THE QUESTION

How are trials and wisdom connected in James 1:5–11?

Asked by a THF member on May 17, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 11 numbered quotations · the 24 early Christian passages and 110 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/how-are-trials-and-wisdom-connected-in-james-1-5-11

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

James puts the prayer for wisdom right inside his teaching on trials. Early writers say trials test and prove believers, that patience makes faith complete, and that true wisdom and patience are gifts God gives to those who ask Him in faith. So in hard times, believers ask God for the wisdom to endure well.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
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IN THIS STUDY

1	Trials test and prove the believer	2	6	Ask with your whole heart, without doubting	4
2	God uses opposition to train virtue	2	7	True riches are in God, not wealth	5
3	Patience makes faith strong and complete	3		What these passages don't tell us	5
4	Wisdom and patience are gifts from God	3		The Sources: 24 early Christian passages and 110 Bible verses, with links	6
5	Seeking God's will means asking for wisdom	4			

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POINT 1 OF 7

Trials test and prove the believer

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian says we must be examined and tested, and he names the kinds of trouble that do it: loss of goods, sickness, wounds and grief. What shows the righteous man is not that he escapes trouble but that he stays patient in it.

1

“But since we must be examined and tested, different sufferings are brought in, and many kinds of temptations are inflicted through loss of property, through the burning of fevers, through the torment of wounds, and through the loss of those dear to us.”

later in the same passage

“And nothing distinguishes the unrighteous from the righteous more than this: in affliction, the unrighteous man complains impatiently and blasphemes, while the righteous man is proved by his patience, as it is written: "Endure in pain, and have patience in your low estate; for gold and silver are tried in the fire."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 22, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

God uses opposition to train virtue

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Lactantius says God did not destroy the enemy at once, so that his attacks might train people in virtue. Like James, he speaks of virtue becoming perfect only through being tested.

2

“For unless virtue is constantly stirred up, unless it is strengthened by continual attacks, it cannot be perfect, since virtue is fearless and unconquered patience in enduring evils.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Lactantius,** *Divine Institutes* 29 (c. 290–320 AD) **Source 24, page 7** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 3 OF 7

Patience makes faith strong and complete

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian says nothing we do reaches perfection without patience, and that patience strengthens the foundations of faith. This fits James's words that patience is to have its perfect work.

3 “Nothing in our actions can help bring praise to perfection unless it receives the substance of its perfection from patience. It is patience that both commends us to God and keeps us for God.”

later in the same passage

“It is patience that strongly strengthens the foundations of our faith.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD)
THF's updated English
Source 19, page 7 Read it in the library ›

POINT 4 OF 7

Wisdom and patience are gifts from God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Tertullian admits he cannot make himself patient; such goods come only by God's grace and are His to give. Origen says divine wisdom, unlike worldly wisdom, comes through the grace of God. That is why James says to ask God for it.

4 “So only the grace of divine inspiration is effective for attaining and practicing them. For what is best belongs especially to God, and no one but He who possesses it gives it out, as He thinks fit to each person.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Patience* 1 (c. 196–220 AD)
THF's updated English
Source 11, page 7 Read it in the library ›

5 “But divine wisdom, being different from human wisdom because it is divine, comes through the grace of God, who gives it to those who have shown that they are able to receive it.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 13 (c. 215–254 AD)
THF's updated English
Source 16, page 7 Read it in the library ›

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POINT 5 OF 7

Seeking God's will means asking for wisdom

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Hippolytus says that a person who wants to know God's will is really asking for wisdom. Whoever knows God's wisdom also receives teaching from Him. In a trial, this is the wisdom a believer needs.

6 “The person who seeks to know the will of God is asking about wisdom.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 13, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

7 “Whoever knows the wisdom of God also receives instruction from Him, and by it learns the mysteries of the Word.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 12, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 7

Ask with your whole heart, without doubting

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Hermas, like James, says to ask the Lord without doubting and with the whole heart, trusting His mercy. Clement of Alexandria points to Christ's promise that those who believe will receive what they ask in prayer.

8 “Instead, turn to the Lord with all your heart and ask Him without doubting. Then you will know how great His tender mercies are.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) **Source 2, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

9 “About faith, He says, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, if you believe, you will receive."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 3.12 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 8, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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POINT 7 OF 7

True riches are in God, not wealth

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

James 1:9–11 turns to rich and poor. Hermas says a rich man can be poor toward God because his riches distract him. Clement of Alexandria says the truly rich man is rich in virtue and uses every fortune faithfully.

