

Becoming Like Christ, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 6: Patience With People and With God

James 5:7–11

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson sets out to recover a virtue our age despises: patience, what older translations call longsuffering. The doctrine at stake is that Christian patience is not a personality trait or a coping technique but a settled trust in the God who is surely coming. James anchors every appeal in the return of Christ (James 5:7–8), so the class must leave seeing that we wait not for nothing and not forever, but for a Person and a day that are certain. Make clear that this patience has two faces in the passage: longsuffering toward people who wrong us (do not grumble) and persevering trust toward God when He seems slow (the prophets, Job). Both flow from the same conviction that the Judge is standing at the door.

There is a doctrinal guardrail to hold with care, and it gathers around the heaviest question of the lesson. When James says the coming of the Lord is at hand and the Judge stands at the door, he points to Christ's final coming and judgment, not to the setting up of a future earthly kingdom. The kingdom is not a thousand-year reign still awaiting us on earth; it was established when the church began at Pentecost (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13), and Christ reigns now at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33–36). His return brings resurrection, judgment, and the new heavens and new earth (John 5:28–29; 2 Peter 3:10–13), not an earthly millennium. Teach the passage so that our hope rests on the reigning, returning Lord, and guard the class against pinning patience on a kingdom yet to be established. Note too that the blessing James pronounces on those who remain steadfast (James 5:11) confirms that salvation is preserved through endurance, never the assumption that one cannot fall away.

Beyond the doctrine, this lesson aims at the heart, because patience is forged exactly where it is hardest. Many in the room are quietly worn down by a relationship that wounds, a prayer that goes unanswered, an injustice no one has righted. The pastoral aim is to lift their eyes from the long stretch of silent waiting to the harvest that is coming, to keep them from letting the strain curdle into bitterness toward the people beside them, and to set before them Job and the prophets as proof that faithful endurance is seen and rewarded by a God who is compassionate and merciful. The goal is not merely to teach patience but to grow it, the fruit of an obedient faith that keeps trusting the Lord all the way to His coming.

Question 1

Student Question:

James grounds the whole call to patience in one event: be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord (James 5:7–8). Why does he anchor patience in the certain return of Christ rather

than in willpower or positive thinking? What does it tell us about Christian patience that it is fundamentally a matter of waiting for a Person who is surely coming?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin by letting the word therefore do its work. James does not say, be patient because patience is a fine quality, or because life is easier when you stay calm. He says, be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord (James 5:7). The whole weight of the command rests on an event: the Lord is coming. Christian patience is not bare endurance or gritted teeth; it is waiting for a Person who has promised to return. Take that promise away and patience becomes mere stoicism, the bleak business of bearing what cannot be changed. Keep the promise and patience becomes hope with its sleeves rolled up.

Help the class feel how different this is from the world's counsel. Our culture treats patience as a technique for lowering stress, a way of managing yourself so you do not blow up. James grounds it instead in the certainty of the future. The reason we can bear injustice now without taking vengeance, the reason we can keep doing right when nothing seems to come of it, is that the One who sees everything is coming to set it right. The cheated laborers of James 5:4 have an Advocate whose ears are open, and He will not be slow forever.

Notice also the kind of patience this produces. Because it waits for a Person, it is relational and hopeful, not grim and isolated. We are not white-knuckling our way through a meaningless delay; we are leaning toward a homecoming. This is why the New Testament can speak of waiting eagerly for our Savior (Philippians 3:20) and even of loving His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8). Set the tone for the whole lesson here: the patience James commands is the posture of people who know how the story ends and are determined to live faithfully until it does.

