

Crown Me- Part II

James 2-12

Purpose of series: The purpose of this series is to assist you in taking off the limits of God's expression *through* you and *in* your life and His blessing *on* your life. This series provides us with a practical view of how to live a life of spiritual impact and personal fullness in a difficult world under pressure. We will learn to be limited less by the things that can distract us from our real purpose and our true potential as believers on this earth.

Purpose of this message: The purpose of this message is to expose the four steps of processing life through James' writing. We are a desperate people and in a desperate society. There has to be a move of God or we will absolutely implode. To be a mild Christian while Satan is viciously reeking havoc on our world is not fully having the mind of Christ. When ever we say that we were meant for more than this, that often refers to our destiny, more of a platform, more of authority. But James enlightens us that we were meant for more than this, more of the havoc so our world could enjoy the fruit of our faith! Be mighty warrior of God. Become limitless, don't cap your faith off at the first sign of trouble! Be mighty, live for our God.

Intro: Max Lucado tells the story of Chippie, the parakeet. One day Chippie's owner decided to clean his cage while he was peacefully perched in his cage. The next thing he knew, he was sucked in, washed up, and blown over.

The vacuum cleaner seemed to be the best means of this feat, so she removed the main attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. The minute the phone rang, Chippie's owner turned to pick it up and as quick as she said "hello," "Ssssopp!" Chippie was sucked in with all the other unwanted dirt and debris. Quickly the bird owner put down the phone, turned off the vacuum, and opened the bag. There was Chippie -- still alive, but stunned.

As soon as the owner noticed how covered the bird was with dust and soot, she raced to the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering, she did what any compassionate bird owner would do . . . she reached for the hair dryer and blasted the pet with hot air. **Chippie never knew what hit him.**

The story hit the news paper and a few days later the reporter who'd initially written about the event contacted Chippie's owner to see how the bird was recovering.

"Well," she replied, "Chippie doesn't sing much anymore -- he just sits and stares."

It's obvious from our standpoint why Chippie doesn't sing much anymore, he's been sucked in, washed up, and blown over . . . That would almost take anyone's song away. (*In the Eye of the Storm*, Word Publishing, 1991, p. 11.)

James

As we study the book of James, it is blatant with the certainty that you and I will face trials and struggles as we walk by faith in obedience toward Christ.

- **The Army Chaplain:** An Army chaplain had a sign on his door that said,

“If you have troubles, come in & tell me all about them. If you don’t have troubles, come in & tell me how you do it.”

LOST: Time Magazine reported this past week, (June 12, 2008), **Erica Nelson**, 23,



and **Abby Flantz**, 25, had been spending their summer working at a hotel just outside the 9,400-square-mile, Denali National Park in Alaska. The stories they had heard and the scenery they had viewed from a distance enticed them to attempt and overnight hike. That overnight hike turned into an six day intensive search that cost more than \$118,000 and sometimes involved 100 people from volunteer groups and state and federal agencies. They had no idea they had triggered a search of that magnitude.

James reminds us of the reality that even in the Christian life, there are trials and temptations, but we don't have to become victims of these events around us. We often face times that absolutely throw us off, as if we are lost. Erica and Abby shared the last granola bar thinking it might be their last...but they had walked far enough out of the wilderness that Erica's cell phone reception and she called her mother in Houston, Texas to tell her she might be late for her sister's wedding. Can you imagine the surprise on the other side of the phone. Incredible joy and concern at the same time. Abby Flantz was reported as saying:

“We were gone long enough. We knew there might be searches for us, but we didn't know it would be this big.”

-ABBY FLANTZ

Listen, I have encouragement for you today, sometimes we may feel like we have got to get through this wilderness enough to get reception with God, but there is no reception problem with God in the wilderness. We can have joy in the storm, we can see the hand of the Lord when we walk out of the wilderness.

