

**Faith in Action: A Study of James**  
**Faith's Longsuffering**  
James 5:1-12

**Trust in Christ....**

- ... is not developed absent of challenge but by applying trust in the midst of challenge. (1:1-8)
- ...provides perspective to help us live God oriented lives. (1:9-18)
- ...will produce Christlikeness. (1:19-27)
- ...produces mercy as we love our neighbor as ourselves. (2:1-13)
- ...must change us. (2:14-26)
- ...must be demonstrated in our words. (3:1-12)
- ...shapes our hearts and desires with wisdom. (3:13-4:12)
- ...helps us have understanding on our limitations. (4:13-17)

**Trust in Wealth Leads to Ruin**

**5:1-3**

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

James 5:1-3

**Trust in Wealth Leads to Sin**

**5:4-6**

Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.

James 5:4-6

Throughout most of the rural areas of the Roman Empire, including much of rural Galilee, rich landowners profited from the toil of the serfs (often alongside slaves) who worked their massive estates. That feudalism arose only in medieval times is a misconception; it is simply less prominent in literature of Roman times because Roman literature concentrated on the cities, although only about 10 percent of the Empire is estimated to have been urban.

*The IVP Bible Background Commentary*

Thus, while the people addressed in this passage are clearly materially wealthy, they are not condemned for their wealth per se, but for their selfish accumulation and abuse of their wealth. Why does James send a denunciation of wicked, wealthy unbelievers to Christians? John Calvin pertinently isolates two main reasons: James "... has a regard to the faithful, that they, hearing of the miserable end of the rich, might not envy their fortune, and also that knowing that God would be the avenger of the wrongs they suffered, they might with calm and resigned mind bear them."

*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*

James' point seems to be that instead of seeking deliverance from condemnation, they have defied God's law (fattened your hearts) and made themselves more likely objects of his judgment (in a day of slaughter).

*NET Bible Study Notes*

## **Trust in Christ is Longsuffering**

**5:7-12**

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

James 5:7-12

In their patient endurance of difficulties, Christians are to imitate the prophets and Job (vv. 10-11). At first glance, Job would seem to be a curious choice to hold up for imitation, for he frequently expressed his exasperation with the Lord. But what James wants us to emulate in Job is his perseverance: despite the disasters he faced, and the relentless attack of his "friends," Job kept his faith and did not abandon his trust in God. As a result, the Lord "finally brought about" the restoration of Job's fortune (Job 42:10-17).

*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*

**Trust in Christ  
leads us to wait  
for our full reward.**

### **Questions for Application**

- Q1. When do you tend to want to place your trust in wealth?
  
- Q2. Why do Christians struggle with longsuffering?