

Lesson 9 Perseverance

James 5:7-9 “Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

V8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. **V9** Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door

1 Thessalonians 5:2,3,5-7,9-10 “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **V3** While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, **V5** You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. **V6** So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. **V7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. **V9** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. **V10** *He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.*

Revelation 21:4 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” *The tragic effects of sin on the present world will be absent. A total reversal of the curses when they entered history.*

Deuteronomy 11:13-14 “So if you faithfully obey the commands, I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—**v14** then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil.” *Yahweh’s promise was conditioned on the people’s obedience and dedication to the Lord. If they turned their hearts from Him, He stops the rain.*

1 Kings 17:1 “Now Elijah the Tishbite said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.”

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 “What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. **V6** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. **V7** So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. **V8** The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor **V9** for we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” *To elevate, Paul or Apollos as the center of their faith was wrong. These men were instruments of the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! **V8** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; **v19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **V20** We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

Lesson 9 Perseverance James 5:7-9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Those who persevere to the end will receive eternal life with Jesus in His kingdom.

1) We can be patient through suffering because one day Jesus will come back.

A) What the people of Israel expected when the Messiah came was that He would fight their enemies, be victorious, and usher in the kingdom of God. But the OT prophets also spoke of the

B) Messiah as a suffering servant who would _____ for His people (**Isaiah 53**).

C) God's plan for the Messiah was to come in two different ways at two different times in history. The first is in the _____ for us—2000 years ago when Jesus came in first-century Israel.

The Second Coming is in our _____ and we do not know the date or time it will happen.

The Israeli people suffered greatly being persecuted for their faith, also social and spiritual conflict. James encourages them to be patient through the _____ times and hold on to the promise that Jesus is coming back to make all things new. He will punish the wicked and declare innocent the righteous. There would be no more suffering, sickness or pain (**Revelation 21:4**). James compared it to the farmer who must wait through the rains to finally see the fruit of the harvest. God promised to provide these rains if His people were _____ to Him (**Deuteronomy 11:13-14**). The drought, or lack of rain, was seen as judgment on them (**1Kings 17**).

We as believers must trust that the Lord will do what He promised and wait patiently. We don't just sit around and wait. Like the farmer who plants, waters, and fertilizes his crop, though he knows only God can produce the growth (**1Corinthians 3:5-9**). While we wait, we should do what we can to build the kingdom of God here on earth, to draw people to Him and bring the ministry of reconciliation, (harmony) to the world (**2 Corinthians 5:17-20**). We also must trust Jesus will come again at just the right time.

2) It is possible to endure much suffering but remain faithful to God. Job 1: 20-22

Q: How did Job remain faithful to God during his suffering? Job was a righteous man. He was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. Even made daily sacrifices on behalf of his children just in case they had sinned and didn't realize it. He was also very wealthy. Satan came to God and told Him that Job only honored God because God had blessed him and he never had any trials in his life. God agreed to allow Satan to attack him, trusting Job to remain faithful to Him no matter the circumstances, which he did. Job lost everything he had, including his children. Job responded "The Lord gave and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (**Job 1:21**). What incredible faith!!

Job trusted that God was in control and had a plan for his life, and if he were going through something difficult, it was God molding him into who God wanted him to be. God does not cause sickness or suffering (**James 1:13**). It is a natural part of life in a fallen world.

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Romans 5:3-5 “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **v4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **V5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy spirit, who has been given to us.” It is natural to glory in what is positive, but not in sufferings and tribulations. Perseverance means to stay under pressure. Suffering teaches believers to stay under the pressure resulting from the conflict of faith and its benefits vs a fallen world (Satan).

Revelation 2:7,11,17,26 “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, *I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.* **V11** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious *will not be hurt at all by the second death.* **V17** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, *I will give some of the hidden manna.* I will also give that person a *white stone with a new name written on it*, known only to the one who receives it. **V26** To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, *I will give authority over the nations.*”

Romans 8:17 “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” *The biblical idea of heir implies possession in part here and now, with the promise of complete possession in the future.*

Romans 8:28-29 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **V29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

James 5:10-12 “Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **V11** As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. **V12** Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.” *The prophets suffered as did Job, not because they did anything wrong, but because they were doing right. Oath taking was abused. It was practiced as a form of profanity, and the rabbis used it to exert control over their followers.*

James 3:2,5,8 “We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. **V5** Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. **V6** The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. **V8** But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” **No taming the tongue w/o God!**

Lesson 9 Perseverance James 5:10-11; Romans 5:3-5, 8:17, 28-29

God is able to redeem suffering for our good. Suffering produces endurance and perseverance which in turn builds character (**Romans 5:3-5**) so that we do not become entitled and self-centered, where we think that we deserve to have everything handed to us. Character produces hope, that hope in the future coming of Christ, when He will make all things new. In **Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26** Jesus told all those who persevered and overcame the struggles of this world that they would receive everlasting life and blessing in His kingdom. The same is true for believers today. **Romans 8:17** promises that if we suffer with Christ, we will be glorified with Him. No matter what you are going through, God can redeem it for your good (**Romans 8:28-29**) No matter how hard things are, you can remain faithful to God when you put your trust in Him and remember that God is God and you are not. Those who persevere are blessed (**James 5:10-11**)

Q: In suffering you have experienced, how have you seen God work it for your good, to build endurance and spiritual strength in you?