Make the practical point plain. If our patience is anchored in the coming of the Lord, then the way to grow patient is not mainly to try harder to stay calm but to fix our hope more firmly on Christ's return. The believer who has lost sight of that day will run out of patience; the believer who keeps it in view can wait a long time. Encourage the class to ask, in each frustration, whether they are really waiting on the Lord or merely enduring without Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christian patience grounded in the certain coming of the Lord (James 5:7–8)
- The difference between hopeful waiting on a Person and mere stoic endurance
- The return of Christ as the believer's settled hope (Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 4:8)
- God's justice as the answer to present injustice (James 5:4)
- Growing in patience by fixing hope on Christ's coming, not by sheer willpower

Discussion Prompts

- How is waiting for a Person different from simply enduring a delay?
- Where has losing sight of Christ's return left you running out of patience?

- What would it look like to wait on the Lord in a current frustration, rather than just gritting your teeth?

Question 2

Student Question:

James says the farmer waits with patience for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until it receives the early and the late rains (James 5:7). Where in your own life are you in a long stretch of waiting where nothing seems to be happening? How would it change your week to see that season the way a farmer sees the silent months between planting and harvest?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the truth toward our own slow seasons, and the farmer is the image to dwell on. James says the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until it receives the early and the late rains (James 5:7). Two things stand out. First, the farmer's waiting is active, not idle; he has plowed and planted and tended, and now he waits on what only God can give. Second, the harvest is precious, worth the long delay. The waiting is hard precisely because the thing waited for matters so much.

Bring this down to the ordinary believer's life. So much of following Christ happens in the silent months between planting and harvest, when nothing visible seems to be happening. You pray for a wayward child and hear nothing back. You labor in a marriage, a job, a ministry, and see no return. You work on a stubborn sin and feel no different. In farming, the absence of a visible crop in March does not mean the seed is dead; it means it is December, and the rains are not finished. God has His seasons, the early rain and the late, and He is not pacing the floor with us.

Press the class gently on how we tend to behave in these stretches. We are tempted to dig up the seed to check on it, to abandon the field, or to conclude that the harvest will never come. James calls us instead to settle in and wait with the farmer's patience, trusting that the God who controls the rains is at work in the dark soil where we cannot see. The waiting itself is part of the harvest, the place where trust grows.

Invite honesty and specificity. Ask each person to name the field they are tending where nothing seems to be sprouting. Then reframe it: this is not abandonment, it is a season. The rains are God's to send, and they will come. Our task is to keep tending the field and waiting for the One who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The farmer as a model of active, hopeful patience (James 5:7)
- God's appointed seasons in the spiritual life, the early and the late rains
- The hiddenness of growth: visible barrenness is not always real barrenness
- God who gives the increase while we tend the field (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

- Waiting itself as the soil in which trust grows

Discussion Prompts

- What field are you tending where nothing seems to be sprouting?
- How does the farmer's view of the silent months reframe your season of waiting?
- What is the temptation in your waiting: to dig up the seed, abandon the field, or give up on the harvest?

Question 3

Student Question:

Twice James says the coming of the Lord is at hand, and then, behold, the Judge is standing at the door (James 5:8–9). What does it mean that the Lord's coming is near and that He stands as Judge at the door, and how does the nearness of His coming and His judgment shape the way we are to live and wait now?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now move to the urgency James presses on us. Twice he sounds it: the coming of the Lord is at hand, and then, behold, the Judge is standing at the door (James 5:8–9). The patience he commands is not a vague hope in something far off; it is a leaning toward something near. The same Lord whose coming steadies our waiting also stands ready as Judge, close enough to be pictured at the door, his hand on the latch.

Be careful and clear about what this nearness means. James is not setting a date or predicting that Christ would return within a few years. The New Testament holds together two truths: the Lord's coming is certain and near in the sense that it is the next great act of the drama, the imminent and ever-impending event toward which all of history leans (Romans 13:11–12; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 22:20), and yet no one knows the day or the hour (Matthew 24:36; 2 Peter 3:8–10). The nearness is not a countdown on a calendar but a posture for the heart: live as those whose Lord may appear at any time.

