

*James – Life after Faith*

**James 5:10-11**

**“Don’t Quit Yet”**

- 1. WHO WE NEED TO COPY IN THIS LIFE**
  - A. Those who have served with faithfulness
  - B. Those who have suffered with faithfulness
- 2. WHAT WE NEED TO COPE IN THIS LIFE**
  - A. We need a patience with people
  - B. We need a patience with problems
- 3. WHY WE NEED TO CONTINUE IN THIS LIFE**
  - A. You are testifying to God’s people
  - B. You are trusting in God’s plan

1. One day P.T. Barnum, the great circus pioneer, was approached by his number one attraction, the human cannonball.
2. The human cannonball said to his boss, “Mr. Barnum, I just can’t take it anymore. Two performances a day and four on the weekends is just too much. I’m quitting.”
3. Barnum answered, “You can’t possibly quit! Where will I find someone else of your caliber?” (Get it? Caliber)
4. The fact is that people of all calibers, at some time or another, want to quit. All of us have considered giving up, and probably have even done so in some cases.
5. The believers to whom Bro. James originally wrote his New Testament book were living in a difficult day. Many of them were struggling with poverty as well as enduring persecution for their faith in Christ.
6. In the closing chapter of his book, Bro. James seeks to encourage them to persevere, and not to quit too soon.
7. 2,000 years later, the same Spirit that inspired these words speaks to us and challenges us. No matter what you are facing and what may be trying your patience, the Lord says to you today, “Don’t quit yet!”
8. There will be a day when we will no longer have to face difficulties and disappointments. However, we don’t get to choose when that day will come.
9. In the passage before us, the Word of God gives us the encouragement we need to keep going until our Lord gives us rest from our labors.
10. Notice with me the encouragement we find in this text, and how we can keep ourselves from quitting too soon. First of all, Bro. James points us to:

## I. WHO WE NEED TO COPY IN THIS LIFE

1. In 1993, *Nike* made a stir with an ad featuring future hall of fame basketball star, Charles Barkley. In the ad, Barkley says coldly, "I am not a role model." Barkley wrote the text for the ad himself.
2. Though people still worship them, athletes and actors, celebrities and entertainers are really *not* role models. Most of them are more dysfunctional than regular folks.
3. In James 5, Bro. James tries to encourage Christian endurance and patience by pointing us to some real role models.
4. Verse 10 says, "*Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*"
5. The word translated "example", literally means something to copy. It is the word used to describe the letters in a copy book that students would trace in order to learn how to write.
6. James says, "Here are some lives to copy. Here are some patient people from which we can learn how to live." Notice the examples James raises for us to copy. First of all, he reminds us of:

### A. Those who have served with faithfulness

1. Again, in verse 10, James says, "Take for an example, the prophets..." James is referring to the men who were called to deliver God's Word to God's people.
2. In Acts 7, Stephen preached a scathing sermon to the Jewish authorities. In verse 52 of that chapter, Stephen asked the question, "*Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?*"
3. The prophets of God were maligned and mistreated simply because, as James says, they "[spoke] *in the name of the Lord.*"
4. They were attacked, afflicted, and abused, yet they were patient, and carried on their work for the Lord.
5. Sometimes, even when we are doing what we are supposed to do, we nonetheless have to experience "affliction".
6. The word "affliction" in verse 10 describes hardship, or what some would call misfortune. In other words, even when we serve the Lord, there will still be struggles and storms.

7. Charles Simeon was the pastor of Trinity Church in Cambridge, England for over 50 years. For much of that ministry, especially in the early years, Simeon was hated by a large number of the people in his congregation.

8. They felt he was not good enough for them, and they treated him terribly for decades. When he was 71 years-old, a friend asked him how he had endured all the trials of his ministry at Cambridge. Simeon answered, "My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ's sake."<sup>i</sup>

9. You say, "I'm living for the Lord, and still I am struggling!" So be it! Look to the prophets, and copy their service with faithfulness.

10. James sets before us not only those who have served with faithfulness, but notice also that he gives us another example to copy from among:

### **B. Those who have suffered with faithfulness**

1. Look now at verse 11. James says, "... *Ye have heard of the patience of Job...*" There is a name that even people who are not familiar with the Bible know something about. James does not need to elaborate on Job's story. He assumes his readers already know all that Job endured.

2. The Old Testament book of Job tells of how Job was a righteous man, and yet God saw fit to allow his whole world to be turned upside down.

