

GROWTH GUIDE

READ & REVIEW

Today's focus is going to be on looking at the biblical text and understanding what the writer was communicating to his original audience.

Begin by reading James 5:1-6 in its entirety.

Read James 5:1-3

James calls the rich - who later in the passage appear to be wealthy landowners - to mourn a future misery that is coming to them (v. 1). James accuses them of hoarding wealth and says it will bear witness against them on the day of judgment (v. 2-3).

We live in a culture where amassing material wealth is not only condoned but admired. How can placing too much value on material wealth lead to oppression and injustice?

Read James 5:4

The people James spoke to were neglecting to pay the people that worked their fields. They were oppressing others to line their own pockets. James says the Lord of Armies has heard their cries.

How does the promise of future judgment give pause to those who would choose to act unjustly? How does it help those who are being oppressed in the present?

Read James 5:5-6

James accuses the rich of living luxuriously and indulgently (v. 5). He also says they have murdered the righteous who do not resist them (v. 6).

It appears in James' context that those outside of the church who are wealthy are oppressing the church (who have been displaced from Jerusalem). How is our Western context different from this? How should this passage caution Christians about their use of wealth?