

"The Crown of Life"

James 1:12-18

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by C.W. Powell

Vs. 12. We return to the theme of vs. 2-4. Trials are a part of God's perfect plan for His people.

1. We need three things to endure:

a) We need knowledge vs. 3

b) We need Faith and wisdom. Vs. 5-8 Our business is always with God, not men or circumstances.

c) Our very station in life is a trial. Poverty can be a trial, but we can rejoice in that we are exalted; Riches can be a different sort of trial, but we can rejoice in that we are humbled. In either case, we know that it is not our station in life that brings us approval with God.

2. He promises a Crown of Life.

a) A crown was a reward in the ancient world. The Greeks gave crowns for honor, praise, achievement; for beauty and for glory.

b) These things are not illegitimate if sought for in a godly way. Jesus spoke much of this.

(1) They are illegitimate if undeserved glory is sought: Jesus condemned seeking the chief seats; let others promote you.

(2) They are illegitimate if sought from men and not from God. Standing on street corners--praying.

(3) They are illegitimate if for foolish things, and not real achievements; tinsel crowns; cheap praise: the praise itself and not real achievements; clouds without rain.

(4) They are illegitimate if the honor a glory is sought before the test, before the trial. The trial comes first.

(5) They are illegitimate if we seek to bypass the trials. Christ Himself endured trials and was not crowned until af-ter the trials.

c) Important uses of crown:

(1) Prov. 12:14. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. She shall not make him ashamed. If she makes him ashamed she is rottenness in his bones.

(2) Prov. 14:24. Riches are a crown to wise men. But Prov. 27:24 warns that riches do not endure forever. But the wise man is still wise, even if he loses his riches.

(3) Prov. 4:9: Wisdom is a crown of glory to a man.

(4) Prov. 16:31. White hair is a crown of glory if it is in the way of righteousness. But it is a shame for an old man to be a fool.

(5) Isaiah 3. A woman's glory is not her apparel. Those who glory in apparel will be given a scab and shame.

d) The Crown of Life is for those who love Christ. Christ, Himself, not the reward that He gives. "Do you love Me," He calls. The world cannot give and the world cannot take away the love of Christ. It is the love of Christ which is the mark of authenticity.

Vs. 13-16. What does not come from God: the sin in the testing. The root of testing and trials is in ourselves. Not is God; not in circumstances. The root is the lust in us.

1. God cannot be tempted. He needs nothing. What could He desire?

2. He doesn't tempt man. Not in the sense of evil: The fire does not create the impurity--it reveals it.

3. "Lust" means wicked desire---not that the desire itself it evil, but that the desire is for evil things.

a) Appetite for food is not wrong: but the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was forbidden.

b) Desire for beauty is not wrong: but the fruit, etc.

c) Desire to be wise is not wrong; but the fruit, etc.

4. In Christ: it is natural for humans to want to avoid pain, but with Christ it was unjust pain; He knew no sin. His horror was having to become sin: to be counted unclean and banished from His Father whom He loved.
5. Unregulated desire is thus the problem-evil desire. This desire conceives evil deeds which are killers and bring death. This is why Paul said, "I keep under my body."

Vs. 17,18. What does come from God.

1. Every good gift. There is no bad side to it, and is a true gift; no strings attached.
2. Perfect gift. Mature and full. Tested. A ripened blessing.
3. God is the Father of Lights; there is no darkness.
4. Our very life is begotten by God, that we might be a sort of first fruit; we cannot fail in this, nor can our love for Christ fail, for it is the very work of the Spirit of God, begotten of the word of truth, the Gospel itself.

The Application

1. Do not question God. He is right in all He does.
2. Do not turn from the love of Christ: He loves you and will do you no harm. But He will treat your disease.
3. Your business is always with God
 - a) Know the scriptures
 - b) Be wise: value eternity. That which is seen is temporal--bear the heat of the day.
 - c) Seek your good from Him, for Him, not His gifts.
 - d) Endure: be patient under trials
 - (1) Add patience to temperance;
 - (2) add temperance to virtue;
 - (3) add virtue to faith.

4. Love the Lord Jesus; Believe and trust. The fullness is in Christ; there is nothing else.

Amen and Amen.

God bless you.