

# The Right Recognition concerning Trials

## James 1:9-11

James 1:2–11 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. <sup>11</sup> 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.

## Introduction

One of the most comforting realities in the Christian life is that all the trials of life are ordained and orchestrated by God. Nothing can so anchor a soul to the Solid Rock than to know and believe the Loving Father's perfect will is behind it all. The most difficult times of life and the darkest valleys that seem to have no exit are all under the sovereign rule of our Creator.

He is all wise so as to know what is best for you and is omnipotent to be able to perfectly carry out the plan for your life.

One of the darkest days in Joseph's life was the time his brothers conspired against him to kill him and threw him into the pit

Genesis 37:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

Genesis 37:20–21 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

They were eventually persuaded by Judah not to kill but to sell him for a profit and as a result he was sold into slavery.

Genesis 37:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

<sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

### Psalm 105:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Moreover He called for a famine in the land;  
He destroyed all the provision of bread.  
<sup>17</sup> He sent a man before them—  
Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.

Jesus endured the worst trial that a man could endure in His day. A hatred and betrayal the led to the worst forms of execution.....crucifixion.

### **Acts 2:23** (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

### **Acts 4:27–28** (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

There is a general promise to all true believers that God is working all trials to our advantage.

Romans 8:28–29 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

**Deuteronomy 8:1–3 (NKJV)**

**8** “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. <sup>2</sup> And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way **these forty years** in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

נִסָּה *nasah*. **to test** v. — to put to the test in order to ascertain the nature of something, including imperfections, faults, or other qualities.

**3** So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

When we often think of trials we think in terms of momentary affliction, a sickness, a death, a financial struggle, or loss of a job.... something that comes for a while and over time, goes away or we are able to manage better,

But have you ever thought of your lot in life as a trial, more than your physical status, or abilities or lack thereof. Where you are born, the family you are born into, whether you are born in an impoverished nation or a wealthy family. Or through God's providence in life, you were never able to get the education you wanted or the skill set that would have enable you to be better off financially in life. It seems that every time you make two steps forward, you make one back.

1 Samuel 2:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> The Lord makes poor and makes rich;  
He brings low and lifts up.

Job 1:21 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> And he said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,  
And naked shall I return there.  
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;  
Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job 34:19 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Yet He is not partial to princes,  
Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor;  
For they *are* all the work of His hands.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the  
might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’

<sup>18</sup> “And you shall remember the Lord your God, for  
*it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He  
may establish His covenant which He swore to your  
fathers, as *it is* this day.

All of these verses and more teach us that wealth  
and the ability to attain it is in the hands of God,  
there for, we can assume that the poor are a direct  
design of His providence and purpose.

**This leads us to our passage.**

James 1:9-11

**9** Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,  
**10** 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.

As is with the previous verses on wisdom, some have taught these these verses have nothing to do with trials. That they are a whole separate subject. But actually they are very needed wisdom that affect all. Whether you are rich or poor. Whether you are born in America or Kenya, Whether you have the nicest things or you live in a straw hut. These verses turn our eyes in the right direction and give us the Divine perspective we all need. These verses take us away from the here and now and help us focus on the new heavens and the new earth. They help us remember that we need to hold on to this world with a very loose grip, but grab hold of the the new world coming with a firm grasp. Let go of the temporary and lay hold of the eternal. And when it comes to trials, this can be the difference between JOY and depression.

## *A Bit of the Wisdom That Is Good for the Christian amid Trials, v. 9–11*

Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James](#) (p. 533).