Hold up the double picture James paints. The coming Lord is both the believer's hope and everyone's Judge. For the mistreated Christians of this letter, the Judge at the door is good news; the injustices done to them will not go unanswered. But James immediately turns the warning on his readers themselves (do not grumble, lest you be judged), reminding them that the same Judge sees their hearts too. Nearness of judgment is sobering and comforting at once: it assures us wrongs will be righted, and it summons us to live ready.

Draw the practical line. If the Judge is at the door, two things follow. We can release our grip on revenge, because vengeance belongs to Him and He is coming (Romans 12:19). And we must guard our own walk, because He sees us as surely as He sees those who wrong us. The nearness of Christ's coming is meant to make us both patient toward others and watchful over ourselves.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The certainty and impending nearness of Christ's coming (James 5:8; Romans 13:11–12)
- Christ as Judge of all, standing at the door (James 5:9; Acts 17:31)
- No one knows the day or hour; nearness is a posture, not a date (Matthew 24:36; 2 Peter 3:8–10)
- The coming Lord as both the believer's hope and everyone's Judge
- Releasing vengeance to God because He is coming (Romans 12:19)

Discussion Prompts

- What does it change to picture the Judge as already standing at the door?
- How is the nearness of Christ's coming both comforting and sobering for you?
- Where do you need to hand a wrong over to the Judge rather than avenging it yourself?

Question 4

Student Question:

James warns, do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged (James 5:9). When you are under pressure and tired of waiting, who tends to absorb your irritation, your spouse, your children, your fellow Christians? What would it look like this week to refuse to let your waiting curdle into grumbling against the people around you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-searching question lands on a small word with a large reach. In the very breath where James warns about the Judge, he names the danger: do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged (James 5:9). It is a striking turn. We expect the strain of suffering to be aimed at our enemies, the rich oppressors of verses 1 through 6. Instead James warns about what suffering does to us inside the family of God. Pressure has a way of leaking sideways. The people who wound us may be out of reach, so the irritation spills onto the people who are near.

Make this concrete and personal, because everyone has done it. The hard day at work becomes short words at home. The unanswered prayer becomes a sharp tone with a fellow Christian. The long waiting becomes a low, constant murmur of complaint against everyone within range. Grumbling feels almost innocent; it is not a violent sin, just a steady drip. But James puts it under the eye of the Judge, which tells us how seriously God takes the corrosion of the fellowship from within.

Help the class see why patience and grumbling cannot live together. Grumbling is impatience leaking out of the mouth. It is the sound a heart makes when it has stopped waiting on the Lord and started indicting the people around it. The cure is not merely biting our tongue but re-anchoring the heart in the coming of the Lord (the very thing James

commands in verse 8), so that the pressure has somewhere to go besides the people beside us.

Push toward a specific resolve. Ask each person to identify who absorbs their impatience most, the spouse, the children, the brother or sister in Christ, and to name one practice this week that interrupts the drip: a held tongue, a turned-toward prayer, a word of gratitude in place of a complaint. The goal is a household and a church where waiting does not curdle into grumbling.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Grumbling against one another as a sin the Judge takes seriously (James 5:9)
- How pressure and waiting leak sideways onto those nearest us
- Grumbling as impatience escaping through the mouth
- Protecting the unity of the fellowship under strain (Philippians 2:14–15)
- Re-anchoring the heart in Christ's coming as the cure for complaint

Discussion Prompts

- Who tends to absorb your irritation when you are tired of waiting?
- Why does James call grumbling a matter for the Judge, not just a small habit?
- What one practice could interrupt the drip of complaint in your home or church this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

James offers the prophets as an example of suffering and patience, men who spoke in the name of the Lord (James 5:10). Why does he point to people who suffered precisely because they were faithful, not in spite of it? What does this teach us about the relationship between obedience to God and the experience of hardship in this life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now James hands us our first set of teachers: as an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord (James 5:10). Notice carefully what kind of example they are. The prophets did not suffer because they had wandered from God; they suffered because they spoke for Him. Their hardship was not a sign of God's displeasure but a consequence of their faithfulness. This cuts directly against a false assumption that lurks in many hearts: that if I obey God, life should go smoothly.

