



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week Six
James 5:1-12

MAIN POINT

James instructs us in our spiritual maturity in the use of money. He warns us of danger, informs us of the ramifications of the problem, and encourages us to deal with it appropriately. The goal is that we use money to serve others, rather than hoarding it for ourselves. The method of attaining this goal is twofold: patience with God (this week) and prayer to God (next week). James reminds us as believers that God is compassionate and merciful as we persevere in patience.

PRAY

Take time **before** your discussion to pray with and for one another. Be sure to write down the things you'll be praying for so you can continue to pray for your group throughout the week.

INTRODUCTION

Use this section to get the group warmed up a bit. You can use one of these questions, or you could write your own based on this week's text.

Discuss examples regarding today's worldview of luxury. How are possessions valued? How are people valued?

Share an example of when you had a different perspective on a personal choice than your father or mother. Who had the better long-term perspective on what the effects of that choice could mean down the road?

As we look at James 5:1-12 we see two groups of people that have different perspectives about life success. This is not unlike it is in today's society. James is speaking to believers helping them view their lives in not just an earthly sense, but what their lives represent for eternity as they represent the family of God. James wants them to see their choices from a heavenly view, not an earthly view, and to make choices that represent who God is as our Heavenly Father.

READ JAMES 5:1-6

What are the two things the rich are abusing? (verse 3 and 4)

Look up the definition of hoarding. Share the definition with your group.

What does James say about how hoarding affects oneself and others? As a group, share all the affects you see listed. How does hoarding affect other people?

The Bible does not discourage saving or investing, but it does condemn hoarding.

READ JAMES 5:7-12

In what light do you think you should consider verses 7-12 because of the word 'therefore' and how it ties to what believers should do? When you see someone hoarding resources or mistreating someone under their care, what emotion or action can this cause you to have?

"Therefore, be patient..." The verb "patient" in Greek is makrothymesate. It means to persevere, to be patient, to refuse to retaliate with anger, to display self-restraint. It literally means to extend a long time. The example of the farmer helps believers see that we are primarily sowing and cultivating in this life, not reaping rewards here and now as extensively as we can. We must not lose sight of our hope in Christ patiently waiting for the future harvest when the Lord returns.

What does verses 7-12 say believers should do? Which one is hardest for you?



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James challenges believers to "strengthen our hearts" in verse 8. This is opposite to how he previously spoke about the heart in verse 5 being "fatted for a day of slaughter".

Share about a time the Lord has strengthened your heart. What strengthens our hearts to patiently endure and not lose sight of our eternal hope?

When we deal with any difficulties in our own situations, we are tempted to turn on those around us to blame them, especially when we cannot blame anyone else! What warning does James give about that problem?

What two other examples of patience does James give to help believers deal with difficulties that come from other people (vv.10-11)? How do the following verses help us understand patience? Proverbs 14:29; Proverbs 15:18; Proverbs 19:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:20.

How have you been blessed (5:11a) in the past as you dealt patiently, in a long-suffering way, with someone who was not treating you well or justly? How did you feel?

James gives us basically one instruction in verse 12 stated in both a positive and negative way. Swearing is an evidence of impatience and that we have forgotten God's revelation concerning the future. God reveals to us in His Word knowledge of the future and how it should affect our everyday lives in what we think about money, and many other things.

PUT YOUR FAITH TO WORK

What are you hoarding on earth? What are you amassing for yourself – clothing, stocks, savings, jewelry, beautiful things, etc.? What is your motive – fear, envy, security, selfishness? What do you need to do about it – maybe give something away?

How might you face the worldly view of reaping earthly rewards differently based on today's study? How does a continual pursuit to overcome temptation and patiently focus on eternal rewards give opportunity to share with others about the truth of the gospel?

Have you been guilty of breaking your word to anyone? Maybe you have not followed through with a responsibility you said you would do or did a poor job at it. Or maybe you did not follow through with the terms you agreed to when you took the job? Ask God to reveal failure on your part, and then ask for forgiveness. Repentance means turning away from those actions that does not display His character. Remember that God is faithful, full of compassion and mercy.

PRAY

Close in prayer, ask God to help you focus on the fact that the day will come when He will right all wrongs. Thank Him that someday what seems very wrong about our world will be fixed. Ask God to show you one area in your life that you need to turn to Him in faith instead of self-dependence. Ask Him to help you grow in your desire and ability to develop the kind of forbearance or patience that He shows. Ask Him to help you follow through with your word and your commitments. Ask for forgiveness when your words and actions do not display His character. Thank the Lord that He is compassionate, merciful, and faithful.