DIGGERS
Bible Study Groups

Pointers and questions on the book of

James

Session **9**   *5:7-12*

The Need for Patience

Summary

5:7-9   Jesus will return. In the light of this we should be patient and stand firm in the midst of difficult circumstances. He comes not only as Saviour, but also as Judge, and this should help keep our attitudes and behaviour right as we await his coming.

5:10-11   Many Old Testament characters illustrate the virtue of patience and perseverance through trials. These include the prophets and Job.

5:12   The assurance that Jesus is coming will cause us to be at peace. In line with this, there will be no need to get up tight and swear oaths to back up our promises. We will be known as people of our word, whose quiet 'Yes' and 'No' means exactly what they say.

Questions to get you thinking

1. The Greek vocabulary of this passage distinguishes between 'patience' (v7, 8, 10) and 'perseverance' (v11). What is the difference?

2. In raising the question of perseverance through trials James has come full circle. Where in his letter did he raise it before?

3. Would you consider perseverance to be one of your strong points?

4. How could the Lord's coming be 'near' (v8) when some 2000 years have passed since James wrote his letter? Did James get his timing wrong?

5. Could there be a sense in which we could say that in *every* generation Christ is 'standing at the door' (v9)?

6. In the light of Jesus' return, what particular sin does James urge us to avoid? (v9)

7. Discuss in the group how the OT prophets and Job showed perseverance through affliction. What was the nature of Job's affliction in particular (see Job 1:13 – 2:7)?

8. In Job's case, what was it that 'the Lord finally brought about' (v11)? See Job 42:12-13. His return to prosperity and blessing was in this life. Should we expect the same, or will ours be only in the life to come after Jesus returns?

9. Is the swearing of oaths always wrong (v12)? Should a Christian acting as a witness in a court of law, for example, refuse to take the oath—as the early Quakers believed?