### **Review**

We have had 4 sermons in this passage so far and we have learned

The Right Attitude in the midst of Trials

The Right Perspective in the midst of Trials

The Right Resource in the midst of Trials (2 lessons)

In these sermons, we have learned,

**The Right Attitude in the midst of Trials**

### **1. The Attitude in Trials**

The Right Attitude in the midst of Trials

**2** My brethren, count it all joy when you  
fall into various trials,

## The Right Perspective in the midst of Trials

### 2. The Advantage of Trials

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1:3 (NASB95)

<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

### 3. The Acquiesce to Trials

<sup>4</sup> But let patience **have** *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

**The Right Resource in the midst of Trials** (2 lessons)

### 4. The Assistance with Trials

- 1. The Needed Resource**
- 2. The Noble Request**
- 3. The Necessary Requirements**

**5** 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.

James 1:6–8 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

<sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways

Now we come to 5th message on relating to trials,

### **The Right Recognition concerning Trials**

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. <sup>11</sup> 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.

## 1. The Attitude in Trials

## 2. The Advantage of Trials

## 3. The Acquiesce to Trials

## 4. The Assistance with Trials

## 5. The Acknowledgment of the Trials

### 1. The Blessing of the Poor

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

James 1:9 (NASB95)

<sup>9</sup> But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;

glory - Pres. Imperative

first in word order in greek to emphasize the emphatic nature of this command.

Original Word: καυχάομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

**Transliteration:** kauchaomai

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kow-khah'-om-ahee)

**Definition:** to boast

2744 kauxáomai – properly, living with "head up high," i.e. boasting from a particular vantage point by having the right base of operation to deal successfully with a matter (see WP at 2 Cor 5:12).

[2744 (kauxáomai) likely comes from the root, auxēn ("neck"), i.e. what holds the head up high (upright); figuratively, it refers to living with God-given confidence.

In this context, the verb denotes “not the arrogant boasting of the self-important, but the joyous pride possessed by the person who values what God values.” Such an attitude is the best safeguard against succumbing to despondency when assailed by trials.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 76). BMH Books.

The verb denotes a strong personal reaction, a feeling of pride or exultation in the condition mentioned. It encompasses the individual’s total reaction, both his inward feeling and the outward expression of exultation. Zodhiates remarks that the word means “to profess loudly something that you

have a right to be proud of.” The present imperative calls upon the believer to adopt this as his characteristic response. James did not agree that a gloomy downcast attitude is the normal and expected response of the believer to economic stringencies. “The pessimist,” declares Robertson, “is not a representative of Christianity.”<sup>77</sup>

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 76). BMH Books.

**9** Let the **lowly brother** glory in his exaltation,

The call to have this attitude is **first directed to “the brother in humble circumstances,”** more literally “the brother, the lowly one.” The identification is generic, denoting any individual who belongs to this class

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 76). BMH Books.

The adjective rendered “in humble circumstances” (*tapeinos*) basically means “low-lying,” but in the New Testament it is always used figuratively. It may have either a material or an ethical import.....

Here, as in Luke 1:52, the adjective means “poor” in terms of wealth, since it stands in opposition to “rich”

in the next verse. His humble financial circumstances also would relegate him to a lowly social position....

James well knew how oppressive and disheartening such circumstances could be.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 77). BMH Books.

**ΤΑΠΕΙΝΌΣ, ή, όν** (Pind., Aeschyl., Hdt.+; pap, LXX; En 26, 4 and Did., Gen. 220, 7 [όρος]; PsSol 5:12; Test12Patr; JosAs 28:3 cod. A al.; ApcSed, EpArist, Philo, Joseph.; Theoph. Ant. 2, 13 [p. 132, 3]) gener. 'low', in our lit. only in a fig. sense.

① pert. to being of low social status or to relative inability to cope, *lowly, undistinguished, of no account*

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 989). University of Chicago Press

ταπεινός **tapēinōs**, *tap-i-nos´*; of uncert. der.; *depressed*, i.e. (fig.) *humiliated* (in circumstances or disposition):—base, cast down, humble, of low degree (estate), lowly.

Strong, J. (2009). In [A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible](#) (Vol. 1, p. 70). Logos Bible Software.

## poor in church

Acts 2:45 (NKJV)

<sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Acts 4:35 (NKJV)

<sup>35</sup> and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

## 2 Corinthians 8:1–2 (NKJV)

**8** Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

Many poor Jews embraced Christianity; many had lost their property during the persecution that had been inaugurated by Saul. We take it that not a few of the readers who were addressed by James were lowly in regard to money and in regard to their social position.

Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [\*The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James\*](#) (p. 533). Lutheran Book Concern.

## 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise,

and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*”

The worst feature is not their poverty but the “waters of the full cup wrung out to them,” the maltreatment to which their lowly position subjects them. If they would give up their faith in Christ they might improve their earthly state; their refusal multiplies their trials in many ways (v. 2). Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (pp. 533–534). Lutheran Book Concern.

James well knew that the heroic steadfastness under trial for which he has called (v. 4) is furthered by the believer’s correct evaluation of his material circumstances. He is not merely concerned about the circumstances of poverty and wealth as tests of

faith but with the believer's response to those conditions. James realized "that a person's attitude toward material things is a good index of his spiritual condition." He makes no move toward eliminating these economic differences but points to the common faith in Christ as the true equalizing factor.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 76). BMH Books.

Does James pity them and allow them to pity themselves? The very opposite: Let such a brother boast, yea, boast, no less, "in his high position!" Let wisdom open his eyes to see what "height" he has attained. He is a true child of God in Christ Jesus. Priceless spiritual blessings are his. Let him shout for joy (v. 2: "all joy")!

Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James](#) (pp. 533–534). Lutheran Book Concern.

**9** Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

**hupsos: height**

**Original Word:** ὕψος, ους, τό

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Neuter

**Transliteration:** hupsos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hoop'-sos)

**Definition:** height

**Usage:** height, heaven; dignity, eminence.

**Word Origin**

from hupsi (on high, aloft)

**Definition**

height

**NASB Translation**

height (2), high (3), high position (1).

James did not pity this poor brother but called upon him to contemplate “his high position” (more literally, “his height”). Barnes understands the term to denote that the poor man, due to a change in his fortunes, has become rich. It is much better to accept that James uses the term here to denote his present exalted spiritual position as a Christian. He is urged to let wisdom open his eyes to the spiritual height to which he has been lifted as a child of God. He may be financially poor, looked down upon by the world, and considered a nobody, but in the eyes of God he has a position of lofty dignity. As a believer, let him evaluate his present circumstances in light of assured eschatological consummation. His hope for the future is to influence his present evaluations

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 77). BMH Books.

“Since it is incomparably the greatest dignity to be introduced into the company of angels, nay, to be made the associates of Christ, he who estimates this favour of God aright, will regard all other things as worthless.”

John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, p. 285.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition). BMH Books.

His exaltation in Christ is beyond present visualization. He must glory in what he has become as a member of God’s family. “Instead of resenting his poverty and being discontented with his obscurity, let him remember that he is a prince. As a son of the King, he is an heir to the future kingdom in glory. He need not be disheartened by his present poverty, or regard it as an evil; he is the possessor of spiritual riches that more than counterbalance his material poverty.

A tent or a cottage, why should I care?  
 They’re building a palace for me over there;  
 Tho’ exiled from home, yet, still I may sing:  
 All glory to God, I’m a child of the King.

Hattie E. Buell

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 77). BMH Books.

One who was desperately poor, yet thru salvation found and inexhaustible joy in his future glory in heaven was Evangelist Billy Bray. You might not have heard of him but his is an amazing story

Billy was born in 1794 in Cornwall, England. Born in poverty and barely educated, Billy became a tin miner. Life was tough in the mining communities of early nineteenth-century Cornwall and Billy was always a poor man living amid bitter poverty. Despite growing up amongst a Christian faith, he soon began living a life filled with drunkenness and violence.

