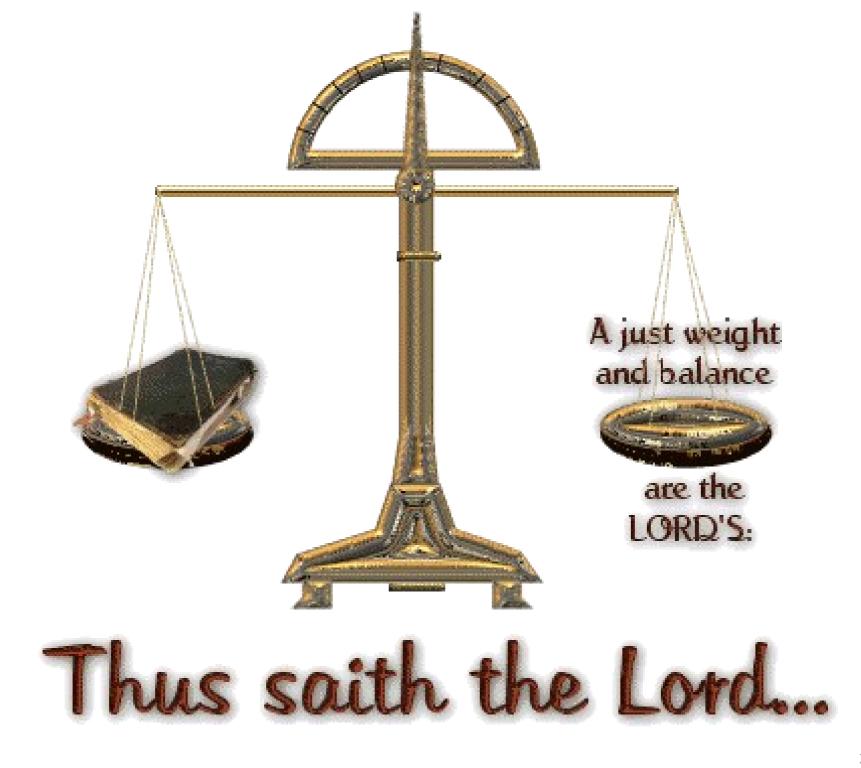
Church Web Site

www.tryonchurchofchrist.com

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 The Book of James is about as straight-forward a book as you will find in the New Testament. • There is a higher percentage of commands in the Book of James than in any other book of the Bible.

 James did not write this epistle to instruct his reader.

 As much as to exhort persecuted Christians
 to put their faith into practice.

> If you want "practical,"
> this is a book for you.

James the brother of our Lord

is believed to be the writer of this letter. (Galatians 1:19)

• This epistle is written to Jewish Christians,

Who were facing
 <u>a great deal of persecution</u>

 and hardship because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ.

• Facing difficult times some would be tempted to take the easy way out and make "friends with the world" as James puts it. (James 4:4) so as to avoid persecution.

 This letter is a divinely inspired sermon, Intended to be read in the refugee churches throughout Palestine. He is believed to have been martyred in 62 A.D. 7

• The theme of this book is stated at the outset:

• <u>James 1:4</u> (KJV) "That you may be perfect and <u>entire</u>, lacking in nothing."

 That you may be <u>fully and perfectly developed</u> without any defects. (James 1:4)
 (Goodspeed New Testament) In this chapter, the following requirements for those who would be complete are advocated:

(1) <u>Be joyful in trials</u> (James 1:2-4)

(2) In life's uncertainties, Pray in faith without doubting (James 1:5-8); (3) Treat rich and poor alike. (James 1:9-11)

(4) God is not to be blamed for temptations. (James 1:13) (5) Anger and wrath are to be suppressed (James 1:19-20) (6) <u>Hear and Do God's word</u> (James 1:21-27).

•<u>The best tests</u> of Christian maturity <u>is tribulation.</u>

•When God's people go through personal trials, they discover what kind of faith they really possess.

Trials not only reveal our faith; They also develop our faith and Christian character.

 James is telling us to expect adversity as the rule,

• Rather than the exception.

• <u>He does not say</u>, if you fall into all sorts of trials," But rather "when you fall into all sorts of trials."

- Peter likewise informs us that suffering should not surprise us (1 Peter 4:12).
- Adversity need not be sought; it will surely come our way.

 He says that we will "fall into" all sorts or trials,

Not that you need
 go looking for them.



James informs us that there will be "all sorts of trials" (verse 2). • There are different forms of <u>adversity</u>.

It may be:

- Financially,
- Some physical malady,
- Parents agonize over their children,
- And children agonize over their parents.
 - Trials may come from one's boss,
 - Or from one's employees.
 - Trials come in various shapes and sizes, but they all are <u>a form of adversity.</u>



James instructs us that when we encounter these trials, we are to rejoice in them. (**James 1:2**) 17

 Knowing that God has allowed them into our lives as a part of His sanctifying process.

 These trials, James writes, are a testing of our faith.

> Adversity tests the strength of our faith:

• Proverbs 24:10 (KJV) If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

 Step into the time tunnel with me and let's travel together back to the <u>land of Uz</u>

 Uz had a citizen who had the respect of everyone, because he was:

- Blameless,
 - Upright,
- God-fearing,
- And clean living.

