

James 4:13-5:20

I. Introduction

A. The book of James is filled with practical instruction for daily Christian living. Notice some specific instruction given in the fourth and fifth chapters of the book.

II. “If the Lord Wills”

- A. At the end of the fourth chapter, James rebukes those who treat future days on earth and accomplishment of earthly pursuits as *guaranteed*. **James 4:13**
- B. In response to this presumptuous attitude, James stresses the uncertainty and brevity of life. **James 4:14**
- C. Instead of boastfully proclaiming our *own* plans for the future, we ought to plan our lives in consideration of (1) God’s revealed will and (2) the uncertainty each of us has regarding temporal circumstances. **James 4:15-16**
- D. The brevity of life is among the things that should motivate us to submit to what *is* in accordance with God’s will. This includes refraining from what He forbids, but it also involves zealously *pursuing* what He *commands*. **James 4:17**

III. Turning of the Tables

- A. James next turns the focus to earthly riches. He rebukes the rich who acquire possessions unjustly and/or have sinful attitudes toward possessions. While those who are rich and ungodly may appear successful while on earth, the tables will be turned. We cannot take earthly possessions with us when we leave this earth, and ultimately, such possessions will all be burned up. **James 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 6:7; 2 Peter 3:10**
- B. James’ focus is not on condemning riches in themselves, but he condemns unjust acquiring of riches, such as getting things by oppression. He also shows the folly of the materialistic mindset that lusts after riches. **James 5:4-6; 1 Timothy 6:9-10**

IV. “Be Patient”

A. After assuring that those who are rich and ungodly will have the tables turned on them, the inspired writer looks to the other side of the coin: the ultimate comfort that will come to God’s faithful children who are suffering. James stresses the need to *endure*. **James 5:7-11; Job 42:12-13**

V. “Let Your Yea Be Yea”

A. The Holy Spirit through James next turns the focus to the problem of swearing. Instead of making a distinction between times to speak with honesty and integrity and times to not do so, James stresses the need to speak with honesty and integrity *all the time*. **James 5:12**

VI. The Power of Prayer

- A. James next exhorts those who are suffering to *pray*. **James 5:13; Philippians 4:6-7**
- B. He also shows the value of praying for those who are physically sick. While part of what he says appears to refer to miraculous gifts given prior to the complete revelation of God’s Word, the importance of prayer is still seen. **James 5:14-15**
- C. The power of prayer is further established by showing the value of Christians praying for one another when struggling with *spiritual* sicknesses. **James 5:16-18**

VII. Rescue the Perishing

A. The final point taught in the book of James is the importance of doing what we can to rescue the wandering sinner. Leading an erring Christian (or non-Christian) to the truth is an act of love that saves that person from (spiritual) death. **James 5:19-20**

VIII. Conclusion

A. May we heed these truths from the book of James.