Walk the class through the witness of these men. Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern for telling the truth (Jeremiah 38:6). Elijah ran for his life from a queen who wanted him dead (1 Kings 19). Many of the prophets were rejected, beaten, and killed by the very people they were sent to help (Matthew 5:12; Hebrews 11:36–38). And through it all they kept speaking

in the name of the Lord. Their patience was not the calm of an easy life; it was the endurance of faithful people in a hostile world.

Draw out the doctrinal point plainly. Obedience to God does not exempt us from suffering, and in a fallen world it sometimes invites it. Jesus said as much: in the world you will have tribulation (John 16:33), and a servant is not greater than his master (John 15:20). To follow Christ faithfully is, at times, to share in the kind of opposition the prophets knew. This is not a defect in the Christian life; it is part of its shape.

Make the encouragement personal. If you are doing right and still suffering, you are not necessarily out of God's will; you may be standing exactly where the prophets stood. The example James gives is meant to dignify faithful suffering and to keep us from the despair that whispers, this hardship must mean God has abandoned me. The prophets prove otherwise. They suffered in the name of the Lord, and they are held up forever as those to imitate.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The prophets as examples of suffering joined to patience (James 5:10)
- Suffering as a consequence of faithfulness, not necessarily of sin
- The false assumption that obedience guarantees an easy life
- Jesus' warning that His followers will share in the world's opposition (John 15:20; 16:33)
- The dignity of faithful suffering in the name of the Lord (Matthew 5:12; Hebrews 11:36–38)

Discussion Prompts

- Why does James point to people who suffered because they were faithful?
- Where have you assumed that obeying God should make life smoother?
- How does the prophets' example reframe a hardship you are carrying for doing right?

Question 6

Student Question:

James says, you have heard of the steadfastness of Job (James 5:11). Job is famous for losing nearly everything and still refusing to curse God. When your faith is tested by loss or unanswered prayer, what does Job's example show you about the difference between perfect patience and honest, struggling, persevering faith? Where do you need that kind of endurance right now?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now James names the second great teacher: you have heard of the steadfastness of Job (James 5:11). Job is the patron saint of those whose faith is tested by loss. In a single day he lost his wealth, his servants, and his ten children, and then his health (Job 1–2). His wife told

him to curse God and die; his friends told him his suffering proved his guilt. And yet, James says, he was steadfast. He did not let go of God.

Be honest with the class about what Job's patience actually looked like, because a sentimental picture will not help anyone. Job was not serene. He lamented bitterly. He demanded answers. He wished he had never been born (Job 3). He argued with God for chapter after chapter. The patience of Job is not the absence of anguish or even of protest; it is the refusal to abandon God in the middle of the anguish. He took his confusion and his complaint to God rather than away from Him. That is endurance, and James calls it blessed.

This is a liberating distinction for many believers. We sometimes think that real faith feels calm, so when we wrestle and weep and cry out, we conclude our faith is failing. Job shows otherwise. The steadfastness God honors is not flawless composure but persevering trust, the kind that keeps holding on while it questions, keeps praying while it hurts, keeps refusing to walk away even when it cannot see. There is room in faithful endurance for honest struggle.

Bring it home. Where is the class member's faith being tested by loss or by prayers that go unanswered? Job's example does not demand that they feel fine; it calls them to keep clinging to God in the dark, to bring the questions to Him rather than letting the questions drive them from Him. Ask each person to name the place where they need that kind of stubborn, struggling, persevering faith right now.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Job's steadfastness as the model of faith tested by loss (James 5:11; Job 1-2)
- The difference between perfect composure and honest, persevering faith
- Lament and questioning as compatible with genuine endurance (Job 3)
- Bringing our anguish to God rather than away from Him
- Endurance, not flawless calm, as what God blesses

Discussion Prompts

- What surprises you about what Job's patience actually looked like?
- Why is it freeing to know that endurance leaves room for honest struggle?
- Where do you need stubborn, persevering faith in a loss or unanswered prayer right now?