Billy's father died when he was young, so he went to live with his grandfather who became a Methodist in one of **John Wesley's** early visits to Cornwall. At the age of seventeen Billy left home to go to Devon. Away from the Godly influence of his family, he fell into evil ways. He says, ***'I became the companion of drunkards, and during that time I was very near hell.'***

By this time he was married with children and his wife had to put up with most of their money being dissipated on drink. On one occasion he went out to get coal, but on the way home he stopped at a beer shop and got so drunk his wife had to come to wheel the coal home. He got into many drunken scrapes and got fired from the tin mine where he was working for being insolent to the captain of

the mine. On one occasion his blasphemy was so bad that his wicked friends said that his oaths must come from hell, for they smelt of sulphur

He went to live in a beer shop and relates, 'there, with other drunkards, I drank all night long. But I had a sore head and sick stomach, and worse than all, horrors of mind that no tongue can tell. I used to dread to go to sleep for fear of waking up in hell; and though I made promises to the Lord to do better, I was soon as bad or worse than ever. After being absent from my native county seven years, I returned a drunkard.'

By this time he was married with children and his wife had to put up with most of their money being dissipated on drink. On one occasion he went out to get coal, but on the way home he stopped at a beer shop and got so drunk his wife had to come to wheel the coal home

His conscience tormented him during the day and dreams terrified him at night. God was certainly on his case! He then picked up a copy of **John Bunyan's** "Visions of Heaven and Hell" that gave him a strong desire to be a better man.

The woman he had married had been a devoted Methodist but who had let her faith lapse (backslide). Nevertheless, his wife's memory of a happy former

life challenged Billy. You see, At this time his wife, who was a backslider, spoke to him of the joy she once possessed, and thus intensified his longing for peace. and in 1823 he became desperately aware that he needed to 'begin again'. He asked his wife, "Why don't you begin again? and then I might start, too!" At three o'clock in the morning he got out of bed and began to pray at his bedside. He says: "The more I prayed the more I felt to pray," and the whole of that forenoon he spent in agonizing prayer.

For long days and nights he continued wrestling in prayer. He tells us that even "while working in the mine I was crying to the Lord for mercy." Returning from the mine one evening he went straight to his bedroom, regardless of the meal that was ready for him, and dropping on his knees, he poured out his soul in earnest, believing prayer. To quote his own words: "I said to the Lord, 'Thou hast said, They that ask shall receive, they that seek shall find, and to them that knock the door shall be opened, and I have faith to believe it.' In an instant the Lord made me so happy that I cannot express what I felt. I shouted for joy. I praised God with my whole heart for what He had done for a poor sinner like me; for I could say, 'The Lord hath pardoned all my sins.' I

think this was in November, 1823, but what day of the month I do not know. I remember this, that everything looked new to me, the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a man in a new world. I spent the greater part of my time in praising the Lord. I could say with Isaiah, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee, for though Thou were angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me ;' or like David, 'The Lord hath brought me up out of a horrible pit of mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.'<https://salvationcall.com/billy-bray/>

He pursued God; praying and reading the Bible and Wesley's hymns for days before eventually finding peace through Christ. Not long afterwards his wife returned to her faith.

Billy's conversion was radical and profound, and a sense of wondrous deliverance never left him. The night he was converted, he says,

***In an instant the Lord made me so happy that I cannot express what I felt. I shouted for joy. I praised God with my whole heart for what He had done for a poor sinner like me, for I could say, the Lord has pardoned all my sins.'***

This was in November 1823.

A Mr Ashworth gives us a picture of what Billy was like.

‘He was one of those happy, unselfish men who love everybody and with simple earnestness he spoke to all – rich or poor – about the love of Jesus. He glorified in religious revivals and he shouted for joy when he heard of souls being saved anywhere.’ Billy was known by some as “silly Billy” because he appeared to be such a fool, but in fact he was full of the joy of the Lord. He would shout and leap about for joy at the slightest provocation, which must have looked a little strange to people. <http://ukwells.org/revivalists/billy-bray>

On one occasion he went to preach at the opening of a chapel, but the crowds were so big that he had to preach in a field. To him the devil was very real; one witness quotes Billy as saying, ***‘Now friend Maynard; let us pray a minute before we go or else the devil will be scratching me on the way. If I leave without praying this is the way he serves me; but when I get on my knees a minute or two before leaving I cut his old claws and then he can’t harm me; so I always like to cut his claws before I go.’***

In the next four decades, Billy's life was marked with an extraordinary and exuberant joy that he continually expressed in spontaneous jumping, dancing and

shouting, whether at work down the mine or in preaching. He lived simply and served his needy community, giving away money without any concern for how it was to be replaced. In addition, he raised orphans and built chapels.