Four Statements That Will Help Us Walk Through Our Wilderness of Life And Win

1. The Statement of **Fact** (James 1:2-4)
2. The Statement of **Faith** (James 1:5-8)
3. The Statement of **Foundation** (James 1:9-11)
4. The Statement of **Forever** (James 1:12)

Let's look as James writing and deal with the first Statement:

1. The Statement of Fact

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4

James is telling us several things in his Statement of Fact:

First: There is one response to every situation...joy. The first thing that James is

telling us in the Statement of Fact is that we have got to look at life differently, we cannot have the same mindset as the world. Though we go through the same thing the world does, we are encouraged here to not define it the same way!

Gordon MacDonald appeals to get in shape in our minds:

"In our pressurized society, people who are out of shape mentally usually fall victim to ideas and systems that are destructive to the human spirit and to the human relationship. They are victimized because they have not taught themselves how to think, nor have they set themselves to the lifelong pursuit of growth of the mind. Not having the faculty of a strong mind, they grow dependent upon the thoughts and opinions of others."

Carol, my wife was telling me about one of the little boy's in our church who turned to his mother and said, "I hate spankings." Like she might not know his true feelings on the subject. I think sometimes we do the same with God when the pressure is on us, we are not accustomed to maintaining a consistent mindset toward the trials and tests of life. We look at God and say, "I don't like trials!," and He looks at us and lovingly leads us on into the back room where the lesson is to be learned.

Warren Wiersbe made this observation that the trials of life are not all alike. They are like multicolored yarn that the weaver uses to make a beautiful rug. God arranges and mixes the colors and experiences of life. The final product is a beautiful thing for His glory.

Second: There's a lesson in every situation... "trials of many kinds"

Another thing that you will find about James' writings is that he does not tell us much about himself or does he grumble or complain. James tells us how people act when the pressure is on and how they should respond despite the situation.

- **Trials Vs. Chaos:** It is important to understand the difference in trials and chaos. Though they can look absolutely the same, there is a difference.
 - **Trials-** *pi-ras-mos'* 3986: an experiment, attempt, trial, proving, temptation. **Trials are attempts at life with Christ.**
 - **Chaos-** a state of things in which chance is supreme; a state of utter confusion. (Chasm or Abyss)

There is a difference here. You can have a trial without giving over to chaos. It doesn't mean that things will not take a variety of directions, but it does mean that you are not left to chance. As you view your situation, you are never left alone if God is your Lord. He will NEVER leave or forsake you. I've often used the word chaos when describing life's situations, but I have been corrected. I will go through trials, they look just like chaos, but I am not left to chance, there is a response to the situation and I know as I keep my eyes on God my Father I will see that joy is my true response. Also I know that I will be able to learn these valuable lessons again and again as I go through this process in "every situation."

It's important to understand that in trials, there is always something to learn. In chaos there is always something to dread. Trials equip, chaos strips bare.

Trials create a deeper relationship with faith in God and influence in the world. Chaos creates a desperate sensation of fear and panic and in turn spreads that into the world. In trials I have learned, I KNOW, that there is an opportunity. In chaos I can go through the same situation multiple of times and learn nothing. The question is, are you in a trial or chaos?

Here are a few things I've come to discover in James' Statement of Fact:

- We learn through trials and testing that cannot be developed any other way.
 - For some it makes them bitter
 - For some it makes them question God
 - For some it breaks their will to live
 - For some it causes them to lose their hope
 - For some they fall deeper into darkness and lost in the wilderness
 - But for some-
 - They see the light!
 - They hear the call!
 - They turn to God and believe!

David Tyree

In the final minutes of **Super Bowl XLII** David Tyree assisted the New York Giants in stunning the New England Patriots 17-14. This win is considered one of the greatest Super Bowl upsets along with one of the greatest catches in Super Bowl history.

But it was not always like this for David. He started drinking at age 14 and was allowed to smoke marijuana in his home as a teenager. He said,

“I was like a captain for the devil's army. My house was a safe haven for craziness. Smoking, drinking, that's where it all went down. By the time I got to college, it got real destructive. I was fearful of getting caught with a drug test, so I left marijuana alone for the most part through the most part through college. But alcohol, that was it. Then I started having trouble with blackouts.”