Question 7

Student Question:

James says, we count those blessed who remained steadfast (James 5:11), and Jesus likewise blesses those who endure (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:10). Why does the New Testament so consistently tie God's blessing to endurance over time rather than to a single moment of decision? What does this teach us about the nature of saving faith and the danger of falling away?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question opens up a theme that runs through the whole New Testament: God's blessing rests on those who endure. James says, we count those blessed who remained steadfast (James 5:11). Jesus says the same: the one who endures to the end will be saved (Matthew 24:13), and be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). The pattern is unmistakable. Scripture does not pronounce the blessing on those who merely began well, but on those who kept going.

Draw the doctrinal point with care, because it touches the very nature of saving faith. Genuine faith is not a single past decision that we can leave behind us; it is a living, enduring trust that perseveres to the end. This is why the New Testament so often warns believers, real believers, to hold fast and not fall away. We are made partakers of Christ if indeed we hold our first confidence firm to the end (Hebrews 3:14). We must take care lest there be in any of us an unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God (Hebrews 3:12). Faith that does not endure was never the faith that saves.

Address the false comfort gently but plainly. Some teach that once a person is saved, they can never finally be lost, no matter what follows. But Scripture takes seriously the danger that a Christian can fall away (Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26–31; 2 Peter 2:20–22), and Paul warns that some have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4). This is not meant to terrify the faithful but to keep them faithful. The blessing James pronounces is for those who remain steadfast, which means steadfastness matters all the way to the end.

At the same time, guard against the opposite error of anxious works-righteousness, as though our endurance earns the prize by its own strength. We endure by grace, kept by God's power through faith (1 Peter 1:5), working out our salvation because God is working in us (Philippians 2:12–13). Endurance is the fruit of an obedient, living faith, not a wage we extract from God. Hold the two together: salvation is preserved through ongoing faithfulness, and that faithfulness is itself sustained by the grace of the God who is bringing us home.

Bring it to the heart. The point is not to make believers nervous about their standing but to make them serious about continuing. The crown is for those who finish (2 Timothy 4:7–8). Encourage the class to see their daily perseverance, the prayer prayed again, the temptation refused again, the love shown again, not as drudgery but as the path of the blessed, walked with the Lord who is coming.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's blessing tied to endurance, not merely to a beginning (James 5:11; Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:10)
- Saving faith as a living, persevering trust, not a single past decision
- The real possibility of falling away; the rejection of once saved, always saved (Hebrews 3:12–14; 6:4–6; Galatians 5:4)
- Salvation preserved through ongoing faith and obedience

- Endurance as the fruit of grace, kept by God's power, not earned by our strength (1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 2:12–13)
- The crown reserved for those who finish the race (2 Timothy 4:7–8)

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the New Testament tie God's blessing to endurance rather than to a single moment?
- How does the warning against falling away keep you faithful without making you anxious?
- How is persevering faith both our responsibility and a work of God's grace in us?

Question 8

Student Question:

James tells us we have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful (James 5:11), pointing us to how Job's story ended. When you cannot see what God is doing in your own long ordeal, how does it steady you to fix your eyes on God's character and His proven mercy? Name one specific hardship where you need to trust God's compassion before you can see His purpose.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question lifts our eyes from our circumstances to God's character. James completes Job's story with a phrase easy to rush past: you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful (James 5:11). The reference is to the end of Job's ordeal, when the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him a future he could not have imagined in the ash heap (Job 42:10–17). But the deeper point is about the kind of God who was at work the whole time, even in the silence.

