

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness
Part VIII: Choosing Godliness Over Worldliness Regarding Business Income, James 4:13-5:12
B. Choosing Godliness Regarding KEEPING One's Employment Income
(James 5:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. As we learned in our previous lesson, worldliness is a sizable problem in business dealings (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to James 4:13-17), one needing attention in the Epistle of James on godly living.
- B. James 4:13-17 addresses the theme of correcting the worldly way of **gaining** employment income or an income stream where James 5:1-12 handles rightly **keeping** one's income in his job (as follows):

II. Choosing Godliness Regarding KEEPING One's Employment Income, James 5:1-12.

- A. After the believer has been given employment or an employment income stream from the Lord, if the human party responsible to pay him for work he performs fails to make that payment, great tension arises!
- B. Accordingly, James 5:1-12 deals with the circumstances of such a wrong (as follows):
 - 1. For the one who does not pay a worker for his work, James announced God's discipline, James 5:1-6:
 - a. The "Go to now" (KJV) or "Now listen" (NIV) expression arresting the attention of the reader in James 4:13 is repeated in James 5:1 to get his undivided attention, Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 831.
 - b. James 5:1 then addressed those who had the financial resources but who failed to pay money due to the workers who had completed business tasks for them, James 5:1, 4a. By way of application, this issue applies both to faulty employers and to customers who fail to pay self-employed business owners for the work they perform for them.
 - c. Accordingly, James 5:1 claims those who have withheld rightful payment for services rendered are going to face the discipline of God's judgment for essentially stealing from the workers.
 - d. The cause for such an unrighteous hoarding of wealth is covetousness, a type of idolatry, for the hoarders depend upon material wealth as their god (Colossians 3:5). Accordingly, James noted that such wealth was corrupted, the wealthy party's garments were moth-eaten and their precious metals tarnished as a witness against their materialistic idolatry that God will eventually judge, Jas. 5:2-3.
 - e. The cause of this judgment is God's anger at the failure of the customer or the employer involved to pay the worker for the work he has performed, James 5:4a. The cries of the unpaid workers reach the ears of the Lord of Hosts, so He will judge the wrongdoers, James 5:4b.
 - f. Wealthy landowners who often wrongly withheld pay were condemned for their hoarding that often led to the death of the unpaid who were too poor to resist them in court, James 5:5-6; Ibid., p. 833.
 - 2. After this condemnation of the wrongdoers, James addressed the victims to guide them, James 5:7-12:
 - a. Self-employed business owners or employees who have had their income somehow wrongfully withheld are tempted to seek ungodly revenge. Thus, James called them to be patient for the Lord to deal out justice, Jas. 5:7a. The wronged must wait like the farmer waits for his income to arrive from his crops that God grows, meaning the believer must wait for God to intervene, James 5:7b-8.
 - b. [The context deals with Christian against Christian, so one must not go before a secular court with his case against a believer, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8! However, it is not wrong to seek justice in court to defend one's family livelihood if the believer has been financially wronged by the unsaved!]
 - c. If we have been wronged [by a Christian], we must not grudge against him, but look to God to judge in the matter, for God is at His judge's chamber door ready to render a verdict, Jas. 5:9; 1 Cor. 6:7b.
 - d. As an encouragement to wait upon God in this matter, the wronged is told to heed the example of long-suffering Old Testament prophets, especially Job, trusting God to be as "full of compassion and mercy" to the wronged in the end as he was to the suffering Job, James 5:10-11 NIV.
 - e. In all such business dealings, the believer must be careful tell the simple, candid truth, James 5:12.

Lesson: *Once we believers have acquired employment or an employment income stream from God, if believers who owe us pay for services rendered in that God-given employment situation fail to pay us, we must trust God to judge the wrongdoer and meet our financial needs versus taking revenge.*

Application: *May we trust and obey the God who gave us a job to help us as our Judge on that job!*