long, far distant) and *thumos* [thoo-mos'] (passion). Hence, one child is Passion and the other is "far distant passion," or Patience.

We have a choice – to exhibit the fruit of the world (passion) or the fruit of the Spirit (patience).

Complete this table:

	PASSION (WORLD)	PATIENCE (SPIRIT)
Perspective	_____	Eternal
Believes best things are	Now	_____
Treasures	Fleeting and fragile	_____
Believes who is in control	_____	God
Promises are	Empty	_____
Powered by	_____	Holy Spirit
Reward	Judgment	_____

Reflect on this table as you think about the three examples that James presents in 5:7-11, namely the farmer, prophets, and Job.

2. How Do We Apply Patience to Our Life?

Patience is one of those attributes that is often times difficult to develop application for. What is the application for patience? Well, it is to be...uh...patient...to wait. That's not very helpful is it?

The reason why patience is often difficult to apply is that we have a skewed view of patience. Culture tells us that patience is passive waiting. This is NOT what biblical patience is. Biblical patience is active patience.

What's the difference? Let's use James' example of the farmer (v. 7):

- Passive patience: The farmer plants his seed and then does nothing. If it rains enough and if the ground has enough nutrients, then he will have a successful crop, and his inactivity will have paid off. If it doesn't rain enough or the ground doesn't have the right nutrients, then he will have a poor crop.
- Active patience: The farmer plants his seed and calmly waits for the early and late rains. He will, however, remain active. He will monitor rainfall and the nutrients in the ground, he will weed and remove pests, he will use the time to increase his horticulture knowledge and to plan the next crops, and if needed, he will fertilize and irrigate with rain water stored from the previous rains provided.

Do you see the difference? Biblical patience is active.

James 5:7-11 reminds us to be patient for the second coming of Jesus in the midst of trials and tribulation. But this patience is an active waiting. We are not to just sit on a log and passively wait for Jesus. It is not fatalistic resignation.

Read these verses and see what we are supposed to be doing (i.e., application) in the midst of actively waiting for Christ's return:

- Matthew 28:18-20 _____
- Acts 1:8 _____
- Acts 2:42 _____
- 2 Peter 3:11-14 _____
- Matthew 25:1-13 _____

- Matthew 25:14-30 (and note the inactive, passive talent!) _____
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We've all seen the motivational poster produced by the British government in 1939 to prepare for World War II – "Keep calm and carry on." For once at least, culture is correct theologically! In the midst of trial and tribulation, we are to keep calm (patience) and carry on (active patience). We are to calmly keep our eternal perspective and continue to grow spiritually, disciple, evangelize, be the church, expand God's kingdom, etc. until Jesus returns.

So, here's your application: Keep calm and carry on Christian until Jesus returns.

See you here, there, on in the air...



PRAYER

1. Praise God that His Spirit resides in us and empowers our patience.
 2. Praise God that Jesus IS coming back!
 3. Pray that we will exhibit active rather than inactive patience. Pray that God shows you how He wants you to "carry on."
 4. Repent of passions of this world that distract you from the patience of God. May we desire for His eternal good for us rather than the fickle trappings of this world.
 5. Pray that Living Hope Bryan has the mark of patience – expecting the second coming of Jesus with joyful anticipation and simultaneously actively being the church while we wait.
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APPENDIX – Portion of *Pilgrim's Progress*²

“...I saw moreover in my dream, that the Interpreter took him by the hand, and had him into a little room, where sat two little children, each one in his chair. The name of the eldest was Passion, and the name of the other Patience. Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet. Then Christian asked, “What is the reason of the discontent of Passion?” The Interpreter answered, “The governor of them would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of the next year, but he will have all now; but Patience is willing to wait.”

Then I saw that one came to Passion, and brought him a bag of treasure, and poured it down at his feet: the which he took up, and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld but a while, and he had lavished all away, and had nothing left him but rags.

Christian: Then said Christian to the Interpreter, Expound this matter more fully to me.

Interpreter: So he said, These two lads are figures; Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of that which is to come; for, as here thou seest, passion will have all now, this year, that is to say, in this world; so are the men of this world: They must have all their good things now; they cannot stay till the next year, that is, until the next world, for their portion of good. That proverb, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” is of more authority with them than are all the divine testimonies of the good of the world to come. But as thou sawest that he had quickly lavished all away, and had presently left him nothing but rags, so will it be with all such men at the end of this world.

Christian: Then said Christian, Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that upon many accounts. 1. Because he stays for the best things. 2. And also because he will have the glory of his, when the other has nothing but rags.

Interpreter: Nay, you may add another, to wit, the glory of the next world will never wear out; but these are suddenly gone. Therefore Passion had not so much reason to laugh at Patience because he had his good things first, as Patience will have to laugh at Passion because he had his best things last; for first must give place to last, because last must have his time to come: but last gives place to nothing, for there is not another to succeed. He, therefore, that hath his portion first, must needs have a time to spend it; but he that hath his portion last, must have it lastingly: therefore it is said of Dives, “In thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” Luke 16:25.

Christian: Then I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come.

² Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, taken from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <https://ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim/pilgrim>.

Interpreter: You say truth: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18. But though this be so, yet since things present and our fleshly appetite are such near neighbors one to another; and again, because things to come and carnal sense are such strangers one to another; therefore it is, that the first of these so suddenly fall into amity, and that distance is so continued between the second...”