Just three years before this claim to fame, because his alcohol abuse and drug use he found himself sitting in the Bergen County Jail in New Jersey. He remembers bowing his head and praying for another chance even though he had no idea who he was praying to. After David was released on bail, like so many just out of jail went to church and sat on the back row of that church crying for 20 minutes and then stepped forward and turned his life over to his new faith in Christ Jesus. He says he hasn't touched drugs since his arrest and drank alcohol twice within two weeks of being jailed and hasn't drank since.

He took his girlfriend who was pregnant with their second child and married her. Here's what he said,

“At that point, I knew I wanted change and I wasn't fearful about what anybody else thought,” he says, “It was my time.”

David's chains were broke without drug rehabilitation or Alcoholics Anonymous. He said,

“I used to wonder what I'd be like if I wasn't smoking weed, drinking, partying every week and putting all these toxins in my body, but at the end of the day. I'd be right back doing the same thing....

...Obviously, you feel better about yourself when you know you're not destroying yourself.”

Look at this quote in USA Today,

“Tyree believes his breakout Super Bowl moment was divinely provided to allow him a platform. He sees himself as an example of the impact of submitting to a holy life, hopeful that he can save others.”

(Taken from USA Today, Wednesday, June 11, 2008)

This Statement of Fact that James makes is that you and I have the opportunity to go through this life on a different road, not one that avoids or numbs the pain, but one that takes us through the problem and changes us in the process!

Third: We can only respond to each situation by what we know... *because you know that the testing of your faith develops.*

The problem is that we forget to believe what we already know. I can't believe how many times I have to be reminded of what, I have to confess, I already know. So what do I know?

Four Things I KNOW I Can Not Forget According to James 1:2-4:

1. I know the testing of my faith develops perseverance!

- **Perseverance-** *hoop-om-on-ay'* 5281 steadfastness, constancy, endurance

Discus Thrower: John Eldredge tells the story of a Scottish discus thrower from the 19th century. He lived days before professional trainers and developed his skills alone in the highlands. He made his own discus from the description he read in a book. What he didn't know was that the competition discus was made of wood with an outer rim of iron. His discus was made of pure metal, four times heavier than the ones used by his would-be challengers. This committed Scotsman trained day after day, laboring under the burden of extra weight. He marked the record distance and kept working until he could throw that far. Of course, when he arrived at the competition, he was handed the official wooden discus. He threw it like a tea saucer. He set new records and for many years, none of his competitors could touch him.

As Eldredge reflected on this story, he said, “So that's how you do it – train under a great burden.

David Tyree, who has already been mentioned was a backup wide receiver during the regular season and only **caught four passes total...all year long before this event.** His faith was being tested and his perseverance paid off. I would agree, I think his breakout Super Bowl moment was divinely inspired, and we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to give us the edged, not only to

help us win but to give us a platform that the world might see God!

I know the testing of my faith develops perseverance.

2. I know that if my perseverance develops then my maturity develops!

- **Mature-** *tel'-i-os* 5046- a full grown adult, of full age, mature who has come to its end, finished wanting nothing necessary to completeness who is perfect.

Christian World Report, says that in China alone, 1100 people are executed monthly just because of their Faith. In some restrictive Nations in the middle east, to become a believer is an automatic death sentence. We need to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are experiencing such trials. Do we like where we are with Christ or are we willing to really grow up in what we call our "belief?"

3. I know that if my maturity develops, then I become complete!

- **Complete-** *hol'-ok'-lay-ros* 3648- complete in all its parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire, whole

Just a note. You would think that this is where most people would want to be your friend. But as Elbert Hubbard put it, "If you have something others don't have, know something others don't know, or do something others aren't doing, then, rest assured, you will be criticized." To be complete requires boldness, the courage to walk in what you know and be ready to endure conflict.

4. I know that if I become more complete I will not lack anything!

- **Lacking** *li'-po* 3007- to leave, leave behind, forsake, to be left behind; to be wanting, to fail; Anything *may-dice'* 3367- nobody, no one, nothing :

"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."

Matthew 19:29

● **The Statement of Fact (James 1:2-4)**

- **That's The First of Four Statements James Makes That Will Help Us Walk Through Our Wilderness And Win**

2. The Statement of Faith (James 1:5-8)

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

James 1:5-8

In 1999, State Farm Insurance rated the most dangerous intersections for accidents in the United States. The winner (or better, loser) was the corner of Belt Line Road and Midway Road in Addison, Texas. There were 263 reported crashes at that intersection

in the Dallas suburb. That averages out to about five wrecks per week, not counting the unreported fender benders.