10 “The rich man has much wealth, but he is poor in matters relating to the Lord, because he is distracted by his riches.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) — **Source 3, page 6** — Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

11 “The man, then, who is truly and rightly rich is the one who is rich in virtues and able to use every fortune devoutly and faithfully, while the false rich man is the one who is rich according to the flesh and has shifted his life into outward possession — the kind that passes away and decays and now belongs to one and now to another, and in the end to no one whatever.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 19 (c. 190–215 AD) — **Source 7, page 6** — Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- None of these early passages comments on James 1:5–11 directly; the link between trials and wisdom is our reading of them together.
- They do not say what wisdom God gives in any one trial or how quickly He answers.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

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WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 24 early Christian passages and 110 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–24, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 25–83, in Bible order), then 51 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *24 passages from 12 writers*

Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · source 1*

1 *Second Epistle* 11 (1885 English; on point 3) "my brethren, let us not be of a double mind, but let us hope and endure, that we also may obtain the reward… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Shepherd* (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 4** "those who are perfect in faith ask everything, trusting in the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Shepherd* **Quote 10, page 5** and rotten. Therefore, this illustration is for the servants of God, for the poor man and for the rich." I said, "How so, sir? Explain it to me." He said… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · sources 4–5*

4 *Diatessaron* 33 (1885 English; on point 6) "11:23 Verily I say unto you, if you believe, and doubt not in your hearts, and assure yourselves that that will be which 7 ye say, you shall have… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Address to the Greeks* 11 (1885 English; on point 7) "rich lack many things, and are glorious only through the estimation they are held in… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 6*

6 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 7) "one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 7–8*

7 *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 19 **Quote 11, page 5** man, then, who is truly and rightly rich is the one who is rich in virtues and able to use every fortune devoutly and faithfully, while the false rich man… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Instructor* 3.12 (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 4** "faith He says: Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 9–11*

9 *On Patience* 12 (on point 3) "which man's patience waits for; charity, which Patience accompanies, with God as Master… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *On Prayer* 1 (1885 English; on point 6) "since wisdom succeeded in the following precept, let it in like manner appertain unto faith, and the modesty of faith, that we think not that the Lord must be approached… [continues online] **read ›**

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11 *On Patience* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** "I recall to mind, and, in the contemplation of my own weakness, digest, the truth, that the good health of faith, and the soundness of the Lord's discipline, accrue… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · sources 12–13*

12 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** "know wisdom and instruction. He who knows the wisdom of God, receives from Him also instruction, and learns by it the mysteries of the Word… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 4** "asks of wisdom, who seeks to know what is the will of God… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 14–16*

14 *Commentary on Matthew* 14 (1885 English; on point 6) "7:8 But when there you will inquire who it is that asks, for no one of those who do not receive has asked, even though he seems to have… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Commentary on Matthew* 10 (1885 English; on point 4) "If any one be perfect in righteousness, and in the rest of virtues, and the righteousness and the rest of the virtues that are from You be wanting to him… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Against Celsus* 13 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** "9:6 We maintain, indeed, that human wisdom is an exercise for the soul, but that divine wisdom is the end, being also termed the strong meat of the soul… [continues online] **read ›**

Dionysius of Alexandria, *c. 232–265 AD · source 17*

17 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) "the wicked one, when he tempts us, draws us into the temptations, as dealing himself with the temptations of evil… [continues online] **read ›**

Gregory Thaumaturgus, *c. 240–270 AD · source 18*

18 *Twelve Topics on the Faith* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) "was tempted in the wilderness, not as giving way, however, to temptation, but as putting our temptations before Himself on the challenge of the tempter, in order to show the… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 19–22*

19 *Treatises* **Quote 3, page 3** "by which we remain in Christ, so that with Christ we may attain to God. This patience, rich and many-sided, is not limited by narrow bounds or confined within… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 1) "3:11 And from Solomon we have received the mandates of wisdom, warning us: My son, despise not the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 1) "19:11 But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness in that we thus ask, lest any should insolently… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Treatises* **Quote 1, page 2** "gold and silver are tried in the fire." Sirach 2:4-5… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 23–24*