3. His kids died. His fortune disintegrated. His health declined. His wife disparaged him. His own friends doubted His integrity.

4. Nevertheless, though Job struggled with his difficulties, he did not succumb to despair. Listen to his words. Job said, "*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD* (Job 1:21)."

5. He said, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him* (Job 13:15)..." The Bible testifies of Job, "*In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly* (Job 1:22)."

6. You may feel as if you are ready to quit as a result of the suffering that God has saw fit to send your way. You say, "I can't take it anymore! I've had enough, and I am just going to give up!"

7. James says, "Don't quit yet! Copy Job! Live with a resolute trust in God as Job did!"

9. When I was growing up, my walls were covered with posters of my favorite athletes. Among them was a life-sized poster of the *New York Knick* center, Patrick Ewing. He was my favorite player at the time. I wanted to be just like him.

10. The only problem is that I was 5' 7". Patrick Ewing was 7' 0". I could not be like Ewing, no matter how hard I tried.

11. In this passage, James sets before us not super-hero's, or people with extraordinary gifts. They were just saints who served and suffered with faithfulness. We can all copy that!

12. Notice a second truth we draw from this passage that encourages us not to quit too soon. Notice not only *who we need to copy in this life*, but notice also further that James describes for us:

## II. WHAT WE NEED TO COPE IN THIS LIFE

1. In both verse 10 and 11 we find the word "patience". James says that the prophets are an example of patience, and then he references the patience of Job.

2. In the original language, James uses two different words in each of these instances. Some newer translations pick up on this, and refer to "the steadfastness"<sup>ii</sup> or "endurance"<sup>iii</sup> of Job.

3. Both of these words could be translated as patience, but they describe two different kinds, or aspects of patience.

4. James indicates that both of these aspects of patience are necessary tools to keep us from quitting too soon. Notice with me the kinds of patience we need to cope in this life. First of all:

### A. We need a patience with people

1. Look again at verse 10. James describes the prophets as examples of patience. The word translated "patience" in this verse is the same one he used in verse 7, where he said, *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."*

2 The word translated "patience" in verse 10 is a compound of two words that mean long and temper. It is long-tempered as opposed to short-tempered.

3. As we saw when we looked at verse 7, this is what we call being longsuffering. This kind of patience is practiced with regard to people.

4. In other words, when people are being difficult, or when their actions disappoint you, what you need is to be longsuffering with them.

5. Rather than losing your temper with somebody, and giving up your testimony in the process, James says that we need a slow-tempered, longsuffering patience with the people around us.

6. There was once a kind Quaker who owned a stubborn and ornery cow. Every day the cow would step on his foot, or kick over the milk bucket, or swat him with her tail. The Quaker, however, was always calm and kind to the animal.

7. One day, the cow was particularly bad, and the Quaker had about all he could handle. He marched around to the front of the cow, pointed his finger in its face and said, "Thou dost know that I am a Quaker. Thou dost know also that I cannot strike thee...but I can sell thee to a Baptist!"

8. Baptist or not, we need to be longsuffering, slow-tempered, and patient with the people around us.

9. Notice not only that we need patience with people in order to cope in this life, but James also indicates that:

### **B. We need a patience with problems**

1. Look again at verse 11. James mentions the "patience" of Job. As I said, here we find a different word than the one translated "patience" in verse 10.

2. This is the same word we found in the opening chapter, where James said in verse 3, "*Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*"

3. The word literally means "to stay under". It speaks of endurance, and perseverance. It is the kind of patience you need, not with people, but with problems.

4. When the pressure of a problem begins to weigh in upon you, rather than giving up and caving in, what you need is a patient endurance that allows you to carry on in spite of your problems.

5. Someone has pointed out that the word "persevere" is a compound of the prefix *per*, which means through, along with the word *severe*. To persevere is to go on through that which is severe.

6. To cope with the hardships of life, and keep going in spite of them, we need a perseverant patience.

7. Charles Allen was a Methodist preacher and author. In one of his books he included a poem called *Keeping On*. Part of that poem says:

*I've drained the cup of disappointment and pain,*

*I've gone many days without song,  
But I've sipped enough nectar from the rose of life,  
To make me want to live on<sup>v</sup>*

8. You and I have sipped enough of the grace of God to make us want to go on in spite of the problems we must face in this life, but we need this patience to do so.

