

“Maintaining Proper Perspectives”

James 1:9-11

Series: Got Faith? Get to Work!

Last week we learned that wisdom from God helps us to endure under trials. Here James teaches that such endurance is further enabled by the believer's correct evaluation of their material circumstances. He wants us to know that it's all in our perspective. The fortunes of God's people are not determined by their financial standing, but by their standing in Christ.

I. The brother of humble circumstances (vs. 9)

- ▶ He is to glory or boast in his high position.
- ▶ James calls upon the believer to adopt this as his characteristic response.
- ▶ He calls upon believers to open their eyes to the spiritual height to which they have been lifted as a child of God.

II. The rich (vs. 10-11)

A. Two mistakes in understanding this verse:

1. This will happen to the riches gathered in this life.
But:
 - ▶ James says it is the rich person that will fade away.
 - ▶ James is talking about present, not future humiliation.

2. James is not addressing rich Christians, but the rich in general. But:
 - ▶ The letter was only intended for believers.
 - ▶ The term “brother” applies to both the poor and the rich.
 - ▶ God does not automatically condemn rich people for their wealth.

B. James is referring to the attitude that the rich brother must adopt in coming to the Lord..

- ▶ When the rich brother comes to the Cross, he stands on the same level as the poor brother.
- ▶ The rich man is more likely to forget this while living in the midst of plenty.
- ▶ This is the danger of wealth, we become self-sufficient not God-dependent.

III. Going Deeper

A. Take a sober evaluation of your priorities by asking yourself these questions:

- ▶ Are my possessions possessing me?
- ▶ Am I neglecting my spiritual life because I'm consumed with accumulating more?
- ▶ Are my relationships with my family suffering because I'm so focused on earning more?
- ▶ Do I have trouble giving to God or to people in need?

B. For next week study James 1: 12-18