While preaching, Billy continued working in the mine, rejoicing in his labors and bringing many of his workmates to faith. Increasingly, however, he preached both in chapels and outdoors, becoming a household name across Cornwall. He was passionate and witty, and his preaching drew the crowds. Many people came simply for the spectacle of seeing him, only to return home converted.

Two quotes can summarize Billy the man. The first is a phrase he frequently used about praying: 'I must talk to Father about that.' The second is a defense of his exuberance: 'Well, I dance sometimes. Why shouldn't I dance as well as David? David, you say, was a king; well, bless the Lord! I am a King's Son! I have as good a right to dance as David had.'

Taken together, that sense of being both a child of God the Father and an heir to the King of kings explains much about him.

For a while Billy suffered from something like consumption (wasting away of the body, sometimes due

to pulmonary tuberculosis) and became very weak. He sent for a doctor and on his arrival said,

‘Now doctor, I have sent for you because people say you are an honest man and will tell them the truth about their state.’ After being examined, he asked, ‘Well doctor, how is it?’ ‘You are going to die’ was the reply. Billy instantly shouted ‘Glory, glory be to God! I shall soon be in heaven.’ He then said, ‘When I get up there, doctor, shall I tell them you will be coming too?’

Billy went to be with his Lord on May 22nd 1868, a few days short of his 74th birthday. He was buried in Baldhu

cemetery. <http://ukwells.org/revivalists/billy-bray><https://www.christiantoday.com/article/billy-bray-the-tin-miner-evangelist-who-always-rejoiced-despite-bitter-poverty/135310.htm>

## 1. The Blessing of the Poor

## 2. The Brevity of the Rich

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. <sup>11</sup> 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

Now, immediately when I read this, you might be thinking... whew!!!, this is great.... This passage has nothing to do with me. I'm not poor, but I certainly am not rich. So thank you pastor for the non applicable Bible study. I can leave here carefree and non convicted because I'm in the middle class!!!

HOLD on, wait just a minute. Let me clarify a few things and help you through this.

You are middle class because you believe some arbitrary standard the federal government has come up with. But I assure you that most of us if not all of us in this building are RICH!!

According to the Federal Poverty Guidelines the poverty level for a household of four in 2022 is an annual income of \$27,750. From here to about \$44 to 50,000 is low income and from \$50,000 to \$140,000 middle-class then upper middle class, blah blah blah...

The middle class developed during the Gilded Age as industry expanded and professional jobs became available.

- Professional jobs paid more money and called for a higher level of respect than jobs in factories or slaughterhouses.

- Professionals and their families formed the new middle class. They had access to better education and opportunities, allowing the status to become multigenerational. They also had disposable income and time to spare on leisure activities.
- The middle class fueled a new consumer culture and contributed to the growth of suburbia.

Today, the middle class is a distinct socioeconomic group. However, as recently as the 19th century, there was no middle class in America. There were only two distinctions: the impoverished lower class and the extremely wealthy upper class. With industrialization and the expansion of the labor market, the middle class began to rise and made lasting impacts on society.<https://www.studysmarter.us/explanations/history/us-history/rise-of-the-middle-class/>

Large portions of Africa live in extreme poverty  
Another parts of the world like India, Asia, China, Mexico and South America live in poverty amounting to income of \$5.50 a day

Large portions of Africa, India and places like Yemen and places like Uzbekistan and Turkmenia in Central Asia live in Extreme Poverty

**Extreme poverty, deep poverty, abject poverty, absolute poverty, destitution, or penury**, is the most severe type of [poverty](#), defined by the [United Nations](#) (UN) as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe [drinking water](#), sanitation facilities, health, shelter, [education](#) and [information](#). It depends not only on income but also on access to services" (UN 1995 report of the World Summit for Social Development).<sup>[3]</sup> Historically, other definitions have been proposed within the United Nations.

