

Wavering?

Consistent Character 11 (Addendum)

Big challenges come to those who walk with Christ. Some are private challenges and others are public challenges. They test our character and our faith.

This portion of scripture is about meeting “trials of various kinds.”

There seems to be a big opportunity and a big danger in meeting these various trials. The “brethren” can look to God in faith or “waver” in a double-minded way.

We must not waver. For this kind of person will not receive the things he asks for and will be unstable.

James 1:2-8

- 2 ¶ My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
- 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
- 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
- 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
- 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
- 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
- 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

In many ways, character is the opposite of instability. People of character can be (and are) relied upon. They are the stable among us. They are the people who have asked in faith, received, and are on solid ground.

There are points to be made from this text that will help us to have this same stability, avoiding double-mindedness.

1. Joy because of knowledge. (vs. 2-3a)

This is first-hand knowledge. We know Him, therefore we know what He is doing in us. We know He is working in our best interest.

We know what His working can do and how it can benefit us.

I John 1:1-5

- 1 ¶ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 ¶ This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

We know what He is doing because we know who He is. Various testings serve to bring us more light.

2. Patience because of testing. (vs. 3b)

These challenges (testings) are useful.

This is the case because of who God is to us and how He has chosen to deal with us.

This patience is a steadfastness, a constancy, an endurance. "In the New Testament, the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings."

James 5:10-11

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Job did not swerve from his deliberate purpose - having seen who the Lord is and therefore known the way in which He would work.

3. Perfection because of steadfastness. (vs. 4)

Responding in a Biblical way, with patience and endurance, produces completeness.

II Timothy 3:16-17

16 ¶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There is a completeness and equipping to every man who knows and obeys (lives in accordance with) the word of God.

Hebrews 5:13-14

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Another translation says meat belongs to “those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice.” This is from knowing God’s word and enduring trials.

4. Wisdom because of generosity. (vs. 5)

God is generous. He hands out wisdom in heaping scoops to those who ask. And He does not scold those who need and/or ask for it.

James 1:17-18

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

We must be ever-mindful that all good and perfect come from Him.

He has what we need.

5. Faith because of familiarity. (vs. 6a)

I say familiarity, because those of us who know Him must certainly (by definition) know His grace, kindness, faithfulness, and love.

We must be “familiar” with His generosity.

Hebrews 11:11

11 ¶ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Sarah had faith because of what she judged. She was acquainted with His character and judged His word to be true.

6. Deficiency because of doubt. (vs. 7)

It is when we begin to doubt He is faithful, doubt He has our best interest at heart, doubt He is generous in dispensing wisdom, that we fail.

I John 5:3-4

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Victory comes from faith in the One who is Victor!

7. Instability because of carnality. (vs. 8)

Doubting God, having confidence (even the smallest) in self, and failing to commit are all recipes for failure.

Instability is failure. For God intends for His children to live on firm and even ground.

Luke 9:57-62

57 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 ¶ And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 ¶ And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 ¶ Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 ¶ And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 ¶ And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Have we made up our minds? Or are we wavering?