9. There is a third truth we draw from this passage that motivates us to not to quit too soon. James points us not only to *who we need to copy in this life*, and *what we need to cope in this life*, but also lastly we see:

### III. WHY WE NEED TO CONTINUE IN THIS LIFE

1. Through James, the Spirit of God is encouraging us to keep going, patiently enduring the struggles of this life.

2. So far, he has given us a *model* in the prophets and Job, as well as a *method*, by showing us the kind of patience we need.

3. As we look at further at this passage, James also gives us a *motive* for carrying on and not quitting. That is good, because we need to be reminded that there is something worth persevering for.

4. You may want to quit, but before you do, consider a couple of good reasons why you should patiently carry on. First of all, you shouldn't quit because:

#### A. You are testifying to God's people

1. Again, in verse 10, James points us to the prophets as examples of patience in difficulty. Then he says at the beginning of verse 11, "*Behold, we count them happy which endure.*"

2. The word "happy" speaks of being blessed. In other words, though the prophets suffered much in their service to the Lord, we see them as being blessed for having endured through that.

3. Their patience and perseverance for the Lord is a model for us, and we admire what they did for the Lord.

4. Just as we look to those prophets as an example, it is likely that someone is looking to you as an example as well.

5. No doubt, there is somebody in your life who is watching how you handle your hardships. They are looking to see whether or not you are going to make it.

6. It could be a lost co-worker who has heard you testify of the goodness of God, and now wonders if you will still say that when you are suffering and struggling.
7. It could be that you are setting an example for your children. You have preached to them about faithfulness, and now they are watching to see if you will be faithful, even when it is hard.
8. You say, "I'm going to quit! I give up!" The Word of God speaks to you and says, "Don't quit yet! Someone is watching you! Someone will count you blessed if you endure through your difficulties."
9. You need to continue on in this life, not only because you are testifying to God's people, but also because:

### **B. You are trusting in God's plan**

1. Look again at verse 11. James says, "*...Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*"
2. When you think back to the story of Job, what makes the story so powerful is not just how Job endured, but even more so what God did for Job in the end.
3. James says, "You have *'seen the end of the Lord'*" The ESV translates that phrase, "You have seen the purpose of the Lord."
4. The idea is that in Job's story, we were able to see that God was working out a plan that resulted in Job's ultimate good.
5. God was not cruel to Job. He was full of compassion and mercy, which He displayed *in the end* when He blessed Job with more than he had ever had before.
6. As Christians, we may not understand all that is happening in our lives, yet we believe as Paul says in Romans 8:28, that, "*...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*"
7. For you to quit now is for you to forget that in the end the Judge of all the Earth will do right! For you to give up now is to fail to trust the ultimate goodness of God!
8. Our Lord Jesus wept in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was weak, weary, and worried. Nevertheless, facing the painful prospect of bearing our sins on the cross, he did not quit.

9. The writer of Hebrews says that He considered the end result – that which would come beyond the cross and the empty tomb. Hebrews 12:2 says, “...for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...”

10. There is a joy set before us. There is the promise of “the end” the Lord has prepared for us. Heaven awaits us at the end of God’s plan for our lives.

11. Don’t quit now! Keep going, trusting in God’s plan! Remember the end toward which He is leading you!

1. I remember hearing my dad tell the story of the journal of Christopher Columbus. After months at sea, his crew became restless, even threatening to throw him overboard, and return back to Europe.

2. On October 12, 1492, land was finally spotted as the ship approached an island in the Bahamas that Columbus named San Salvador.

3. In the difficult days leading up to the discovery of land, when Columbus had to negotiate with his men to keep them from mutiny, over and over again his journal would say, “No land in sight, but today we sailed on.”

4. Friend, we are too close to the homeland of heaven and the fulfillment of our faith for you to quit now! Though you see no land in sight, I urge you, sail on!

5. Take the Word of God and read about those who have patiently endured before you, and have already made it over. Copy their example!

6. Ask the Spirit of God to grant you patience with people and patience with problems. Then remind yourself everyday that God’s plan is being worked out in your life.

7. No matter what you are facing, don’t quit yet!

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<sup>i</sup> Piper, John, Brothers, We Must Not Mind a Little Suffering, 4/15/89, [desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org), accessed 4/23/10, [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1460\\_Brothers\\_We\\_Must\\_Not\\_Mind\\_a\\_Little\\_Suffering/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1460_Brothers_We_Must_Not_Mind_a_Little_Suffering/)

<sup>ii</sup> ESV

<sup>iii</sup> NASB, HCSB

<sup>iv</sup> Swindoll, Charles, The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart, (Word Publishing, Nashville, 1998), p. 438