In 2018, extreme poverty mainly refers to an income below the [international poverty line](#) of \$1.90 per day (in 2011 prices, equivalent to \$2.29 in 2021), set by the [World Ban](#)

Quote,

“Individualism and the media encourage a myopic view of life. Many wear blinders, oblivious to what the rest of the world experiences. Poverty in the United States is quite different from poverty around the world.

To see the big picture, we should look at how the US poor compare to those in other countries. One scholar of Latin America pointed out that the poor in the US lived at a level similar to the upper middle class of Mexico. As another example, an American living below the poverty line has more housing space in terms of square footage than the average European.

While those living in poverty in the US do have real problems, a lack of material goods and food are not the biggest issue. When the CDC studied diseases of poverty in the US, obesity was more common amongst those living in poverty. As far as possessions go, the US poor are better off than many around the world. They are even better off than Americans 40 years ago:

Most of those Americans now living below the official poverty line have possessions once considered part of a middle-class standard of living, just a generation or so ago. As of 2001, three-quarters of Americans with incomes below the official poverty level had air-conditioning (which only one-third of all Americans had in 1971), 97 percent had color television (which fewer than half of all Americans had in 1971), 73 percent owned a microwave oven (which fewer than one percent of all Americans had in 1971) and 98 percent of “the poor” had either a videocassette recorder or a DVD player (which no one had in 1971). In addition, 72 percent of “the poor” owned a motor vehicle.

. But even if we look at incomes, Americans do not have a good sense of how high their income is compared to the rest of the world. Researchers, including the former lead economist of the World Bank Research Department, have shown that most Americans believe the average income globally is \$20,000 but it is in fact only \$2,100. This means that Americans underestimate how wealthy fellow Americans are compared with others around the world.

Based on information in:

[Intellectuals and Society](#) by Thomas Sowell

[Wealth, Poverty and Politics](#) by Thomas Sowell

Gautam Nair, "Most Americans Vastly Underestimate How Rich They Are Compared with the Rest of the World. Does It Matter?," The Washington Post, August 23, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/08/23/most-americans-vastly-underestimate-how-rich-they-are-compared-with-the-rest-of-the-world-does-it-matter>  
<https://www.fashionablepoisons.org/post/poverty-in-the-us-vs-other-countries>

So although, the first Imperative to the poor, might not apply to you, the second one definitely does. We are the rich of the world.

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, **10** but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

We accept as most probable the view that both the rich and the poor man are thought of as Christians

by James. This is the most natural meaning of the structure of the sentence in the original, as displayed in Lenski’s very literal rendering: “Now let him boast, the brother, the lowly one, in his high position; on the other hand, the rich one, in his lowly position!”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 78). BMH Books.

The view that James, in light of his strong terms against the rich in 5:1–6, must always regard the rich as wicked unbelievers outside the church, **has little or no force.** There is no justification for the claim that the “rich man” here belongs to the oppressive rich denounced in 5:1–6. In the present passage, all that is implied is a clear contrast between the two classes.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 78). BMH Books.

From the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 19:23; Luke 18:23–27), James knew the danger that wealth might be to a rich believer and felt it incumbent to issue the warning to those who were rich in material possessions.

The word “rich” (*plousios*) denotes “one who does not need to work for a living.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 78–79). BMH Books.

**plousios: wealthy**

**Original Word:** πλούσιος, α, ον

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** plousios

**Phonetic Spelling:** (plooo'-see-os)

**Definition:** wealthy

**Usage:** rich, abounding in, wealthy; subst: a rich man.

4145 ploúsios (an adjective, derived from 4149 /ploútos, "abundance") – properly, **fully resourced; rich (filled)**, by having God's "muchness" – i.e. His abundance that comes from receiving His provisions (material and spiritual riches) through faith (4102 /pístis).

