

Series: James

**Title: The Perspective of Perseverance**

Text: James 1:9-12

Time: 9/25/2011 (a.m.)

**Introduction**

1. Imagine that you have been chased from your home, your job, and your family all because of your belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God.

2. One of the reasons we struggle to understand this concept in America is that for the most part we don't see or value our belief in Christ as something that is life threatening. We tend to see Christianity as a right of citizenship rather than a transformational belief that alters the way we think and act.

3. Christianity is an all out assault on everything this world values and promotes. Listen to what Jesus said about the world's relational hostility toward Christianity.

**John 15:18-19** "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. **19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

**John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

4. The whole adversity that rages in the heart of the believer is that we live in a world that we are not made for.

5. James is instructing these believers who before their belief in Christ had homes and jobs and up to this point their new found faith has been a total disruption of life and for some a total destruction because of persecution.

6. Remember, James is writing to Jewish believers who have been taught that they gain position and power by gaining wealth and social status. James is now teaching them a whole new perspective of living in this world by teaching them to pursue the things of eternal significance.

**1. Overcome Self-pity**

1. It is easy to understand how one could start feeling sorry for themselves when their whole life has been disrupted by believing in the One Who came to rescue them from the penalty of sin.

2. "Self-pity is the ultimate protest against God's providence. It is the refusal to be content with God's provision for your life. It is a selfishness that demands the "right" to have more, be more, do more." (Ed Hindson, *God is there in the tough times*)

3. David battled self-pity, **Psalms 73:2-3** "But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. **3** For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

4. Think about it! Seemingly, the reward for their obedience to the gospel was adversity, why wouldn't they have to fight self pity?

5. Self-pity will ultimately lead to rebellion and despair if it is not dealt with quickly and effectively. It is really an expression of our anger toward God. It is the ultimate cause of depression and suicide. It leads to senseless brooding over the circumstances of life. It fixes our thoughts on the negatives of life and denies the possibility of improvement or change. It finally produces such personal misery that we lose the joy of living.

6. Self-pity comes from clinging to what we feel we deserve. It enslaves us to the past, thus preventing us from developing our future potential.

7. Dealing with self-pity:

- **Admit your selfishness** and deal with self-pity for what it is, sin.
- **Deny yourself.** Life is a battle and victory can only happen through the daily crucifixion of self.
- **Surrender your rights.** Stop demanding your rights. Surrender them to God and accept whatever He gives back to you as privileges. Stop reacting to your circumstances, and start responding to God's working in your life. He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.
- **Realize who you are in Christ.** As a child of God, you are a joint heir with Jesus Christ.
- **Start helping others.** The best way to forget your own troubles is to help someone else with his. Accept the responsibility of being a blessing to someone else. Stop waiting for others to bless you. Start being a blessing and you will receive a blessing.

## **2. What You Have (or don't have) Is Not Who You Are**

1. In battling the world poverty is an advantage if you understand that your identity is in Christ. Poor believers usually find sufficiency in Christ a way of life much more easily than those with financial means.

2. The task of the more prosperous believer is to battle the natural tendency that wealth does not grant favor from God and that they must work to be just as dependent upon Christ as those who are impoverished.

3. The reasoning is that both poor and rich are going to die and that the wealth of the rich will be destroyed. A pricier funeral doesn't make one less dead.

## **3. Pursue the Eternal**

1. Are your pursuits of eternal significance?

2. "Blessed", **(happy)** who perseveres in the pursuit of the eternal.

3. James is teaching that the pursuit of Christ demands the same perseverance for both rich and poor.

4. Most of the folks that I talk with are not being challenged in perseverance by the pursuit of Christ but they are being challenged by that which has caught them in the stillness of their indecision. **(Gal. 6:1)**

5. Until there is an intentional pursuit of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which means the abandonment of self, you will always be in jeopardy of being caught in the stillness of your doubt.