

Wednesday Night Fellowship Discussion Guide

James 1:9-11

6/2/21

James 1:9–11

⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Passage Summary

In these verses James introduces the trial of wealth as he calls believers to walk in wisdom and in faith. His goal to cause his readers to view money from God's perspective. From this perspective the point is not whether a person has money or does not have money, the point is rather how God desires each person to follow His Will in regard to the wealth He has provided for them. Therefore, James uses only one verb to call believers whether or rich or poor to action. He calls upon us all to boast not in our wealth but rather in Christ.

Discussion Questions

(These questions are intended to generate discussion and promote application. Don't feel pressured to make it through all of them. The questions are made for the discussion leader, not the discussion leader for the questions.)

Boasting

- Consider the verb boast which James uses. The verb usually has a negative connotation or meaning but it is used in a positive sense several times in Scripture. The concept of boasting is the concept of "taking pride" in something or someone.
- Identify how the following two passages inform our understanding of boasting?

Jeremiah 9:23–24

²³ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

- What are some talents or areas of your life in which you find it easy to take pride in?
- When was the last time that you boasted about Jesus and/or what He has done for you?
- Are there any groups of people with whom you find it easier or harder to boast about Jesus? (Friends, Family, Neighbors, Coworkers, Strangers, etc.) Why?

Boasting in our exaltation

- James calls the “lowly” brother to boast in his exaltation. Lowly is contrasted with “rich” in v.10 and contextually references those in Judea who were poor. Compared to the poverty they would have been experiencing as believers in Judea in the 1st Century, are there any truly poor people in America?

(James is not making an argument that only the very poorest of all people should boast in exaltation, but rather that in any society, those who are comparatively poor as believers should apply the wisdom of God to their situation and embrace that in which they SHOULD take pride)

- James is speaking specifically about wealth, but the application is there for other areas as well. In what other ways do you view yourself as poor or lowly? How has the work of Jesus elevated you in that particular area whatever it might be?
- Discuss some of the ways that Jesus has exalted believers. Any passages come to mind?

Boasting in our humiliation

- James calls the rich brother to boast in his humiliation. Why would James say that boasting in Jesus is the same as boasting in our humiliation if you are rich?
- In what ways does wealth give the appearance of stability from the perspective of the world? As believers, how is that appearance of stability shattered?
- What are some practical ways a rich person might keep a proper perspective on wealth?