**10** but the rich in his

**humiliation,**

The rich brother is admonished to take pride in “his low position.”

ταπεινός **tapēinōs**, *tap-i-nos'*; of uncert. der.; *depressed*, i.e. (fig.) *humiliated* (in circumstances or disposition):—base, cast down, humble, of low degree (estate), lowly.

Strong, J. (2009). In [A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible](#) (Vol. 1, p. 70). Logos Bible Software.

The expression may have reference to his humiliation as an experience. If taken quite literally, the meaning may be “the humiliation of the rich man, by his being stripped of his riches and possessions.” This seems implied in Good-speeds rendering, “to rejoice at being

reduced in circumstances.” Others suggest that the experience of humiliation is social; the rich man as a Christian is now ostracized by his former rich friends and treated as a social outcast.<sup>97</sup>

It seems best to accept that the statement is figurative, pointing to the attitude that the rich brother must adopt. Moffatt well asserts, “The lowering of the rich brother is as inward as the raising of the poor brother.”<sup>98</sup> The parallel in James’s statement supports this view; if the exaltation of the poor brother has a spiritual basis, the experience of the rich brother being brought into a humble station should also be understood spiritually

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 79). BMH Books.

Cadoux notes that James

can hardly mean, let him glory in the loss of his wealth, for such loss without change of mind would be no true reason for glorying, nor does the desirable frame of mind depend on the loss. It would seem that here to be “made low” is to find something of incomparably greater value than his wealth, something that by its greatness makes him feel small, so that disillusioned in his old ground of glorying, he attains a basis for a better glory.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 79). BMH Books.

## James 1:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

The command to the poor brother is abruptly stated, but the command to the rich brother receives strong amplification. James states a reason for the command to the rich brother (v. 10*b*), illustrates it from the fate of the field flower (v. 11*a*), and applies it to the end of the rich (v. 11*b*).

### Because of the salvation of the rich man,

This rich brother has lost all high-mindedness, he has gained the lowliness which is true Christian and spiritual wisdom. Earthly riches no longer affect him. He knows himself to be a poor sinner who is saved by grace alone, whose earthly life is only a poor, transient flower.

Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James](#) (p. 535). Lutheran Book Concern.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 79). BMH Books.

As a result,

He must have the indicated attitude because of the brevity and uncertainty of life. This is also true for the poor man, but James presses it upon the

conscience of the rich, because while living in the midst of plenty he is more prone to forget it than the poor brother. He needs grace to realize that his earthly fortune is not the true basis for his security.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 79–80). BMH Books.

James declares the rich man to be as transitory as “a wild flower,” (literally “flower of grass”). It is another of James’s similes drawn from nature. The expression “as the flower of the grass” is from Isaiah 40:6, where it is the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew “the flower of the field.” The picture is not to be restricted only to grass but includes any green herbage. The reference is to the various field flowers in Palestine that bloom in great abundance each spring with the spring rains (cf. Matt. 6:28, 30).

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 80). BMH Books.

### Matthew 6:28–30 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> “So why do you worry about clothing? **Consider the lilies of the field**, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, **which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,** will He not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

James was well aware that the life of these beautiful wild flowers was brief. With the commencement of the dry summer season, they rapidly passed away. Their brief duration became a common Oriental symbol of the transitoriness of life

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [\*James\*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 80). BMH Books.

### **Psalm 102:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> My days *are* like a shadow that lengthens,  
And I wither away like grass.

### **Psalm 103:15–16 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> *As for* man, his days *are* like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
<sup>16</sup> For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
And its place remembers it no more.

### **Isaiah 51:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> “I, *even I, am* He who comforts you.  
Who *are* you that you should be afraid  
Of a man *who* will die,  
And of the son of a man *who* will be made like  
grass?”

### **Isaiah 40:6–8 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> The voice said, “Cry out!”  
And he said, “What shall I cry?”  
“All flesh *is* grass,

And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
Surely the people *are* grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
But the word of our God stands forever.”