• <u>He had:</u>

- 10 children,
- Lots of livestock,
 - Plenty of land,
- A houseful of servants,
- And a substantial stack of cash.
- No one would deny that he was *"the greatest of all the men of the east"* (Job 1:3).

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 His name was <u>Job</u>, a synonym for <u>integrity</u> and <u>godliness</u>.

• Within a matter of hours he was,

 "A wretched soul, bruised with adversity."¹
 as Shakespeare would say. Without announcement, adversity fell upon Job like an avalanche. •He lost everything. Including all <u>10 children.</u> Soon thereafter he lost his health.

The book that bears his name <u>records his attitude:</u>

 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." (**Job 1:21**)

 Following this incredible statement, <u>God added:</u>

• Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God. (Job 1:22)

• As yourself: "How in the world could Job so calmly handle these trials? Trials mixed with **unbelievable grief?**

The logical questions are:

- Why didn't he blame God?
- How could he keep from it?
- What kept him from bitterness?
 - He had done nothing wrong.

May I suggest
 three basic answers?

First, Job claimed God's loving sovereignty.

The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. May the name of the LORD be blessed!" (Job 1:21).

 In his own words he stated such: "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10)



not everyone will understand.

What was it Job's wife said:

•<u>Job 2:9</u>

Then his wife said to him, "Are you still persisting in your blamelessness? Curse God and die." (Lexham English Bible)

•But Job looked up and not down. Recognizing his Lord's right to rule over his life.

• <u>Second</u>, Job counted on God's promise of resurrection.

 Do you remember his immortal words:

"I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last I shall see God." (Job 19:25-26)

Job looked ahead trusting his Lord.

 Knowing that
 <u>hope does not disappoint</u>" (Romans 5:5),

• Job endured today by envisioning tomorrow.

• Abraham said: *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Genesis 18:25)

• <u>Third</u>, Job confessed his own lack of understanding.

- What a relief that brings into our lives!
 - He didn't feel obligated
 <u>to explain why.</u>
- Listen to his honest admission:

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

 <u>42:2</u> I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be held back.

 <u>42:3</u> Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. (Job 42:24) 34 Job looked within, confessing his inability to put it all together.
 He rested his

not knowing with God,

Not feeling forced to answer why.

- Perhaps you are beginning to get bruised by life.
 - Or maybe the avalanche has already fallen.

Maybe the adversity seems thousands of miles away . . .

•As remote as the land of Uz.

That's the way Job felt
 a few minutes before
 he lost it all.

 James says that if you are having difficulty understanding that then do what? • James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and it shall be given him.

Wisdom has a simple definition: Looking at life from God's point of view.

If we could see life as God sees it, we'd be able to see through problems •But, You and I are not God.

 Wouldn't you like to see your problems
 from God's point of view?

• You can!

• Through the lens of His Word!

 More often than not, the book of Proverbs offers a good starting place. This eye-opening **Old Testament book** teaches us that wisdom is available.

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An ancient Greek maxim states: "The knowledge of **Ignorance** is the beginning of knowledge."

- <u>Wisdom shouts in the street</u>, <u>She cries out</u> <u>in the public square</u>. (Proverbs 1:20)
 - <u>Wisdom is knocking</u> at your door, right now!
- However, wisdom won't barge in.
 - It stands within reach, <u>but you can choose</u>
 to keep it at arm's length.

• Wisdom can be spurned.

 Like a jilted lover, lady wisdom weeps:

•"I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but no one paid attention." (Job 1:24)

• <u>Our problem is not</u> the availability of wisdom;

- It's our lack of passion for it.
 - Remember impetuous
 <u>Samson</u>,
- <u>The He-man with a She-weakness?</u>
 - He spurned wisdom's resistance to Delilah's seductions. and disaster came.
 - Reject wisdom and
 "calamity overtakes you like a storm" (Proverbs 1:27).

- Solomon initially and passionately pursued wisdom.
- When God invited the young king to ask for anything he wished, <u>Solomon requested</u>

• "an understanding heart to know the difference between right and wrong" (1 Kings 3:9).

God honored his request and gave him

• "*a wise and understanding heart*" (1 Kings 3:12).

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 God still doles out a generous supply of wisdom to people with a passion for it. But you must ask for it. (James 1:5)

Don't let your passion fade!

• <u>Why</u>?

• Just ask Solomon.

 True wisdom originates from outside our rashly impulsive natures. Wisdom comes from **God Himself** • Through His Word .

- <u>To where we live.</u>
 - Need wisdom, <u>do you?</u>

It is the kind of wisdom which God alone

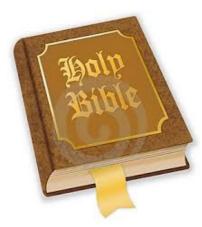
possesses,

 And which He promises to give
 to those who ask for it.

And it is in His book of wisdom. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; (Colossians 3:16)

•Think on these things •Philippians 4:8

The doors of the church are open. The Spirit and the Bride Say "Come". **Revelation 22:17**



William Shakespeare, The Comedy of Errors, 2.1.34, in William Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York: Dorset Press, 1988), 169.

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