

James 1:5-11 | Tom Grass

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Date: 15 March 2026

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[0:00] How much has Dayspring been updated or improved? Who knows Robert Fitzgerald? He's willing to go to Dayspring this year.

! Which means he won't he sold RV on RVs on how many years he will never use one and his idea of roughing it is at least a I would think not even a holiday and what is it now I mean you know so anyway Robert is going to go down there for a week I guess and so that tells you at least those facilities at Dayspring have been well upgraded anyway I was listening to a little random things before we start but I was listening to partly listening to Bill Nye and Ken Ham the creation debate and you know Bill Nye wears a bow tie right you don't see that a lot you don't see many ties here at Bethel except for I guess Bob Morgan now there's a tie on but uh so Bill Nye was somewhere and he he didn't know how to tie a bow tie yet and so someone where he was he knew knew how to tie a tie and so he had the tie and his dad like wore a tie and I think his grandpa wore a tie is what I believe Bill Nye said so he knocks on this guy's door and says hey can you help me with this bow tie and he says sure he goes lay down here on this bed okay and so then the guy ties the tie for him and Bill Nye gets up he goes okay that's thanks for doing that he goes why do I have to lay on the bed he goes well I'm a mortician and I always tie a bow tie with the guy laying down oh well anyway uh the good thing about the book of James from for Mark Manella is that James kind of has ADHD you know or ADD he jumps around a lot it's kind of more like a proverb so it's like there'll be he'll have a line of thought going you know and the next thing you know he's talking about something else and we'll see that this morning he'll be talking about faith and wisdom and asking and all of a sudden he talks about the man of wealth the man of means and poor guy and it's all the same because you're going to die and if you're a believer you have an inheritance with God so he kind of jumps around the book of James and so uh if you have a hard time paying attention it's a good book for you uh good book for me it seems likely uh let's pray

Lori thank you for this day thank you for your word and a couple things you know we ask for your guidance in our lives and to live a life of faith and to persevere under trials way that glorifies you in Jesus name Amen I'm going to read uh the first twelve verses and then we can start our discussion about I'm going to read out of the King James because I I brought this bible for a reason this morning but uh you know James was uh the brother of the Lord Jesus and uh the half brother of Jesus I kind of thought about the time frame it was I said the introduction last week but I was thinking about forty to fifty years forty to fifty years eighty is when they think it was written which would be roughly you know just for this isn't accurate historically by date but twenty years fifteen to twenty years after the Lord Jesus uh was crucified so as we went through the book of Acts remember how we called that a transitional book a hard book to derive doctrine from things came up which created some questions you know like you get in a later Acts and there's this guy Apollos shows up on the scene and preaching the baptism of John that's all he knew and that was okay twenty years after the Lord had already died and rose went to heaven and uh it fit that era with the way information was shared and it also fit with people who had faith in the message of John the Baptist and were believers so there's that kind of thing so James is like writing it out of that context of course all the New Testament writing is in that time frame but

I was thinking about James a little bit and um being in Jerusalem and seeing the you know could you imagine like it's not declared that he's a believer when Jesus is alive at some point he trusts in the Lord and then he sees you know his brother be crucified and then he sees Stephen be stoned and then all these things are happening and then you know Rome comes down pretty hard on the Jews or those believers in Jerusalem and they scatter you know they went up as far as Antioch of Syria and then you know we also learned in Acts that Priscilla and Aquila were kicked out of Rome because that that ruler didn't want them there because for various reasons so you kind of get this I