When we are on this journey, our life, we are dealing with all kinds of life's trials and test, sometimes we are not functioning in what we *know*. There are times we come to intersections that we are very unfamiliar with. We cannot respond out of knowledge as which way to turn. When we get to those intersections, we respond out of wisdom.

What is wisdom?

There are various definitions of wisdom. Webster defines it as “**the ability to make right use of knowledge.**” Wisdom uses knowledge as a tool to deal with life’s issues. It is taking experience and applying knowledge for making decisions. True wisdom, according to Scripture, begins with God.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”
Proverbs 1:7a

Proverbs tells us that a fool hates knowledge. The fool refuses God’s truth. The fool looks for an alternative to God’s standards and direction. The fool will always make poor choices.

God's Response To Those Who Asks For Wisdom:

- 1. He gives generously!**
- 2. He gives unbiased!**
- 3. He gives! He gives!**

God delights in giving you direction and instruction in your life. Here is something important to understand, you can develop an incredible capacity of obtaining helpful and prosperous knowledge. But after a while, operating in that knowledge does not require faith. Some people love this place. It's a safe place, a controlled environment. But God wants us functioning out of our faith. If we are constantly stepping out in faith, we will go through trials and testings. But those who constantly, foolishly engage in chaos...I'm not sure where the wisdom of God is in that. He is treated more like a parent who constantly bails their kid out of trouble. I don't believe that is my God...though I do believe that if we call on Him He will answer. I am loving my God!

Faith Is Required- If you haven't learned this, then it is necessary or you will continue to live your life in chaos and not the befitting trials of this life.

Faith is the ability to believe without any question to doubt. It is standing strong, not in your decision or responsibility, that is all secondary. But it is in believing that God will come through with the answer. Too many men put their faith in there decisions and then they are closed off from the Holy Spirit talking to them because they are believing for the miracle. I'm not against miracles, but what if God has a better one? What if He answered that miracle, how would we respond to that miracle? Would it be a celebration of our faith or of His power? No, I believe that our faith is a response to God's way. We believe He wants us to go a certain direction, and suddenly it changes. Since we are seasoned with this process we do not panic, we do not feel foolish and we have not announced our faith so firmly and so loudly that God cannot change it. I

have one resolve, God is my truth and my source of life. I will attempt great things for Him and at times I will have to lay down great adventure to sit at His feet. I will be challenged to question His ways when there seems to be a demand for action and He is telling me to sit. I am in fact a true believer in miracles. I am at this moment in great pursuit of an incredible vision. It is being challenged at every turn. I do not question if it is God's will, I only question each step I take if it is the direction that God wants me to take. Not too fast or too slow. Not directly, but indirectly if He chooses. Alert, passionate, but still obedient. I come to you God. I submit my life to you. Have your way in me. Break my habit of running ahead, of exhausting myself before you answer. I know you are the way and your path has incredible promises. I know this for a fact. And I call upon you for your wisdom...at every turn. Not in fear or in doubt, but in patient submission to you...my Master, my Lord!

Don't Be Unstable

Do you know what an unstable person is? It is one who lives a life of chaos. One minute they are serving God and the next they are given way to panic, fear, doubt and distress. They no longer depend on God for their life. Oh, for their soul, they are quite convinced that God is the ticket. But for that everyday life, the questions and challenges. Dealing with your daughters, sons, bosses, tax man, and even the doctor, that is all done in the flesh, such a distant faith from God. Learn that in "every" trial God is with you and wants to speak to you in that exact situation. This is good!

- **The Statement of Fact (James 1:2-4)**
- **The statement of Faith (James 1:5-8)**
 - **That's The First and Second of the Four Statements James Makes That Will Help Us Walk Through Our Wilderness And Win**

3. The Statement of Foundation (James 1:9-11)

⁹The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. ¹⁰But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

James 1:9-11

KJV says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted..."

