

Lowly Brother

10-19-25

James 1:9 (ESV)

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation.

This is a puzzling statement. The NIV says, “Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.” Literally, the lowly brother is to boast in his high position. (Started to skip this.) Asking God to clarify, HE immediately brought Acts 3:6 to mind.

Acts 3:6 (ESV)

Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”

The lowly brother without material resources will out of necessity more readily embrace spiritual resources. Thus, the lowly brother’s dependence on God is his boast. Counter this with the admonition to the rich.

James 1:10-11 (ESV) O/H (10a)

¹⁰But the rich should take pride in their humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Another puzzling statement, “The rich should take pride in their humiliation.” In comparison to the lowly brother, the rich man recognizes that his wealth adds nothing to him before God. Thus his humiliation. But he will take pride in the worthlessness of wealth because that means his trust is in Jesus. We are reminded of Jesus’ parable of the word sown among the weeds.

Matthew 13:22 (ESV)

This is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

The lowly should be encouraged. The wealthy must beware not to set their heart on riches and not be like the seed sown among the thorns. Now James encourages believers, both the poor and the rich.

James 1:12 (ESV)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love HIM.

When I read this something jumps off the page at me: Steadfast under Trial and Stood the Test.

This goes back to verses 2-3, where we are to count it all joy for trials, because trials are God's method for teaching us. Here we also see that HE will reward us and give us the Crown of Life when we persevere. Crown of Life means the Crown because of our life. We are saved by Grace and not by works. However, as believers we are rewarded for the good works we do.

Revelation 2:10 (ESV) NO/OH

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. ... you may be tested. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the Crown of Life.

After death we will receive a Crown because of our Life. However, all our self-efforts without Christ will be burned up.

1 Corinthians 3:15 (ESV) NO/OH

If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

When we persevere through trials and tests, we will receive rewards that are beyond description.

Romans 8:18 (ESV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

This really is all about love. Perseverance is only evidence of our love. God rewards those who love HIM. The last statement of James 1:12 makes this clear.

James 1:12 (ESV)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love HIM.

Bottom line, it is all about who we love. It is all about Jesus!

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

There is salvation in no one else, but Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.