

ECCLESIA  
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST  
Pastor Luther H. Holmes, Jr.  
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Bible Enrichment Series

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**NINE TESTS EVERY BELIEVER MUST FACE**  
**LESSON 9 – THE SERVANT TEST**

**KEY CHAPTER: James 1:1-12 (Message Bible)**

**1** I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello!

**Faith Under Pressure**

**<sup>2-4</sup> Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So, don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work, so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.**

**<sup>5-8</sup> If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.**

**<sup>9-11</sup> When down-and-outers get a break, cheer! And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer! Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't ever count on it. You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the "prosperous life." At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing. <sup>12</sup> **Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.****

## **Introduction**

We are living in a time that most of us never would have expected or predicted. Now more than ever we recognize that we do not know what tomorrow holds.

In times like these the question must be asked, how should we, as followers of Jesus, respond during these unusual and uncertain times?

Tonight, we turn to the book of James where we have this reminder: that while trials are certain and come in all shapes and sizes, joy is possible as we recognize God's purpose and provision in the midst of our trials.

## **Context**

James was the half-brother of Jesus, and he was a pastor in the church in Jerusalem in the years following Jesus's return to Heaven. ***James is writing to real people, in a real situation.*** These are people who are facing real trials. As individuals and as a church we must strive to have a view toward joy in the midst of unexpected situations. We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we can trust that God will use our trials to accomplish His purposes. As we navigate uncertain times, we must trust His plan, submit to His work in us and go to Him in faith asking for wisdom.

The first phrase of verse 2 provides a call that frames the entire section that follows. James is calling on believers who are facing trials to consider their trials with joy. On its own this may seem like a call to unsubstantiated happiness, but the verses that follow reveal the reason saints can truly, *count it all joy*.

We can experience joy in our trials by knowing that our trials have a purpose (1:2-4) As we face trials, we can have this hope: That God is using our trials to make us perfect and complete. The call for joy or rejoicing in the knowledge that God uses trials to bring us to maturity is a theme throughout the New Testament (≡; Romans 5:1-5)

How can we endure with joy?) Jesus endured the cross with joy as his motivation (Hebrews 12:2) While Jesus endured the cross with joy, He

still experienced pain, grief and sorrow (Matthew 26:37-39). Enduring with joy does not mean we don't experience pain, but it does mean that we have hope and purpose in the process. We can experience joy in our trials by knowing that God provides wisdom for the journey. In times of difficulty, we become acutely aware of our need for wisdom. It is easy to feel lost or unprepared. God does not leave us alone to find our way through our trials, He generously and graciously gives wisdom to those who ask in faith.

God is ready and willing to give wisdom, but there is a qualifier, we must ask believing that He will give it. We must trust that He will hear and answer our request. The person who doubts is described as double-minded and will not receive wisdom from God.

In this series, we will examine "Nine Tests Every Believer Must Face" knowing that they're all working together for our good. The nine tests for our learning are:

- (1) The Wilderness Test (alone in storms)
- (2) The Test of Time (just waiting and waiting)
- (3) The Motivation Test (Doing the right things for the wrong reasons?)
- (4) The Failure Test (We all fail if we try to do something)
- (5) The Self Will Test (Are you stubborn in your ways?)
- (6) The Discouragement Test
- (7) The Misunderstanding Test
- (8) The Frustration Test
- (9) The Servant Test

Tonight, we conclude this series, **'Nine Tests Every Believer Must Face' with Lesson 9**

## **THE SERVANT TEST**

**1 Kings 19:19 (NLT)**

So, Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field with a team of oxen. There were eleven teams of oxen ahead of him, and he was plowing with the twelfth team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak across his shoulders and walked away again.

**1 Kings 19:20 (NLT)**

Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, "First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!"

Elijah replied, "Go on back! But consider what I have done to you. "

**1 Kings 19:21 (NLT)**

Elisha then returned to his oxen, killed them, and used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the other plowmen, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant.

**2 Kings 3:11 (NLT)**

But King Jehoshaphat of Judah asked, "Is there no prophet of the Lord with us? If there is, we can ask the Lord what to do."

One of King Joram's officers replied, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to be Elijah's personal assistant. "

**2 Kings 3:11 (KJV)**

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

- Servant is defined as a person, male, or female, who performs duties for others, especially a person employed in a house on

domestic duties or as a personal attendant and that person is subject to his or her command.

- A servant is a devoted and helpful follower or supporter.

There are many who wish to serve God...but only in an **ADVISORY** position.

