

James: Faith That Works: Patience, Power, & Prayer

Day 1

Active Patience

Check out this great article about staying active while you wait patiently:

<https://www.therebelchristian.com/blog/patience-and-faith11202018>

Verses: Romans 12:12, Galatians 6:9, Psalm 37:7

Prayer Topics: Endurance, Consistency, Contentment

Day 2

Construction

When you build a house, you must lay the foundation correctly. While working on the foundation, things are slow, tedious, and at the end of the long and difficult process there is not much to show for all of the effort and time. If you have laid the foundation correctly, the rest of the house will take shape quickly. In chapter 5 of his letter, James encourages us to be patient so that our hearts can be rooted in Christ. This preparation must take place if our lives are to be a suitable house for God. To see how this worked in the life of a famous leader from this past, check out this article:

<https://hopethroughhardtimes.org/humble-beginnings-david/>

Verses: Isaiah 28:16, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Matthew 7:24-27

Prayer Topics: Planting, Roots, Foundation

Day 3

Weight

In Chapter 5 of his letter, James has encouraged us to give weight to our words, to let our "yes" be "yes" and our "no" be "no". We might wonder why it is important to do so when it is clearly costly to us. It is easier to lie than to tell the truth, and it is certainly easier to break my commitment than to keep it. To understand why it is important, we must understand that God always keeps his word. In fact, scripture tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. It is part of the weight of His glory that he gives weight to his words, for even at the cost of death on a cross, God will be true to his word. You might think that that is all well and good for God, but I don't see why I must give weight to my words just because he does. To see why this notion is a mistake, we can turn to Mr. C.S. Lewis for help. Lewis was a master at getting to the heart of perplexing issues, and shows this ability when he tackles the difficult topic of deciphering what it is we as humans really want in life. To unpack this, Lewis talks about the enjoyment we take in beauty. He discusses how a beautiful sunset, a wonderful moment of conversation with friends, a gentle breeze on your face as the last twilight fades into night, makes us feel. These types of things are full of joy and pleasure, and yet full of sadness and melancholy at the same time. Why the melancholy? Lewis recognizes that in these moments we have glimpsed the world of God's glory. In "The Weight of Glory" he states: "For a few minutes we have had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that it is no such thing. We have been mere spectators. Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our

direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted, welcomed, or taken into the dance. We may go when we please, we may stay if we can: "Nobody marks us." A scientist may reply that since most of the things we call beautiful are inanimate, it is not very surprising that they take no notice of us. That, of course, is true. It is not the physical objects that I am speaking of, but that indescribable something of which they become for a moment the messengers. And part of the bitterness which mixes with the sweetness of that message is due to the fact that it so seldom seems to be a message intended for us but rather something we have overheard." The melancholy is the realization that we don't belong in the world of Glory, simply because we are not glorious. We have caught a glimpse of it, we have overheard it, but we are not at home there. What will it take to be at home there? Transformation. We must become like God in His glory, and to do that we must bear the weight of Glory. We begin by giving weight to our words. If we want to reside in the world of God's glory, there is no other way but through the justification of Christ Jesus and the sanctification of the spirit that transforms us into glory.

Verses: Hebrews 10:23, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Peter 1:5-8

Prayer Topics: Integrity, Authenticity, Transformation

Day 4

The Weight of Prayer

Yesterday I wrote about the reason to give weight to your words. Even though it is costly to do so, it is worth the price because God has given weight to his own words, and our job is to image him. This role we have been given of imaging God is not so much a burden, even though there is great weight associated with it, in fact it is more of a gift. I wrote yesterday about C.S. Lewis's observation about glory, and how we desire to be a part of it, to be welcomed by it and to be found glorious. Part of the way we do that is by giving weight to our words. We must let our yes stand in the affirmative even when it is costly, just as our no stands firmly in the negative. As we give weight to our words, and recognize the great weight God gives to his, we will find ourselves drawn ever more into prayer. This only makes sense, because if we doubt the weight God gives to his words we will never take seriously the tremendous promises he gives in relation to prayer. In addition, if we do not give weight to our own words it is unlikely we will seek out the power of the words of God. When I give weight to my words I will be struck by the tremendous burden that is placed upon me. When that happens, I will need much greater strength than I currently possess and the only way to bear that

weight will be for me to seek help from someone stronger than I am. While we can lift the load ourselves we do not seek help, and the temptation we experience in letting our words be weightless reflects our lack of faith in the weighty promises of God. When Daniel was confronted by the command from the king not to pray to God, he was forced to confront the weight that he gave to God's words and to his own. Daniel had no doubt called himself an Israelite, one who wrestles with God and is a member of the covenant with God. Those are the words he used to describe his identity undoubtedly. Would Daniel take that word about who he was seriously? In addition, would he take seriously the promises of his God to bless him if he remained faithful to the word of the covenant? Could Daniel take seriously the claim of God that He is the one true God and there is no other? Daniel went to pray precisely because he gave weight to the words of God and to his own words, and we will find the same is true when we behave like Daniel.

Verses: Romans 8:26, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer Topics: Meaning, Wisdom, Attitude

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

There's a difference between believing in God and knowing God. Believing in God doesn't require intimacy with Him whereas knowing God requires intimacy with Him. The Bible teaches that even Satan and his demons believe in God (James 2:19). Belief in God isn't good enough. God is relational therefore to know God you must enter into a relationship with Him and take His yoke upon us to learn of Him (Proverbs 1:7; Mt. 11:28-30). When the choice is just to believe, reality becomes leaning unto your own understanding and this is what the Living Word of God is trying to warn us against (Proverbs 16:25). Wisdom teaches us about the holiness of God and the necessity of living a holy life unto Him before men so they may see the goodness of God at work in and through all who have surrendered to Him whose heart, mind and body have been circumcised by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:13-21). Wisdom affirms what faith in God teaches. The reverence of God is the beginning of knowledge and this means to dwell in Him daily, surrendering daily, picking up the cross daily choosing to obey Him daily. Just like Enoch walked daily with God we can too (Gen. 5:23-24).