An amazing fact in the Kingdom of God that is opposite to all the laws of nature is this, "Down is Up." To humble yourself, in other words, place yourself in a servant role to God, you will always be lifted up.

This is a demand that those who have much should be quick to realize that all of their accumulation does not impress God and is at times, (many times), a distraction as to what God can do in our lives.

David Livingstone- Once a group of people who wanted to give aid in his work in South Africa wrote to missionary and explorer David Livingstone asking, "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you."

Livingstone replied, "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come even if there is no road at all."

God is not calling us to a convenient gospel. He is calling us to one that demands it all. His call is not negotiable. We cannot give of our substance and think we please Him. We give out of our inability and lack where a blind step of faith is required, that pleases God. I cannot tell you how revealing this type of faith is of the things you hold dear and the things you call your own. The truth be, they own you more than you own them!

- **The Statement of Fact (James 1:2-4)**
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4. The Statement of Forever

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."
James 1:12

James is telling us that there is a reward that goes beyond this life. It is one that we will enjoy for eternity. It is the great exchange. You can never get anything in this life quite like what you can enjoy in eternity!

- This crown is won by going through the trials of this life. Not only going through them, but perseveres through them.
- This crown is won by standing strong in the test of your faith.

This crown of life is an impressive crown, not anybody can get it. It is only give to special people. People who have exchanged their life for it. They have stood the test. They were not lured away to the deceptions of this world.

- This crown is a promise of God to those who love Him and show it by how they live. This is the crown that I want. This is the crown I hope to wear some day!

Conclusion: This is not a time to lose focus!

Cook Inlet

In Alaska there is an area called the Kenai Peninsula where there is an area called the Cook Inlet. There are huge warning signs on the beautiful black beach there that states, "Keep Out." The black beach is the deposit of hundreds of years of glacial silt. What people don't know about it is that it acts like quicksand. Once you are in it, it will not let you go. The "Keep Out" signs on Cook Inlet are not only to keep people out, but to keep them alive.

There was a honeymooning couple who had rented ATV four-wheelers and were driving all over the place enjoying the time they had together. The woman ignored the warning signs and drove onto the beach of black glacial silt. The ATV got stuck so she jumped off and immediately sank up to her knees. At first they thought it was funny but people started stopping and yelling at them to get out of there. The fire department

was contacted along with others to come and help. By that time the tide had started coming in and she was stuck up to her thighs. The fire department used pressure hoses to try to free her, but they couldn't.

The tide quickly came in higher and higher, the silt began to accumulate as she was stuck up to her waist. A helicopter was even flown in to try and pull her out but that failed as well. Despite all their efforts, they were unable to save her and the tide eventually covered her body as it flowed back into Cook Inlet.

I can't imagine the tragedy and pain that occurred in this family because of the ignoring of the warning signs, because of a "whatever" attitude. But here's what I do know, **we as a body of Christ have a commissioning, appointed from God to be a compelling force for God that will release and break the chains of those who are bound by Satan's power so that they can come to the full knowledge of Jesus Christ.**

We are asked to engage in this world, but not in it's chaos. **We need to obtain the knowledge of God so that we might be able to activate the wisdom of God with a humble attitude for God so that we might wear a crown with God.**

Please Respond To Him Today:

- 1. Repent of your fear and doubt. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the opportunity to learn of Christ in a way that you might start the process of walking fully in your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to move you into participating in trials rather than chaos.**
- 2. Practice constant faith. Refuse to have multiple prayers that contradict themselves. Pray that you would stand strong and stable. Keeping the faith and not wavering. Ask God to show you when you allow doubt and fear into your life to throw you into chaos. Ask Him to tell you when you are slipping into old ways and depending in your own flesh.**
- 3. Humble yourself before God. Realize your best in your flesh can never be as powerful as the simplest act of obedience. Trusting God in a humble estate is far more acceptable to God than a haughty spirit who gives Him props. Know that God wants this relationship with Him more than you do. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the things that have you that you think that you have. Humble yourself before God.**
- 4. Celebrate in the fact that the crown of Life is yours, given by God. Make that your target, not having great events of God, but finishing well with God. Make this your journey, to finish well for Him!**