

JM 1.22-27 ~ *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. ²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

AP: James calls for the Christian to not just memorize or talk about God and His word—but to apply it. He calls for us to use the word as a mirror—constantly and continually applying it to ourselves and measuring ourselves against it. We need to be aware of the fact that, sometimes, our sufferings come from ourselves—and that by seeking to improve ourselves, we can find strength and purification! And as we resist and overcome these trials from within, we can come to be, in truth, a real Christian—a *doer*, not a *forgetful hearer*.

1JN 1.8-10 ~ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

CONCLUSION

Tradition states that James would face a martyr's end in AD 62—when the Pharisees, filled with hatred for James' testimony, violently cast him down from the temple and beat him to death with clubs. If tradition is to be believed, he echoed the words of His Lord: **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**

If tradition is to be believed, James wasn't just a *forgetful hearer*, but a *doer of the work*. He faced persecution—even to the point of death. But he turned those **trials into triumph**—given the *crown of life* he promised to the church in the **διασπορῇ**. He lived, daily, resisting **resisting trials from within**—continually comparing the word against himself, becoming truly that *doer of the work*—shown in his echoing of the very words of our Lord in his death.

Today, our persecution is quite different—at least, it is for now. But like James and the church in the **διασπορῇ**, we are promised trials—the difference between a Christian in name and a Christian in truth is how we handle those trials!

RM 5.1-5 ~ *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

INVITATION

#680 [Exp-NTGE]
11/10/2025

A Real Christian is...Patient in Testing

JM 1.1-27 (NKJV)

PC ___ Pchd ___

QUESTION: What is a real Christian like?

TRN TO JM 1

INTRODUCTION

PERSECUTION/Modern/World Watch List – Report from 2023

It's terrible to hear about the persecution of brethren throughout the world. But persecution has always been hand-in-hand with the church. Its for that reason that it shouldn't surprise us to see it written about so often in the Bible.

BACKGROUND – The Author, Audience, and Aim (JM 1.1)

As we come to our next book in our studies alongside our Bible Bowl team, we turn now to **JM**. One of the General Epistles, it stands behind only **HB** in length. It begins with a simple introduction: *James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, (JM 1.1a) But, which James was the author? The son of Zebedee and brother of John from MK 3.17—the “Sons of Thunder”? The son of Alphaeus from MK 2.14? The father of “the other Judas” from LK 6.16?* Possibly. But most likely, it was composed by James, the brother of Jude, and the half-brother of Jesus.

Much like with Jude, James had not believed in the divinity of Jesus early in His ministry (**MK 3.31-35**). That's likely part of the reason why, similarly to Jude, he only referred to himself as *a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ* despite being raised in the same household as Jesus and being referred to by Paul as one of those who *“seemed to be pillars”* (**GL 2.9**) in the Jerusalem church.

JM is a considered, by many, to be the **PV of the NT**—in part because of its imminent practicality, but also because within its 5 chapters are 50 imperative statements made to its **audience** in greeting: *To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (JM 1.1b)* Most naturally, this is a reference to Jewish Christians who had scattered outside of Judea following the persecution led by Saul in **AC 8.1**. The Greek word there (**διασπορῇ** - de-uh-spore-UH) had two meanings: their physical scattering abroad was the literal meaning, but it also was a word used in the scattering of seed in sowing—which, in truth, was what the scattered church had become—the seed of the kingdom sowed far and wide!

In this, we see the **aim** of the letter: James was determined to help these scattered Christians to be better seed—better influence and evangelism for the kingdom far and wide. He wanted to teach them just what **a real Christian is supposed to be**. And to begin, he taught that **a real Christian is patient in trials**.

BD1: A Real Christian...Turns Trials into Triumphs (JM 1.2-12)

ILL—“When life gives you lemons” (it's an old cliché: make lemonade; make the best of a bad situation) In a way, that's what James is saying when he says, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (JM 1.2)* We must take joy in the pain—certainty in the misery. That is easier said than done! But throughout the Bible, we see examples of people turning defeat into victory: **trial into triumph!** As James looked at the persecuted church in the **διασπορῇ**, he

wanted them to realize that good can come even through these most difficult of circumstances. But that requires certain things of the Christian!

First, the Christian must **know** something: *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (JM 1.3)* The Christian must have a kind of confidence—confidence in the wisdom and will of God at work behind the scenes.

1PT 1.6-9 ~ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

EX: Ultimately, the Christian's sufferings and trials work like weight training: increasing our endurance—our patience. And as we mature, we're better able to endure worse and harder persecution and struggles. *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (JM 1.4)*

"That's easy for you to say!" But when we're stuck in the middle of the pain—in the midst of the suffering, it can be difficult to understand what it is that God is calling from us. **So, what are we to do those moments—when we don't understand?** *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (JM 1.5)* When we don't get it, we should ask God! But not doubting—unsure if God cares or is willing even to help—but with confidence!

JM 1.6-8 ~ *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

EX: The church seemed to be made of two groups: the wealthy and the poor. James wanted them both to understand the true place of their glory. *Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, (JM 1.9)*—they'd never had anything. Any position or power or influence. But now, they had a place and a home in Christ and in the church! What a glorious gift! *but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. (JM 1.10-11)* The wealthy, though, were losing status and power and position. But James wanted them to take joy in this: for their persecution and struggles were purifying them—allowing the temporal to give way to the intemporal!

AP: Regardless of the pain and sufferings and struggles, the Christian was to take joy—for God was purifying and exalting in this humility. God was preparing them for something far greater. And that promise stands for us today! When we are neglected and overwhelmed, when the things of this life seem to burn away like dross, God is preparing us for something far greater and more important: eternal life!

JM 1.10-12 ~ *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

BD2: A Real Christian...Resists Trials from Within (JM 2.13-27)

But the struggles and trials of the Christian in the **διασπορά** weren't simply external ones. They also were dealing with internal trials. James next tells the church that **the real Christian resists trials from within!**

JM 1.13 ~ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

EX: James wanted to correct the assumption of some that even their internal struggles and sins were brought to them by God. That trial, James clarifies, comes from somewhere else: *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (JM 1.14-15)* Their temptations and sins came from within—those things that were causing them their pains were things they gave themselves. But God gave them something far better:

JM 1.16-18 ~ *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. ¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

EX: God only gives good things—things that are given for purpose of growth and strength! But that doesn't mean they're always **"good"** from our perspective.

B.III—2CR 12.1-6 ~ *Paul's Thorn in the Flesh* (Paul blessed to go to the third heaven; what a gift from God; then, he suffered from some malady) *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. (2CR 12.7)* How miserable—how difficult this must have been to Paul! But even this terrible thing is revealed to have been from God—for his own good. *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2CR 12.9-10)*

So how is the Christian to respond to the trials from within—their temptations and spiritual struggles? To grow in Christ, they need to learn how to **resist trials from within.** *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (JM 1.19-21)* God calls for a humility and meekness of soul—setting aside those things that would pull us away from God, and instead, embracing Him and His word.