kind of got this thought about James like well who's he talking to he's talking to these scattered people he's talking to people that have been persecuted he's writing to people who lives has been turned upside down you know Priscilla and Aquila were tent makers if you're in a trade word of mouth or you have consistent clients in a business and so they're in Rome and they're making tent leather work whatever you want to call it and they're probably you're okay there and all of a sudden now they're uprooted because of some persecution or something like that and so I was thinking about that a little bit and then you have this topic the end of my verses here where you have the man of low means and the man of wealth wealth and I said well you know that could have been some of the believers that maybe they were doing alright and then the persecution came and they fled and now they're not doing so well so what's the message to that guy I'm reading a lot into it but that happens in our lives things are going okay things seem fine then you lose a job you lose your benefits and you dip into your savings if you have them you know sometimes some people live we call it paycheck to paycheck other people seem to do really well but God's working in both situations in both both people's lives and I just kind of thought that's maybe was James outlook possibly maybe a way we could identify with it or understand it so let's just read the first 12 verses James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad greeting my brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials knowing this that the testing of your faith works patience but let patience have her perfect work that you may be perfect and entire lacking nothing if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God who gives to men liberally and unabraideth he abraideth not and shall be given him but let him ask in faith not wavering for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord a double minded man is unstable in all his ways let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is insulted but let the rich in that he is made low because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat but it withers the grass and its flowers fall and the grace of the fashion of it perishes so also the rich man shall fade away in his ways blessed is the man that endures temptation for when he is trialed he shall try he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those that love him you can sense the topics kind of shift or because of this this you know or this like a proverb kind of reads like a proverb

[8:58] I kind of jotted down what I see is like the the different topics how do you say it they are kind of opposite sometimes here is what I wrote down testing yields patience patience should lead to maturity maturity maturity should result in contentment you need wisdom ask for it God the character he gives it liberally how do you ask don't doubt have faith faith when you are doubting you are wavering like the wind driven water that is an easy thing to see the wind when it blows across if you are going to doubt don't bother to ask future views of wealth and poverty there is no middle mentioned there is no middle mentioned it is just like but the same axiom either you have eternal rewards of low means in this earth or wealthy either they all perish but whether or not you have an inheritance with God filled with all depends on your belief in Jesus the lowly will be exalted rich man will be made low but both have the opportunity for a future inheritance any of those!

any of those! any of those any of those any of those any of those any of those When I've had this Bible a really long time, in earlier years of my Christian walk in the 90s and stuff, I would write stuff down in the front of it, just like notes.

And so I was going to share a little bit about things I wrote down that were maybe times when God led me and showed me where to go, what to do. My early career as a worker was I was in food service, and I liked that a lot, and I was good at it.

I was skilled in that trade as far as a cook. I mean, honestly, I had the caliber of a chef, but I was in private schools doing it, which is great.

In 1995 or so, after about a dozen years in it, I was managing and cooking and all that, my back was starting to get messed up, you know.

[12:12] I'm sure some of your manual laborers know what I'm talking about. When your discs get compressed, they get damaged, whatever. And you start to go, well, this isn't so great.

Well, in 1995, around Valentine's Day or February, Gary Vineyard asked me, hey, you want to come work for me at Mako? I'm going to buy the Mako down the street there in Kirkwood. I'm like, Gary, I don't know anything about body work and cars like that, you know.

And I went from a sanitary grade A kitchen to Mako. And I walked into that shop to look at it, and I go, there is no way.

It stunk, and it's filthy dust everywhere, and trash piled up, you know, because there's masking paper everywhere for covering the cars in your body work and painting, and thick dust, it's nasty, you know.

I'm like, I don't think so, Gary. I said, no, I don't want to do this. Nikki and I went to this house for dinner, and no, this is, he goes, well, think about it, pray about it, let me know by some date.

[13:16] I'm like, okay. It's pretty much a no-brainer, you know, I could tell you now, but all right, I'll pray about it. Well, you know what happened. You know, remember the Gilligan Island, you can't make me, you can't make me.

Well, that's where I ended up for ten years almost. But I'll tell you, the Lord was good to clearly guiding me there.

So, I wrote down in April of 95, leaving Vianney High School, which I was in food service, for my new job with Gary Vineyard, God has changed our hearts to take this position with Gary.