3) Godly people don't need to swear by anything; their word alone is trustworthy. James 5:12

In the ancient world, oaths (pledge or promise) were a common practice used to bind (tie up, secure) agreements. Swearing by something greater than you, a god, on your mother's grave, etc. was intended to add importance or significance to your words. This was done when the other person didn't trust you would later keep your promise. God's people were taught to keep the oaths they made to Him because He is holy and they didn't want to dishonor Him. Jesus warned against making oaths in the first place (**James 5:12**). Some distorted this saying that as long as you didn't use God's name in the oath, you were free to break it (**Leviticus 19:12**). *This defeated the purpose of an oath.* The law was meant to make you more honest, but it was used to get away with being dishonest and did not encourage truthfulness but let people know they could get away with lying and deception. *The opposite of the purpose of oath-taking and the character of God, who is truth.* Keeping your word is part of perseverance, steadfastness, and faithfulness. How can you grow in trustworthiness so others will trust you to do what you say?

4) A heart full of God's love will speak truth, love and blessing. The tongue is a small thing, but it can cause major damage or major healing. James 3:2-9 and Proverbs 18:21

This Scripture says we ___stumble in many ways—not one of us is perfect, even our teachers and church leaders. The word "stumble" gives us the picture of our walking along the right path, but occasionally tripping and falling. This is not willful disobedience or intentionally living in habitual sin. It's being honest about the fact that all of us, even those committed to following Jesus down the narrow path, make mistakes sometimes. James (**1:26**) said anyone who thinks he is religious but doesn't bridle his _____ is deceiving himself. His religion is worthless. No human being can tame the tongue—it's impossible (**3:8**).

Lesson 9 Perseverance and the Tongue

Proverbs 18:21 "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Words have power. What a person says will often return to him or her in some way, adding to his or her life or subtracting from it. Our speech has consequences.

James 1:19 "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Christians must concentrate their attention (quick to listen) control their tongues (slow to speak); contain their anger (slow to become angry); and cleanse their lives of sin (get rid of all moral filth and...evil). These do not promote the work of God's righteousness.

James 3:9-12 "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. **V10** Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. **V11** Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? **v12** My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water." The human tongue is inconsistent and hypocritical: one moment it blesses God, and the next moment it curses those made in His likeness. Having the tongue produce both praise and cursing is incompatible.

Ephesians 4:25-32 "Therefore each of you must put off false-hood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **V26** In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **v27** and do not give the devil a foothold. **V28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. **V29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **V30** And do not grieve the Holy spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **V31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **V32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other." A Christian's uniqueness in the world should be obvious in his or her morality, mood, money, speech, and manners.

Matthew 12:33-37 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. **V34** You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. **V35** A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. **v36** but I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. **V37** for by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." What the heart is full of refers to the core nature of a person that ultimately surfaces. Those in the crowd who attributed exorcisms to the power of Satan had corrupt hearts and therefore could not speak good things or say anything truthful.

Lesson 9 Perseverance and the Tongue

We still are all called to do our best to bridle our tongue, not because it's the religious thing to do, but because of the damage it causes when we don't! We may think a small bit of gossip isn't a big deal, but gossip spreads like wildfire. It can get out of control so fast, and grow bigger and bigger each time it is repeated.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that the power of life and death are in the tongue. We can either speak life and healing over people or damage and death. We may think the negative or sarcastic comment we made wasn't a big deal, but we don't know the damage it could have caused. In the same way, we might not realize just how much healing, joy, confidence, and self-worth a small positive comment can bring to someone's life.

The tongue is so hard to control that if we can learn to control our lying, crude jokes, and unkind comments we will be able to control worry, lust, anger, etc. **THIS IS NOT DONE BY OUR OWN POWER**, by trying harder. Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit. It's something the Spirit grows in your life as you walk with Him and abide in Christ. No human being can control his tongue, but the Spirit can. The key to self-control is abiding in Christ.

Q: What are some ways to tell that you are taming your tongue? James 1:19 Based on your words the past week or so, what's in your heart?

5) Only blessings should come from the mouths of believers.

James 3:9-12, Ephesians 4:25-32; Matthew 12:33-37 What do our words reveal about us?

Those who have the Holy Spirit living inside them should only speak kindness and love because the *Holy Spirit is only kindness and love*. Yet, we have both the Spirit and the flesh battling against each other inside our hearts (**Romans 7:17-23**), so sometimes we speak blessing and sometimes we speak curses. We do not always do what we should do. *Jesus said that our mouths speak what is in our hearts*. To control what comes out of our mouths we must focus on our hearts—filling them with the love of God. **Then we love others as God does. We will speak the way Jesus did. Building other people up with grace, love, kindness, truth and blessing.**

James said our mouths are a "restless evil", meaning unstable and inconsistent. With our mouths we bless God and curse people, who are made in the image of God. Thus, cursing God Himself in doing this. We praise God in church and then gossip about the person in the next pew after the service is over. We attack those we disagree with in social media with ridicule and condemnation. *We speak of entire groups of people with disdain (scorn, contempt)*. It might be a cultural group, an ethnic group, a political group, a religion or denomination, opposing team. There are ways to disagree with someone respectfully. Done right, it is a healing, positive, growth experience, not a negative experience. Every word should build others up, not tear them down. And seasoned with grace (Colossians 4:6) Our words should come from a heart of love and humble desire to help others grow to be more like Jesus, no other motivation!