

AN EXEGESIS OF JAMES 5: 7-11 ON SUFFERING AND PATIENCE AND ITS
IMPLICATION FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

This is an exegesis of James 5: 7-11 on suffering and patience and its implication for the contemporary church. There are questions in the heart of an average human being as to why righteous people suffer. The world in which we live is full of ups and downs. Suffering is very real in human existence and this does not exclude the children of God. However, people try to deny it and God's servants try to shy away from it. Denial of faith, either directly or indirectly as a result of pain or unpleasant circumstance, has been found in Christian history. People react to suffering in several ways: through resentment, groaning, complaint, impatience, or faith and confidence in God. Contemporary Christians need the assurance that the Lord is gracious and compassionate irrespective of what their experiences might be. The writer looks at the subject of suffering and patience in the light of James 5: 7-11. In-depth usage of library materials is principally employed in this work. He examines the subject first from non-biblical literature, then from Old and New Testament perspectives. The essayist later provides an exegesis of the text and then draws out some implications of the study for the contemporary church before making some recommendations. One of the findings is that whatever pain God allows in the life of His child, He meant it for good; those who endure are considered blessed. Another one is that Suffering has value in that it matures the believer in a way. Some of the recommendations are: that gospel ministers should preach a balanced gospel; that Christians should strengthen their heart and add boldness and courage to their faith in the face of challenging experiences and that Christians should patiently endure and check within while passing through any experience of suffering. They should not blame God or men for their sufferings but should patiently trust God for help.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This work is not to advocate that to be a Christian is to suffer, that will be an extreme. Neither is it to prove that suffering makes a man holier, nor is it to say that all sufferings are God's will for man. This work has certainly shown that believers ought not to see suffering as a strange thing. No one's trial is unique in the sense that other persons have suffered same before. God is always full of compassion and mercy and will always provide a way of escape. He also feels the pain. Therefore, contemporary believers ought to exercise patience in the face of suffering and pain.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Gospel ministers should preach a balanced gospel. The whole truth of God's word should be disseminated to the church. The whole of Bible doctrines should be preached so that people will not be half-baked.

Christians should have a broad mind. They should strengthen their heart and add boldness and courage to their faith in the face of challenging experiences. They ought to assure themselves like Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives..." They should not be discouraged but stand their ground as the apostles of old did. Christians should resist the Devil instead of blaming God, themselves or others.

Believers should stop grumbling against one another or transferring aggression. Also, Christians should always live with heaven in focus.

Contemporary Christians should patiently wait, just like the farmer who waits with patience for the fruits of the ground. They should know that “the Judge is standing at the door” and that their deliverance is near.

One should check within while passing through any experience of suffering. This is necessary so that one will not confuse the trial of faith with deserved punishment, or with God’s discipline.

Christians should pray for those who are suffering. In addition, one should pray for breakthrough instead of enduring unnecessarily.