

Scripture Reference: James 1:12 / "Light my Fire"
Focus: Living today by the values of eternity.

"Blessed is a man..."

There is **blessing** living as one surrendered to God.

God promised it. – Deut. 11:26-28

Jesus affirmed it. – Matt. 5:1-12

The biblical writers reminded their readers of it.

But, humanity has hijacked it.

We tend to defined "happiness," "blessedness," as *good* things, wealth, a good life, health, etc.

Understanding blessedness is grounded in Israel's history with God.

It is about His favor, more than physical comfort.

It is happiness in circumstances, not in the deliverance from them.

It is happiness grounded in the hope of redemption, as per James' reference to the "*crown of life*."

James instructs his readers of the joy, peace, and *happiness* that accompany living for what God values.

vv. 2-4 "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

It is counterfeit blessedness that promotes God as responding to what we value.

"...who perseveres under trial..."

Ever wonder why God calls for those who trust him to *persevere*? Why doesn't He just take care of the problem?

He is operating on a different value system than we. He is looking to glorify Himself before all people, not to glorify us as a means of comfort.

When a person trusts God enough to persevere regardless of loss or gain, comfort or distress, it says something about God.

Perseverance is staying the course, continuing on, no matter the hardship or opposition.

"...for once he has been approved..."

The action of persevering approves the believer. The validity and genuineness of one's faith is proven in continued devotion despite feelings or personal gain or loss.

For those who persevere, there is a reward, "*the crown of life*."

The quality of this life is not a person's reward from God. Instead, this life is the continual opportunity to show yourself approved before Him.

- Notice when this “approval” comes. It is only beyond death, the “*crown of life*” is received.

1. If life is lived to experience the *blessings* of God, as we define them, there will be disappointment.

2. The blessings a disciple of God looks for come ultimately in Eternity.

3. What drives you in life? What is it that causes you to persevere, to press on? Is it the idea of this life being a blessing or the blessing of knowing God?