Make the crucial distinction. James does not say we have understood the reasons for the Lord, as though every why has been explained. He says we have seen the purpose, the end, the outcome of the Lord, and that what it reveals is His mercy. Job never received an explanation for his suffering; God never told him about the conversation in the heavenly court. What Job received instead was God Himself and, in the end, the evidence of God's compassion. We are not promised answers in our trials. We are promised a God whose character is proven trustworthy.

This is enormously practical for the believer in the dark. When you cannot trace God's hand, you can trust God's heart. The compassion and mercy James names are not abstractions; they are written across the whole story of Scripture and supremely at the cross, where the purpose of the Lord toward us was shown once for all (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9–10). The Christian in an unexplained ordeal is not waiting on a faceless fate but on a Father whose mercy is already demonstrated.

Press for specificity and trust. Ask each person to name a hardship where they cannot yet see the purpose, and then to fix their gaze, not on the unanswered why, but on the proven character of the God who holds it. Faith in the dark says, I do not understand this, but I know the One who does, and He is compassionate and merciful. That is where Job landed, and it is where James means to bring us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The purpose of the Lord revealed as compassion and mercy (James 5:11; Job 42:10–17)
- Trusting God's character when we cannot trace His reasons
- God's mercy proven supremely at the cross (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9–10)
- Faith resting on God's revealed heart rather than on full explanations
- The restoration of Job as a foretaste of God's faithful purpose

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between understanding God's reasons and trusting His character?
- How does the cross assure you of God's compassion in an unexplained trial?
- Name one hardship where you must trust God's mercy before you can see His purpose.

Question 9

Student Question:

This is the heart of the lesson, so weigh it carefully. James says the Judge is standing at the door and the coming of the Lord is at hand (James 5:8–9), and he points our hope to that final coming when the Lord sets all things right. Some teach that this points to a future earthly reign of Christ for a thousand years, a kingdom still to be set up on earth. Yet Scripture teaches that Christ's kingdom was established when the church began (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13), that He reigns now at God's right hand (Acts 2:33–36; 1 Corinthians 15:24–26), and that His coming brings not an earthly thousand-year reign but resurrection, final judgment, and the handing of the kingdom to the Father (John 5:28–29; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10; 2 Peter 3:10–13). How does a right understanding of Christ's present reign and His certain final coming as Judge give us a firmer foundation for patience than a hope pinned on an earthly kingdom yet to come?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson, and it requires both clarity and care. James anchors patience in the coming of the Lord and warns that the Judge is standing at the door (James 5:8–9). The question is, what exactly are we waiting for? Some teach that the Lord's coming will inaugurate a future earthly reign of Christ for a literal thousand years, a kingdom still to be established on earth, with patience pinned on that coming golden age. Scripture, read whole, points us somewhere firmer and better.

First, the kingdom is not still future; it has already come. The prophet Daniel foretold that in the days of the Roman kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44). Jesus declared that some standing before Him would not taste death until they saw the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1), and that power came at Pentecost when the church was established (Acts 2). Paul writes that God has already transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom is here now; it is the reign of Christ over His church.

Second, Christ reigns now, not at some future date. Peter proclaimed at Pentecost that God had exalted Jesus to His right hand, that God has made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:33–36). Paul says Christ must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet, with the last enemy, death, destroyed at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:24–26). The reign is present and ongoing; the church does not wait for the King to take His throne, for He sits on it already.

Third, what His coming brings is not an earthly thousand-year reign but the end of all things and the great assize. At His coming the dead are raised, both the just and the unjust (John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15), the wicked are repaid with eternal destruction and the faithful are glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:6–10), the heavens and earth as we know them pass away and the new heavens and new earth appear (2 Peter 3:10–13), and Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). This is the door James says the Judge is standing at: not the door of an earthly utopia, but the door of final judgment and eternal home.