The purpose, the gospel, he has confirmed through his word that his purposes are higher than my natural inclinations for reasoning or determining what constitutes a good job. The purpose is to be where God desires me or us to be and not where I think I should be.

If he says move on, I should move on. And then he spoke to me out of verses he gave me was Philippians 1, 12-14, Ephesians 3, 1-12, which is the mystery, the gospel, the church.

[14:27] I set aside some time to pray and fast about it. And then John 21, where Jesus is talking to Peter.

And he asked him, because Peter, after the resurrection of the Lord, went back to fishing. He was kind of frustrated, you know, I don't know what to do, I'm just going to go fish. And then the Lord asked him, do you love these fish more than what I want you to do?

And that's what spoke to me. Do you love food service more than where I want you to go? And I was like, yes. But I'll go. And it was good.

And I went, you know, and there's ways, the reason I'm talking about this is, because, you know, how do you know what God's will is for your life when you're living a life of faith? And I struggle with this, you know. It's never, you know, I never feel like I have this master, right?

What James is talking about. But at the time, my back was pretty bad, and I was going to the chiropractor, and it got, and I said, hey, if I could get out of food service and do something different where I wasn't putting away 60, 80 cases of frozen food, you know, every Friday and Thursday, would that be beneficial?

[15:44] And he said, yeah, you should do that. Well, you know, so I was like, all right, Gary, I'll do it, you know. And then, Lord, use that situation a lot in my life, good and bad.

And then, you know, there's other things I could talk about that. But then, like, us moving to Hillsboro, we were looking in Franklin County for over a year, probably longer.

Man, we knew every street out there, every alphabet soup highway that was out there. A, J, E, E, E, B, B, B, Highway 185.

One time I got a, and back then you couldn't look online and look at comparables. You had to go look at them to get a feel for it or pick up the real estate magazines.

We had been looking a really long time. I literally took, if you know what a compass is, right, those things from math, and you have a needle in one end, a pencil in the other end. Literally, I did this.

[16:47] We were living in Baldwin, Manchester, and I stuck it on the map. And I went out 35 miles and just drew a big circle around Kirkwood.

I said, anywhere 35 miles from there, Nicky, I don't care anymore. It's kind of how it went. I literally put a circle on the map. I mean, but then we end up in Jefferson County, and it was the Lord's doing, and it was right for a lot of reasons, which I'm not going to talk about now.

And that was 99. 99. In 2000, when we were out there in Hillsboro, we still are, same house. We met a family, the Menkes, who live around the corner.

And Brian was a Christian, and I was walking Joel, Lydia, and Anna down their street, which is right down the road. And he goes, hey, are you a Christian? He had been building his house for a year, a lot like Ted and Lydia just did.

And he lived in his neighbor's house with his good friends. And he goes, yeah, I'm a Christian. He goes, you want to have a Bible study? It's like, yeah. And then we started, like, Kids for Christ out there at the Baptist Church.

[17:50] And the Menkes, we witnessed to our neighbors. We had Bible studies. And as a matter of fact, you know, it was 20, how many years later, 25, 26 years later, two of the neighbors came to the Ladies' Conference this year.

And one, they're Catholic, but, you know, it's kind of interesting the Lord's still working and doing that and leading us through circumstances.

So if you lack wisdom, ask God. And then trust Him. That's hard, isn't it? It's hard. Dave, I know you're going through some stuff.

You know, we all are. If you stop and listen to somebody, they're probably all going through something. And, you know, homeschooling, we didn't know what we were doing. We didn't know. The Lord directed us through that, too.

And coming to Bethel, there's another story there, how we ended up here. We were living out there in Hillsboro, and it didn't seem like we would end up here. And you know what? It was, the Lord does give you inclinations, I would say, or He does give you little hints sometimes in these situations.

[18:56] Like, we felt like where we were at, Christian Bible Chapel, is that what it was called then? In Fenton, where we were going. We went there for four years after we left Believers.

