

word there translated “trying” is dokimon or testing to prove the value of.

Each new test successfully endured adds fresh proof of our fidelity to God and contributes to our approved character" – The testing both reveals our character and produces character within us.

**The crown of life** -- This expression is used elsewhere only in Revelation 2:10. It is the crown which consists of life--eternal life. This is the culmination of our salvation.

The word crown (*stephanos*) was used in the Septuagint to symbolize honor and happiness as well as sovereignty. This crown also symbolized victory. James 2:5 would support the idea of *sovereignty* here, but what it is really talking about is victory – to the VICTOR goes the crown!

This crown is similar to the *crown of righteousness* in 2 Timothy 4:8 and the *crown of glory* in 1 Peter 5:4. The Lord has promised eternal life to those who love Him (cf. 1 John 2:25, John 6:40).

# AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PULPIT SERIES

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Let's Get Practical

## Part 3

## RICH MAN, POOR MAN

Practical Applications of Biblical Truth

Rev. Michael Gantt, Senior Pastor

Agape Christian Fellowship  
30 Canal Street

Brattleboro, Vermont 05601  
Ph. (802) 257-4069

Fax (802) 254-4239

agape@sover.net

[www.acfellowship.net](http://www.acfellowship.net)

Michael K. Gantt, Senior Pastor

M. Bryan Gantt, Associate Pastor  
**Going Around the World for Jesus**

James has shown that God's purpose in introducing trials into our lives is to bring us to maturity as His children (1:2-4).

Under the pressure of trials, we all need special, supernatural wisdom from God. This wisdom is generously given by God to all who ask Him. It enables us to handle trials in a way which guarantees we will get the maximum benefit from them.

However, we must ask in faith, believing that He is able and willing to do as He promised. This, of course, means we must be willing to accept the fact that God is sovereign and has sent this trial for the purpose of bringing us to maturity. Trials afflict the poor and the rich alike. James is now going to give insight on how we are to face the trials we are called to bear (1:9-11). He will then give a reminder of the blessing of trials in the plan of God 1:12).

It is of utmost importance when undergoing trials that we not set our eyes on material things. That will cause the double-mindedness so strongly condemned in verses 6-8. This is true for all of us, poor and rich alike.

### James 1:9

The brother of *humble circumstances* is addressed first. glory (*kauchastho*, ) Meaning "to boast," "glory," "pride oneself". This word denotes a strong personal reaction, a feeling of pride or exultation. This word is used often in the New Testament and is a favorite of Paul's, who uses it more than 30 times (cf. Rom. 5:2; 2 Cor. 12:9).

**in his high position** -- The person of low circumstances must not envy the material possessions of the rich – but he should lift his sights to the exalted position he now enjoys in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:3,1 & 2:4-6). For though he is poor in the things of this world and treated with disdain by those of this world, he must remember who he is in Christ.

For let him remember that he is a prince, and glory in it. He is a prince on his way to his kingdom,

traveling by rough roads, enduring many hardships, suffering from hunger, cold, and weariness, and the people among whom he is traveling do not know anything about his greatness; but he knows; let him glory in his high estate! (R. W. Dale in *King*, p. 13).

### James 1:10-

**James now turns his attention to the rich man.** Again, this is a believer that is in view. The early church, while comprised to a large extent of those of little material means, did have some of wealth.

**humiliation** (*tapeinosei*) -- This is the same word used to describe the brother of humble circumstances in verse 9. The rich need to be reminded that earthly possessions are not the mark of true wealth (cf. Luke 12:15). In the face of trials, the rich man needs to glory in the fact that He has become a slave of Jesus Christ. His glory in this life is transitory and all that will really matter is his position as a humble servant of God.

**like flowering grass he will pass away** -- This stress on transitory nature is developed in the next verse. He is saying to the poor man – though you might obtain the wealth of the rich, you can not depend upon it, you certainly can't keep it – and in the final day it will profit you nothing.

He says to the rich man that though you may have the wealth and possessions of this world, you cannot depend upon it, you certainly can't keep it – and in the final day it will profit you nothing.

### James 1:11-

It is a real and constant danger for the rich (believers included) to forget the brevity of this life in their pursuit of material things. The reference is taken from Isaiah 40:6-8

The four verbs in the aorist tense picture the rapid succession of events: **rises . . . withers . . . falls . . .** is destroyed. In the midst of his pursuits--As the rich man is busily going about his business activities, his end will come. (Cf. the rich man in Luke 12:16-21. Death separates us from all we have in this life. Therefore, the real

cause of glory for the wealthy believer is his position as a humble servant of the Living God (cf. I Tim. 6:17-19).

### James 1:12-

This verse corresponds closely to verse 2 with its command to count it all joy. Trials endured will be an occasion of great reward. A reward that is great than all the wealth the rich man may possess and which the poor man may covet.

Blessed -- This is the same word used in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. This person has an inner happiness and joy not dependent on external circumstances. This word is used 50 times in the New Testament. Note this blessedness is not a result of:

1. absence of trials.
2. presence of trials.

But rather it is a result of persevering under trial. *Perseveres* is the same word translated "endurance" in verses 3 and 4. This does not mean he never fails or stumbles but that he keeps on without giving up. He makes a conscious, deliberate decision to remain under the pressure for the purpose of gaining the perfect work God is doing in him.

**approved** (*dokimos*) -- Related to the word testing (*dokimion*) in verse 3. It was used of the testing of coins and metals to establish their genuineness. The word is used seven times in the New Testament (Rom. 14:18; 16:10; 1 Cor. 11:19; 2 Cor. 10:18; 13:7; 2 Tim. 2:15; James 1:12).

The *dokimos* relates not only to the testing of coins and metals – *but to those doing the testing*. Some men would shave coins so that they were not giving the correct weight – in essence cheating those with whom they did business.

However, the *dokimos* were approved because they provided the full measure of value in the coins they traded with. They were approved in their character, because their character proved itself during the time of testing.

Remember back up in verse 3 when James talked about the trying of your faith worketh endurance – the