### **THERE ARE SEVEN DEMANDS UPON A SERVANT:**

#### 1.) A surrender of **FREEDOM**

***Luke 17:10** In the same way, when you have done all the things which are given you to do, say, There is no profit in us, for we have only done what we were ordered to do.*

#### 2.) A surrender of **TIME**

***Luke 17:7** If your servant comes in from plowing or from taking care of the sheep, would you say, "Welcome! Come on in and have something to eat"?*

***Luke 17:8** No, you wouldn't say that. You would say, "Fix me something to eat. Get ready to serve me, so I can have my meal. Then later on you can eat and drink."*

#### 3.) A surrender of **AUTHORITY**

***Luke 7:8** For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

#### 4.) A surrender of **EGO**

***John 13:4** He riseth from supper and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself.*

***John 13:5** After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

***John 13:14** If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

***John 13:15** For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

#### 5.) A surrender of **PREFERENCES**

***Matthew 26:39** Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, don't make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want."*

#### 6.) A surrender of **PURPOSE**

***Mark 10:43** But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:*

***Mark 10:44** And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*

#### 7.) A surrender of **RESOURCES**

***Matthew 25:16** Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same and made them other five talents.*

***Matthew 25:17** And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

***Matthew 25:18** But he that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money.*

### **SERVANTHOOD IS INEVITABLE IF YOU ARE TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

***Matthew 20:26** Let it not be so among you: but if anyone has a desire to become great among you, let him be your servant;*

***Matthew 20:27** And whoever has a desire to be first among you, let him take the lowest place:*

***Matthew 20:28** Even as the Son of man did not come to have servants, but to be a servant, and to give his life for the salvation of men.*

### **SERVITUDE WILL COME BEFORE HONOR.**

- Joseph serves Potiphar

- Joshua serves Moses
- Samuel serves Eli
- David serves Saul
- Elisha serves Elijah
- Timothy serves Paul
- John Mark serves Simon Pete

## **TWELVE ATTITUDES OF A SERVANT:**

### 1.) A servant is **TEACHABLE**

***3 John 1:9** I wrote to the church. But Diotrephes likes to be the number-one leader, and he won't pay any attention to us.*

### 2.) A servant is **SUBMISSIVE**

***Matthew 26:39** And he went forward a little, and falling down on his face in prayer, he said, O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup go from me; but let not my pleasure, but yours be done.*

### 3.) A servant is **PATIENT**

***2 Timothy 2:24** (CEV) and God's servants must not be troublemakers. They must be kind to everyone, and they must be good teachers and very patient.*

### 4.) A servant is **DILIGENT**

***Matthew 24:46-47** (NLT) If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. [47] I assure you, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns.*

***Matthew 24:48-50** (NLT) But if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' [49] and begins oppressing the other servants, partying, and getting drunk— [50] well, the master will return unannounced and unexpected.*

***Matthew 24:51** (NLT) He will tear the servant apart and banish him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

5.) A servant is **PRODUCTIVE**

***Matthew 25:29-30** (NLT) To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away. [30] Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

6.) A servant is **LOYAL**

***Luke 16:13** (BBE) No man may be a servant to two masters: for he will have hate for the one and love for the other; or he will keep to the one and have no respect for the other. You may not be servants of God and of wealth.*

7.) A servant has **INTEGRITY**

***Galatians 1:10** (NLT) Obviously, I'm not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant.*

8.) A servant is **SELFLESS**

***Acts 20:24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God*

9.) A servant is **PROFITABLE**

***1 Corinthians 9:19** For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

10.) A servant is **TRUSTWORTHY**

***Revelation 17:14** These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

Faithful in the Greek is **pistos** which means **TRUSTWORTHY**

11.) A servant is **FOCUSED**

***1 Corinthians 7:35** And this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare on you, but for that which is right, and that you may attend on the Lord without distraction.*

12.) A servant is **PREPARED**

***Luke 12:47** And the servant who had knowledge of his lord's desires and was not ready for him and did not do as he was ordered, will be given a great number of blows;*

13.) A servant is **FERVENT**

***Romans 12:11** not lagging in diligence, boiling [fig., being fervent] in your spirit [or, in the Spirit], serving as a slave to the Lord,*

### **Elisha's Legacy**

Chosen  
Anointed  
Obedient  
Sacrificial  
Servant  
Patient

***2 Kings 6:12** And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.*

***2 Kings 4:27** And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.*

### **After Elisha's death—his legacy continues**

***2 Kings 13:21** And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into*

*the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.*

**Let's wrap-up this lesson with a few points of application:**

**When we get through “serving” down here, what do we want the Lord to say?**

These are the words we want to hear from Christ:

***Matthew 25:23** His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

- God tests us to see if we have a servant's heart, or demand that we be served.
- The last lesson Christ taught to His disciples before Calvary was about being a servant. He used a towel and a pan of water to show who would be the greatest in His kingdom
- ***We will be judged upon how we served.***
- We all long to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful SERVANT"

**What we hear depends upon how we do with the Servant Test.**