

Sunday, August 23, 2020

Text: James 1:12

Title: Crown of Life

*Proposition:* Today, we'll draw three ways we should respond to God's pronouncement of blessing of those who persevere in James 1:12.

(Scriptures following each point are some possible cross references.)

1. Value God's approval (James 1:12a).

(Hebrews 12:2-3; Psalm 27:14; 40:1; 130:5)

2. Anticipate God's reward (James 1:12c).

(John 3:15; 3:36; Genesis 29:20)

3. Trust God's timing (James 1:12b).

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:19; John 10:14; 10:27-28; Genesis 22:1; 22:12; Deuteronomy 8:2; 8:16)

Study Guide Questions:

1. What does the word *blessed* mean? In what ways do words like *happy* and *fortunate* capture a portion of its meaning but not all?
2. What other pronouncements of blessing can you think of in Scripture? How does this verse complement them?
3. The blessed person perseveres under trials. What is perseverance? What attitudes and practices exist in your life when you are most persevering?
4. Perseverance is not the same as perfection. Why is that a valuable distinction to make?
5. If you continue on your current course, will you persevere? Why or why not?
6. What is the crown of life? How can those who have already been born again receive this crown?
7. Theologically, rewards can be complex to discuss. How can we both be undeserving and yet eagerly anticipate God's reward?
8. James doesn't say that God has promised the crown of life "to those who persevere" but "to those who love Him." "What connection is there between persevering, receiving the crown of life and loving Him?"
9. Why are you looking forward to receiving this metaphorical crown? How much do you want it? How does the prospect of receiving it encourage you to persevere?
10. The word for trial can be translated test. Why does God test us even when He knows what is in our hearts?

11. When will we have passed the test and been approved? How does understanding of justification motivate us to seek to be approved by God?