



Faith and Two Kinds of Trouble

The Testing of Personal Faith

Main point: Perseverance in trials requires the right mindset toward two basic kinds of trouble.

Expositional Outline:

Review: Perseverance in trials requires...

- *The proper attitude toward trials (1:2-4)*
- *The right use of prayer amid trials (1:5-8)*

Lesson 4: The correct mindset toward life when facing trials (1:9-11)

A. The brother of humble circumstances (v.9)

⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;

B. The brother of means (vv.10-11)

¹⁰ and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation,

Two lessons for the brother of means:

1. Money will not mean deliverance from humiliation. (v.10b)

because like flowering grass he will pass away.

2. Money will not deliver from death. (v.11)

For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

Observations:

Digging deeper

Humble circumstances—list some of the reasons a person might find themselves in poverty.

- Genesis 41; 50:20
- 1 Samuel 2:7
- Exodus 1:1-14
- 2 Kings 4:1-2ff
- Isaiah 53:1-3
- Hebrews 10:32-34

There are many other reasons as to why God's people find themselves in poor circumstances. We must be careful not to judge based upon outward appearances only, but to judge with righteous judgment (*John 7:24*).

Having means—Read 1 Timothy 6:17 and Psalm 62:10. Think of some practical steps or duties that will help you “*not to be conceited*” and to “*fix your hope on God.*”

Interpretative discussion questions:

- What are some of the temptations that a person in poverty might face?
- What are some of the temptations that a person of means might face?
- Be honest. On a scale of 1-10 (1—not much, 10—greatly) how much has this world’s view of success influenced your identity? Your happiness?
- Read Romans 8:14-18. Although the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us, make a comparison if you will. What is the difference between the sufferings of this life and the glory to come for believers?

Applicational project:

1. Find the words of a hymn that speak of heaven and your future inheritance. Meditate on the words. Find Scriptures that affirm each stanza. YouTube it. Update its truth in the library of your mind.
2. Take inventory on what things you are currently doing to store up treasure in heaven. How are you preparing for glory? List at least three things that should be priorities in your life and recommit yourself to delightfully practicing these priorities in the days to come.

Memory verse for lesson 4:

- **James 1:11**—*For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.*



Insights on Our Trials:

Keith Brazier

Soul and R&B group, Maze, released the hit, *Joy and Pain*, in 1980. Decades later, groups from across the musical spectrum are still releasing covers of the song or sampling the chorus. Although popular for its catchiness, the hook really resonated with all who heard it: *“Joy and pain is like sunshine and rain...”* Just as no one who was familiar with the tune could escape humming along or singing those words back then, all men are subject to common grace and trials. To further illustrate this point, James uses two social classes: the poor and the rich.

Temptation can entrap all men regardless of social status. A rich man may let greed and arrogance ensnare him (*1 Tim.6:9-10; Prov.28:11; Prov.15:27*). Perhaps, a poor man may wallow in pity and ignore God (*Prov.13:8; 18*) or act upon unlawful desire and steal (*Prov.30:8-9*). Both groups can find themselves being prideful and greedy just as both can allow themselves to find comfort or excuses due to their circumstances. *“The rich man’s wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty” (Prov.10:15 NKJV)*. Spiritual riches found in Jesus Christ are the only real ones that are everlasting.

All rich men are not wicked, abusive, and haughty. God allowed some of our spiritual forefathers to be extremely prosperous (i.e. Abraham, Job, David, and Solomon). Conversely, not all poor people are righteous and humble in spirit. In this life, each man is certain to taste death. After death, comes judgment. Your social class will have zero bearing on how you spend eternity. Trials should point believers to the giver of true riches. As adopted sons, we are joint heirs of a heavenly inheritance—one that is bountiful, limitless, and everlasting.

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