Now bring it back to patience, for that is James's whole point. A hope pinned on a future earthly kingdom that has not yet come can leave us forever waiting for the King to begin His reign. But the gospel gives us something steadier: our King already reigns, His kingdom already stands, and He is surely coming as Judge to set all things right and gather His own. That is a foundation that does not shift. We are not waiting for Christ to take power; we are serving a Christ who already holds it, and waiting for Him to bring history to its appointed end. That certainty, more than any speculation about an earthly golden age, is what allows the suffering believer to wait with unshakable patience until the coming of the Lord.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The kingdom already established when the church began (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13)
- Christ reigning now at the Father's right hand, not at a future date (Acts 2:33–36; 1 Corinthians 15:24–26)
- No future earthly thousand-year reign; rejection of premillennialism
- Christ's coming bringing resurrection of just and unjust, and final judgment (John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10)
- The passing of the present heavens and earth and the new creation (2 Peter 3:10–13)
- The kingdom delivered to the Father at the end (1 Corinthians 15:24)
- Patience founded on the reigning, returning Lord, not on an earthly kingdom yet to come

Discussion Prompts

- What evidence shows that Christ's kingdom is already established and He reigns now?
- What does Scripture say His coming will actually bring, if not an earthly thousand-year reign?
- How does knowing your King already reigns give you firmer patience than waiting for a kingdom yet to begin?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across James 5:7–11 as a whole: the patient farmer, the steady heart, the warning against grumbling, the suffering prophets, the steadfast Job, the compassionate purpose of the Lord, and the Judge at the door. Name one specific situation where Jesus is calling you to longsuffering right now, and one concrete way you will wait on Him this week, in your speech, your prayers, or your attitude toward someone who is hard to bear.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone gathers the whole passage and asks for a concrete response. Walk the class once more through James's gallery: the farmer waiting through the silent months for the precious harvest (James 5:7); the steady heart, established because the coming of the Lord is at hand (James 5:8); the warning not to let waiting curdle into grumbling against one another (James 5:9); the prophets who suffered for their faithfulness (James 5:10); steadfast Job, who held to God through unimaginable loss; and the purpose of the Lord, compassionate and merciful, with the Judge standing at the door (James 5:11).

Now make it personal and particular, because patience is never grown in general; it is grown in specific situations with specific people. Press for two things from each person. First, name the one place right now where Jesus is calling for longsuffering, the relationship that wounds, the prayer that waits, the injustice that stings, the season where nothing seems to grow. Second, name one concrete way to wait on Him this week: a complaint replaced with a prayer, a sharp word held back, a deliberate return to the promise of His coming when impatience rises.

Tie this back to the heart of the study. We are learning to look like Jesus, and few things reveal Him more clearly than patience under pressure. He endured the cross and the contradiction of sinners against Himself (Hebrews 12:2–3), entrusting Himself to the One who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23). The longsuffering James calls for is nothing less than the character of Christ formed in us, the fruit the Spirit grows in those who walk with Him (Galatians 5:22).

Close with hope, because the whole passage breathes it. The waiting is not endless and it is not pointless. The rains will come, the harvest is precious, the Judge is at the door, and the Lord is compassionate and merciful. Send the class out not merely resolved to try harder at

patience but lifted by the certainty of the One they are waiting for. Establish your hearts, James says, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. The same word steadies us still.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A synthesis of James 5:7–11: the farmer, the steady heart, the warning, the prophets, Job, and the merciful Judge
- Patience as Christlike character grown in specific, concrete situations
- Christ Himself as the supreme model of patient endurance (1 Peter 2:23; Hebrews 12:2–3)
- Patience as fruit the Spirit grows in those who walk with Him (Galatians 5:22)
- Establishing the heart on the certain coming of the Lord (James 5:8)

Discussion Prompts

- Where is Jesus calling you to longsuffering right now, with a person or a situation?
- What is one concrete way you will wait on Him this week, in speech, prayer, or attitude?
- How does the certainty of the Lord's coming change the way you will face that waiting?