And it seemed like the Lord was moving us on from that, but we weren't sure what to. And it seemed like we were going to be out there in Hillsboro. But the Lord seemed to impress on us that He wanted us at Bethel for someone in our family.

I didn't know what that meant. My sister lived in Fenton. My other sister lived in St. Louis County. My brother. I thought one of them, you know, and it turns out Jeff and Laura, I believe that was instrumental in them coming to Bethel.

So it was like, well, I wasn't thinking about that, right, necessarily. Not to slight you, Jeff. I was thinking about my own brothers and sisters, you know.

But now, 30 years later, after we've been here a long time, my kids, some of my kids come here to my girls, right, Lydia and Anna, and my grandkids.

[20:03] There's six grandkids that go to Bethel. I never saw that in my mind, come here for your family. You know what I mean? Isn't that interesting how the Lord knows better than we do and sees further along than we do?

So if that's any help to you, that's a few examples of how God moved in my life and my wife's life in the aspect of faith or asking.

And I can tell you, there was a lot of doubt with those years and those events.

When you look on the outside of someone's life, it looks like, oh, they got it all together. But inside, there's this mess going on, right? I've heard it said this way, there's like a Christian's life, Christian's life is like a tapestry or a woven rug.

On the top, beautiful colors. You can almost make mosaics out of material, right? But underneath, you know, are all the knots. And all the ugliness is underneath there.

[21:22] But God's doing a great work on the top. But inside and underneath, it could be all messy. You know, the foundation of stuff isn't always the best thing.

It's the finished work. And that's what God's after. And thankfully, he takes care of that, right? And it's not dependent on me. Do you need wisdom?

Anyone lacks wisdom? Verse 5, what are you supposed to do? Ask. Ask. Ask God. Do you need wisdom today for something? Yeah.

I do. Still do. Where are you getting your answers from?

Where do you go when you need an answer? When you need wisdom? Do you go to the world? Do you listen to that noise? Or do you go to God and his word?

[22:31] It's challenging in our culture. It's always been challenging. We like to think we live in the hardest era. I don't believe that at all.

But as far as outside influences into the believer's life and mind, this is a terrible time. It's a terrible time for that. When you ask God for wisdom, you've got to wait.

God doesn't answer your questions like a Google search or AI. It doesn't work that way. It doesn't. It's slower. He's working in your life during that process.

It's like training children to do certain things. It's a process, you know. You don't get it all at one time. You can't just put a chip in. That's reprogrammed.

When we do ask, the Bible tells us God gives his wisdom to us generously or liberally.

[23:35] Okay. I believe God on that. I guess so. Sure. When you're asking God for wisdom, it takes humility, right?

It's another aspect of asking God for wisdom. I essentially have to confess I don't have the understanding of the situation that is required to make a good decision.

I still feel that way sometimes. This seems right right now. I mean, a year and a half ago, it seemed right not to take a full-time job for one employer. Well, it worked out for a while, but it's not the best thing for me now.

Now I have allegedly a stable job, I think. Who knows what's stable, though, right? You go in tomorrow, it's like, you know what? You're out.

Someone else is in. The company got bought. You know, it's like, there's a lot of instability.

Proverbs 2, verse 6. The Lord gives wisdom from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

[24:34] It's the Lord who gives the wisdom. Another condition about wisdom. You're supposed to ask God. When you ask God, don't doubt. David, in Psalm 5, verse 3, says, I lay my request before you and I wait in expectation.

I wait in faith that you're going to answer me. Don't waver. Wait in faith. That's easy to say. Easy to stand up here and deliver that message.

Hard to live. Right? Yeah. I'm trusting you, God. I'm expecting that you're going to answer me. You could talk about all kinds of winds of doctrine and things like that.

And I think that's important for us. Paul, in Ephesians 4, verse 14, says, I want you to be strong and stable in your face so that winds of doctrine don't just come and blow you off course.

You have to be really, really careful what you expose your heart to because there's so many confusing messages.

