

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness
Part II: Godliness In Relation To Life's Trials, James 1:2-18
B. God's Practical Help In Our Trials
(James 1:5-12)

I. Introduction

- A. When we believers face trials in our lives, we obviously need God's help to weather them if we would hope to handle them effectively versus suffering spiritual defeat.
- B. James 1:5-12 reveals God's practical help in our trials, a passage we do well to apply for His blessing:

II. God's Practical Help In Our Trials, James 1:5-12.

- A. The arrival of trials that can tempt the believer to react to them unrighteously calls for "wisdom" from God, the *sophia* of James 1:5 in the Greek New Testament that in the Epistle of James means insight of "a morally upright walk," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. VIII, p. 524.
- B. God is very willing to supply the believer in trial such "wisdom", for He as literally "the giving God (*tou didontos theou*)" eagerly provides such wisdom at our request "without reproach," without scolding us for our lack of wisdom, James 1:5a,b. Thus, we who face trials should ask God in prayer for this "wisdom".
- C. However, this divine offer has conditions attached to it for such a request to be granted from God as noted in James 1:6-8 (cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 821):
 - 1. First, we must ask in an unwavering faith that God will provide us such wisdom, James 1:6-7:
 - a. James charged his reader to ask for God's wisdom with an unwavering faith (James 1:6a), for a man with a wavering faith in God and in His provision is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind, making his acquiring any "wisdom" from God a useless feat, James 1:6b. God will not give any wisdom to such a wavering party, James 1:7.
 - b. Such double-minded people who shift between accepting God's wisdom and the world's ungodly wisdom are thus unstable in all their ways, and God does not give His wisdom to unstable people since it would be a fruitless exercise to do so (James 1:8 with 1:6b-7), and God is not a vain God!
 - 2. Second, we must ask in hope that there are eternal benefits to God's letting us face trials, James 1:9-11:
 - a. Regardless of the believer's current station in this earthly life, he must ask God for wisdom in his trials in hope that the trials he faces contain eternal advantages, *Ibid*.
 - b. Specifically, the brother of humble financial or social circumstances in this life must be glad of his high spiritual standing before the Lord, James 1:9.
 - c. In like manner, the brother of high financial or social standing in this life must recall he will be made low, for as the flower of the grass, he will pass away from his lot in this life, James 1:10, 11.
 - 3. Third, we must ask in hope of gaining God's reward for spiritually succeeding in our trials, James 1:12:
 - a. The believer in Christ who "steadfastly endures" (*hypomenei*) in his trials, thus standing the test (*dokimos genomenos*) of the trials faced, will "receive the crown of life", James 1:12; *Ibid*.
 - b. Some hold this crown is "life here and now" (*Ibid.*), while others view it as a crown to be given in eternity at the Lord's return like the crown of glory that is given to godly elders, 1 Peter 5:1-4. (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:14; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to James 1:12 that refers to 1 Corinthians 3:14 and its reference to the reward for having one's work last the testing fires of God at the believer's appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ after the Rapture)
 - c. I hold the view that this reward is eternal, for the "crown" is actually a "garland" given to an athlete who wins a competition and is rewarded at the judge's seat similar to the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers in 2 Corinthians 5:10; R. V. G. Tasker, The General Epistle of James, 1974, p. 45.
 - d. However, as 1 Timothy 4:8b indicates there are both temporal as well as eternal advantages to being godly, we have both immediate and long-term cause to be spurred to ask God for the wisdom we need to handle our trials in a way that will elicit His positive answer and help!

Lesson: *To handle our trials, we must ask God for wisdom in a strong faith in His supply, in hope of the eternal value of overcoming in such trials and in hope of God's reward for overcoming in them.*

Application: *If facing demanding trials, may we ask God for wisdom as directed in James 1:5-12 above.*