

Growing Towards Christian Maturity

Lessons learned from the book of James

Lesson One: Maturity Comes Through Working Out Your Patience in the Midst of Trials

A person once wisely said, “A woman who walks with God always arrives at her destination.” And maturity is the destination that God desires all Christian to successfully reach.

Please turn with me to the book of James and let’s read together the first 4 verses.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.”

Who was James? Some say he is our Lord’s brother, and some say that he was a cousin to our Lord.

Who was he writing to? He was writing to Jews that had become Christians, who had been scattered (probably) because of persecution sake.

What was the main theme of the book of James? Practical religion that manifests itself in a life filled with good works, rather than merely a profession of faith.

It is good for us to realize that Christianity is a religion of the spirit, and therefore the kind of good works that identify the maturity of a Christian are those that require God to work through our spirits. Keep in mind that our spirit is the part of us that is the seat of our emotions.

Today we are going to begin to study the first of ten character traits of maturity Christianity.

JOY AND PATIENCE IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

1. ***“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;”***

Definitions of words:

divers: various in character

temptations: adversities such as affliction, persecution, sickness, poverty, experiences of evil

Things God wants us to understand:

1. Divers temptations are allowed into our lives as a means to grow us stronger spiritually
2. They are always used as a means of exposing the authenticity of our faith
3. It is good for us to have the reality of our religion tested from time to time

2. ***“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”***

Definitions of words:

trying: testing, trial

worketh: accomplish, to finish, to work out

patience: endurance, continuance in waiting

Things God wants us to understand:

1. The trying of our faith is to work our patience, NOT our passions
2. Patience that is “worked out” becomes strong and leads it’s owner towards experience and then hope

3. ***“But let patience have her perfect work,”***

Definitions of words:

let: (present active imperative) let it keep on having

perfect: complete, to cause you to become completely grown and mature

Things God wants us to understand:

1. Afflictions of all sort are the instruments that God uses to polish and refine us
2. We should do everything we can to keep our passions from hindering our patience from doing its perfect work
3. If we don't allow our patience to be worked during times of diverse temptations, our spiritual growth will be stunted

4. ***“That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”***

Definitions of words:

entire: complete, perfectly sound in being

Things God wants us to understand:

1. Handling our trials and tribulations with patience (rather than passion) produces the good fruit of good character which makes is evident in our mature in responses and feelings.
2. Mature Christians bring glory and honor to God because they are “living epistles” of the authenticity of His Word. They remind the world around them that God's Word works!

As we close, I just want to emphasize the value of trials on our lives. They are what God uses to strengthen our patience, which in turn strengthens our faith, which in time brings about the beautiful fruit of contentment and peace into our lives.