[25:48] And when you allow yourself to be influenced by things that are contrary to the Word of God and worldly, another word for double-minded is worldly. You become worldly and double-minded.

I would challenge you. This is probably the biggest challenge, if you will, or instruction that I'd have for you this morning out of this passage. If you can remember one thing.

Stay in the basics of the Word of God. Stay in the fundamental, foundational truths. And stay in those lanes. Don't get off on these tangents.

There's enough here to study without going down rabbit trails and rabbit holes of truth and some new thing. Like, I know there are people that now think the Book of Enoch has something for us as believers.

Man, it might have something historical in there, maybe. But don't trust it. Right? The Gospel of Thomas. You hear these things, right? These are things meant to lead you astray.

[26:53] Okay. So be really careful on those kind of things. Now, if you want to know historical stuff, the Book of Maccabees, that would be fine. It's pretty historical. It's not biblical.

It's truthful. But it's not truth. Life-changing truth. Inspired truth. Does that make sense? And you have enough. I have enough. I can speak for myself.

I have enough to do. Studying this and staying in this lane and getting down into tangents and all kinds of things like that. Dig into the Word and cry out to God for understanding.

If the musicians want to come up, we'll wrap this up pretty quickly. The Bible says to guard your heart, for out of it comes the wellsprings of life. Colossians 2, verse 8 says, See to it that no one

takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, which are based on human tradition and the spiritual forces of the world rather than on Christ.

You know, if you look at some of the mega church type things that happen in our lifetimes, you know, some of those places aren't truth. They're great places to go, good for your life.

[28:08] They might be very beneficial, but are they truth? And do they have truth? Do they consistently preach truth, right? That's where we need to stay focused. We'll wrap this up here in 9 to 11, and this is kind of like where James just kind of throws out a new topic, if you will.

And I was thinking, well, why would James do this? I thought, well, maybe he had a lot of kids at home when he started writing the book. And he started, he got to verse 10, he's like, and two weeks later he comes back and he goes, I don't know what I was thinking.

I didn't write it down. Well, I don't know, let's just, I'll throw this one out. You know. Let the brother, yeah, this guy, let the brother of low degree rejoice that he is exalted.

Okay. So, you know, James describes how the rich man here is like a flower. It's there for a little while, and the sun comes and dries it up.

It scorches, it withers, it dries. But like I mentioned at the very beginning, it's just James just kind of saying, whatever your situation is, if you're in Christ, or have faith, your future is secure.

[29:23] Your inheritance is secure. You will be wealthy in the age to come. In this age, it might look kind of bad or nasty. It might look really good for that guy, but for this guy, it might look really bad, you know.

Have you ever done that thing, or you ever see that thing where, shows billionaires in the world, and it'll give a timeline, and it'll just keep flipping it, you know, and it'll show like Bill Gates, Bill Gates, and then like, you know, the ten richest people in the world, and you'll see all these names keep going up and down and up and down, and then all of a sudden, like in 2020, and guess whose name pops in there?

Elon Musk. And it goes from like, he's not even in there, and all of a sudden, he's like leaderboard, you know. He's like at the top. But what's going to happen to all that wealth that he has?

In a hundred years, he won't have it. So that's all James is saying there at the end, you know. It's all going to fade.

You know, the things we have, they're passing away. The only thing that remains is our faith and people we take with us are that the Lord takes with him.

[30:37] It would be better to say it that way, right? I can't save anybody, but he does the saving. So, I guess to sum it up, maybe, maybe, where's that little cheat sheet I had at the beginning?

If you're going through testing, have patience. Let patience have its work in you that you'll be mature. If you want maturity, learn to have contentment.

You need wisdom? Ask for it. Don't doubt. Man, that's hard. That is so hard.

Not to doubt. Let's close. Lord, we thank you for your word. Help us to, help our unbelief.

And help us to lead a life worthy of what you've called us to. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.