

New Life Evangelistic Center



Book of James

-LIVING BY FAITH-

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to deeply thank each and every one of you for praying for Penny and myself. God has miraculously healed our marriage plus 50% of the tumor resulting in her breast cancer is now gone. To God be the glory!

But why the trials? James 1:2-4, says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and that includes you sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." Oh Lord it is hard in the midst of the financial needs, the trials, the tribulations, and the uncertainty of the future to continue on. When it seems that our world is crumbling around us we must remember that, "no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Cor.3:11 Our faith is tested to determine if it is based on the foundation of Jesus Christ or are we clinging to worthless idols and forfeiting the grace that is ours. How hard it is persevering in the midst of trials. The pain is unbelievable but here James says "consider it pure joy." This perseverance that these trials produce must finish its work so we "may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." What we are told to do in the middle of these times of trials and uncertainties is to ask God for wisdom. (James 1:5) He will give it if our goals are centered on Jesus and not self-centered. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."(Ps 51:17)

As one asks from such a broken and contrite heart "he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man and women should not think he/she will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."(James 1:6-8) We must continue to trust God in the midst of these trials for as James 1:12 says, "blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, because when he/she has stood the test, he/she will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him." How does verses 13-15 show us that we are not to blame other people or God when we go through these trials? In the midst of the pain and uncertainty we must remember that, "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James

1:17). When our world seems to have been turned upside down and circumstances lead us to believe that we have lost that which is closest to us we must remember that God does not change, He is the source of all that is good and, “He chose to give us birth through the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all He created”(James 1:18).

When we are hurting our first reaction is to get angry. What does James 1:19-21 has to say about anger and the need to humbly accept the word planted in you? “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says”(James 1:22). What does verses 26, 27 say about our tongue and helping those in need? How does James 2:1-13, stress that it is wrong to show favoritism? “Mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it if one claims to have faith but has no deeds?”(James 2:13,14) It is one thing to talk about faith; it is another thing to actually live it in the midst of trials, tribulations and uncertainties. Faith involves believing God when the circumstances dictate otherwise. Faith involves action. “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”(James 2:17) It involves surrendering that which is closest to us totally unto God. This was so hard for me to do concerning Penny but once I surrendered her to Jesus, He gave her back in such a glorious way. How did Abraham and Rehabs actions of surrender described in James 2:21-26 result in righteousness? It is by faith that we are saved (Romans 3:28) but true faith results in actions.

One of the hardest places to express faith is in the controlling of our tongue. So many words are spoken that should have remain unsaid. What does James 3:1-12, say about the need to control the tongue? How we must daily surrender our tongues unto the Lord. Tongues reflecting the wisdom of God will be “first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” (James 3:17,18) As we read these words and then examine our personal lives we are driven to our knees crying, “Lord have mercy upon us.” How we need to submit to God.

In James 4:1-12, James goes into great detail as to why such submission is absolutely essential. Please read these verses carefully and state what James says about praying with the right motives, humbling oneself before God, resisting the devil, not slandering or judging. In verses 13-16, how does he describe we must submit our schedules to God daily. “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.”(James 4:17)

James also deals with the issue of injustice in James 5:1-5. What does he say on this subject?

How hard it is to be patient when you are suffering “you too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble... 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 considered 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.” (James 5:10, 11)

Oh thank God for His word, His compassion and His mercy. I must by faith hang on and so must you. God is faithful. “As you know, we consider blessed, those who have preserved.”

Thank God for community and the power of prayer. How is this power expressed in James 5:13-17? Thank God for those who exercise the faith and courage to keep us from wandering off the path of life. “If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins.”(James 5:19, 20) Sharing the gospel is a mission of love. It involves hearing the Word, being saved personally and sharing with others. Through the grace of Jesus Christ we can have hope both now and for all eternity.

James is such a practical book when it comes to showing us how to apply our faith to the problems we encounter daily. This dynamic book teaches us to:

1. Stand on God’s word in the midst of the shifting sands of current events. We must be birthed in the truth of God’s promises by coming under the governance of His word. “He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all He created.”(James 1:18)
2. True faith is religion resulting in action. “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”(James 1:27) “But someone will say, ‘you have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” (James 2:18,19)
3. Exercise faith by praying. “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. “The prayers of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”(James 5:16) Remember prayer locates God and faith secures the answer.

Enemies of faith according James include:

1. Double mindedness destroys faith. “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man (it includes women also) should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”(James 1:5-8)
2. Impatience results in receiving second best rather than the best that God intends when patience is exercised with faith. If your faith is not married to patience then you run the risk of missing God’s promise. Ishmael was a result of Abraham’s impatience. “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.”(James 5:7,8)
3. When we let pride take over and we try to be in control then faith is destroyed. That is why James says, “‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will come near to you.”(James 4:6-8)
4. Negative speaking destroys the seeds of faith. “The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”(James 3:6) “Don’t grumble against each other, brothers (and sisters), or you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door!”(James 5:9)

Remember “God will bless you, if you don’t give up when your faith is being tested. He will reward you with a glorious life, just as He rewards everyone who loves Him.”(James 1:12) Praise the Lord, God is good and faithful to His word.

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice