



5.15.11/James 5:7-12

Materials Needed

None!

Read James 5:7-12

“Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider 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. Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.” (NIV)

Discussion:

Have you ever helped your mom or dad bake a cake before? Sometimes it seems easier to go buy a cake from the grocery store, but have you ever noticed how much tastier mom or dad's cake is? When I think about all the ingredients you need to make a cake, sometimes I wonder how it ends up tasting so good. There's flour, which is really dry and powdery, there are raw eggs... gross. You have to add things like baking powder and baking soda... also disgusting... and mix it all together. It can seem like the whole process is taking forever, but when that cake starts to bake and the yummy smells fill the kitchen, you can tell it will be worth it. And then when it comes out of the oven and you can finally have a taste, you're really glad you kept with it. In today's passage, James teaches us the importance of patience and persevering and why it is beneficial in our walk with Jesus.

Questions:

1. James says that one sign of our impatience comes out when we grumble against each other. Grumbling indicates that there is some anger underneath our words. You can even hear it in the word: “Grrrrrr-umbling!” Why do you think grumbling is a clear sign that we are not being patient in our life? *When we get frustrated with our circumstances or a certain situation and we're not patient, it's usually because we don't have control over what's going on. Maybe a friend is annoying us or you have to wait on your little brother or sister to wake up from a nap before you can go to the park and play. We tend to grumble or get angry when we can't control a situation and we lose sight of who is ALWAYS in control: God!*

2. Today's passage has two GREAT examples of why “we consider blessed those who have persevered.” In other words, how does the Lord bless those who are patient? The first example is of the farmer. How does he show patience and what is His blessing? *Like anyone who gardens, you have to plant seeds, water them, fertilize them, water them some more and wait, wait, wait! But after all of the waiting, he gets a “valuable crop.”* The second example is of the Old Testament prophets. There are many we can name, but James specifically mentions Job. If you're not familiar with the book of Job, have your parents read it to you this week. Job had some really awful things happen to him! He was once a very rich man but then he lost all his possessions, all of his children, and on top of all of that he got severely sick. But through all of those difficult trials, Job was faithful to God and never became impatient with his circumstances. Because of Job's faithfulness and patience, God blessed him tremendously with two times the number of animals than before and many more children in his family. What can we learn from Job about suffering or pain? *That all suffering is temporary. It won't last! God will bless you if you are patient, and even if our whole lives on Earth are difficult, if we believe in Jesus Christ, we will spend eternity with Him where there will be NO pain and NO suffering, forever and ever!*



3. In the last verse of today's passage, James says that we should not swear. "Not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no." James is not talking about profanity or bad language. He is telling us that we should not swear to do things, we should just do them. Why is it important to remember this? *Because no matter how hard we try, we can't control outcomes – we can't be certain that what we swear to do will actually take place. Instead, we should be patient and trust the Lord in all things. We can make plans and tell people yes and no, but ultimately, God is in control of all outcomes. When we swear, we are saying we have control that we don't really have. It shouldn't be necessary to say we "swear to do so and so..." We should be able to be honest and accountable for the things we say to people.*

4. Many times in today's passage we see mention of "the coming of the Lord." Just as Jesus walked on earth with humans over 2000 years ago, He will come back again! In this passage, He is referred to as "the Judge" because the next time He comes back, it will be to judge who has decided to follow Him to dedicate their lives to glorifying God and who has turned away from Him to pursue their own selfish desires. This requires a great deal of patience because nobody knows when Jesus will come back. But we can be sure of this: that He is full of compassion and mercy. How can we be patient as we wait for Jesus to come back? *We can spend time praying to God. We can love our families, friends and neighbors. We can let the Holy Spirit continue to change us to be more LIKE Jesus. We can do all of these things, even when they're hard... and even when we're tired... and even when we just don't want to... because we know that God blesses those who persevere!*

Reflection/Prayer

Pray together with your group that the Holy Spirit would allow patience to grow in your lives. Remember that the kind of blessing that God promises to those who persevere are not things like money or toys or games. The blessings God promises us are things that help us to know Him better and to love Him more. Ask your parents to tell you more about Job this week. And thank God for first having patience with us even when we are not loving with each other or towards Him. If you're not sure what it means to follow Jesus, please make sure to ask your parents this as well!