**This** .....presents a picture of the transitory nature of human life in general, but here James applies it specifically to the rich. He skillfully uses the picture to encourage the rich brother to foster that lowly mindedness which looks beyond temporal material things to spiritual values.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 80). BMH Books.

### **James 1:11 (NKJV)**

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.

The four verbs, “risen” “withers,” “falls,” and “perishes,” picture the rapid succession of events. All are in the **orist tense**, which generally presents the action as a definite

historical event. Here the aorists are gnomic, portraying the successive events as characteristic of what always happens in such cases.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 80). BMH Books.

**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.

a burning heat

**kausón:** burning heat

**Original Word:** καύσων, ὠνος, ὄ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Masculine

**Transliteration:** kausón

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kow'-sone)

**Definition:** burning heat

**Usage:** a scorching heat, hot wind.

James 1:11 (NASB95)

- 11 For the sun rises with a **scorching wind** and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

Could refer to heat from the sun in general, or the hot Arabic Winds

The verb “falls” (*exepesen*)

ἐξέπεσεν

means “to fall off, fall out” and is an exact description of “the dropping of the petals or corona out of the

calyx, as an effect of drought.” When this happens “its beauty is destroyed.” The words of James are literally “and the beauty of the face of it perished.”

The word “beauty” (*euprepeia*), εὐπρέπεια which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, denotes the flower’s outward attractiveness. The expression “the beauty of its face” reveals that James had “something of the same appreciation of the loveliness of God’s creation which we find in the words of Jesus, who said that the simple beauty of the wild flowers exceeded that of the splendour of Solomon’s court.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 81). BMH Books.

### James 1:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> 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.

The remark that the rich man “will fade away” continues the imagery of the flower; his passing is similar to that of the rapidly fading flower.

“Even while he goes about his business” implies that his disappearance from the earthly scene will come while he is busy with his varied activities.

“While he goes about his business” (*en tais poreiais autou*, literally, “in his goings”) may refer to a literal trip or journey. In Luke 13:22 the noun is used of Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem. With this meaning, the implication is that the rich man will come to his end while on one of his business trips (cf. 4:13). The term is also used metaphorically of one’s way of life (cf. the expression in v. 8 above). Then the reference is to the varied activities of the rich man in general. ,,,,,,the words of James imply that the rich man will pass away while he is still restlessly busy with his material pursuits and not anticipating that his end is at hand.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 81–82). BMH Books.

**He shall pass away** (παρελευσεται [*pareleusetai*]). Future middle indicative (effective aoristic future, shall pass completely away from earth).

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Jas 1:10). Broadman Press.

2 warnings I would give to the rich. Most of us here today...

If you are lost and don't know Christ

Luke 12:16–21 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

<sup>17</sup> And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup> So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” ’ <sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

<sup>21</sup> “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

To the Rest of us.

Get a right Divine perspective of your life in light of your trials. As a believer, remind yourself often of the temporary nature of your life here. All that you you have and all the earthly achievement you have gained. All

the degrees and awards, and all the money and investments, and retirements. All the things of this earth are passing away.

If you live on this earth, and find yourself consumed with investing here, building here, gaining here. You can.... for a little while but then it all passes away.

It is akin to you building and addition on your house with the best of building materials with all the most up to date moldings and paints and furniture and lighting, while at the far end of the existing house, it is already being lit on fire.

Lenski, R. C. H

Faith in Christ lifts the lowly brother beyond his trials to the great height of a position in the kingdom of Christ, where as God's child he is rich and may rejoice and boast. Faith in Christ does an equally blessed thing for the rich brother: it fills him with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of lowliness and true Christian humility (Phil. 2:3–11: “with lowly-mindedness,” v. 3). As the poor brother forgets all his

earthly poverty, so the rich brother forgets all his earthly riches. The two are equals by faith in Christ.

Lenski, R. C. H. (1938). [\*The interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James\*](#) (pp. 534–535). Lutheran Book Concern.