23 *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 57 (on point 4) "is the highest faith. This is true wisdom… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Divine Institutes* 29 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** "how far this is removed from wisdom, Juvenal declares in these verses… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *59 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

25 **Deuteronomy 6:16** You shall not tempt the Lord your God, as you tempted him at Temptation. **read ›**

26 **Deuteronomy 29:3** the great trials that your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders. **read ›**

27 **Psalms 49:2** both the earthborn and the sons of men, the rich and the poor together. (Septuagint Psalm 48:3 (Psalm 49:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

28 **Proverbs 14:20** Friends will hate poor friends, but the friends of the rich are many. **read ›**

29 **Proverbs 18:23** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

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30 **Jeremiah 26:14** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

31 **Ezekiel 27:19** From Asel came worked iron, and wheel-work is in your mixed trade. **read ›**

32 **Ezekiel 28:20** And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: **read ›**

33 **Daniel 1:2** And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. **read ›**

34 **Daniel 2:6** But if you make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Only tell me the dream and its interpretation." **read ›**

35 **Daniel 3:5** at the hour you hear the sound of the trumpet, pipe, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and every kind of music, you shall fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. **read ›**

36 **Daniel 8:11** And until the commander-in-chief rescues the captivity; and because of him the sacrifice was thrown into confusion, and it prospered for him; and the sanctuary will be made desolate. **read ›**

37 **Daniel 9:9** To you, the Lord our God, belong compassion and atonements, for we have fallen away, **read ›**

38 **Daniel 9:10** and we have not listened to the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by the hands of his slaves the prophets. **read ›**

39 **Daniel 10:4** On the twenty-fourth day of the first month I was beside the great river, which is the Tigris, Hiddekel. **read ›**

40 **Hosea 7:8** Ephraim mixed himself among his peoples; Ephraim has become a cake baked in ashes, not turned over. **read ›**

41 **Hosea 7:12** Whenever they go, I will throw my net over them; I will bring them down like the birds of heaven; I will discipline them by the report of their trouble. **read ›**

42 **Hosea 10:6** And having bound it, they carried it to the Assyrians as gifts for King Jarim. Ephraim shall receive a gift, and Israel shall be ashamed of his counsel. **read ›**

43 **Amos 1:3** And the Lord said: For three ungodly deeds of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away from him, because they sawed the women with child of those in Gilead with iron saws. **read ›**

44 **Amos 9:4** And if they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them; and I will fix my eyes upon them for evil, and not for good. **read ›**

45 **Wisdom of Solomon 1:3** For crooked thoughts separate from God, and his power, when it is tested, convicts the foolish. **read ›**

46 **Wisdom of Solomon 2:19** Let us examine him with insult and torture, that we may know his gentleness, and prove his patient endurance of wrong. **read ›**

47 **Wisdom of Solomon 6:20** so the desire for wisdom leads up to a kingdom. **read ›**

48 **Wisdom of Solomon 9:4** give me the wisdom that sits beside your thrones, and do not reject me from among your servants. **read ›**

49 **Wisdom of Sirach 2:1** My child, if you come forward to serve the Lord God, prepare your soul for testing. **read ›**

50 **Wisdom of Sirach 2:2** Set your heart straight and endure, and do not be hasty in the time of calamity. **read ›**

51 **Wisdom of Sirach 2:5** For gold is tested in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. **read ›**

52 **Wisdom of Sirach 2:12** Woe to cowardly hearts and to slack hands, and to the sinner who walks on two paths! **read ›**

53 **Wisdom of Sirach 2:14** Woe to you who have lost your endurance! And what will you do when the Lord visits? **read ›**

54 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:13** Even if his understanding fails, be forgiving, and do not dishonor him when you are in your full strength. **read ›**

55 **Wisdom of Sirach 10:30** A poor man is glorified for his knowledge, and a rich man is glorified for his wealth. **read ›**

56 **Wisdom of Sirach 13:20** Lowliness is an abomination to the proud; so a poor man is an abomination to the rich. **read ›**

57 **Wisdom of Sirach 13:21** A rich man who is shaken is held up by friends, but a lowly man who falls is pushed away by friends. **read ›**

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58 **Wisdom of Sirach 13:22** When a rich man slips, his helpers are many; he speaks things not to be spoken, and they justify him; a lowly man slips, and they rebuke him besides; he speaks with understanding, and no place is given him. **read ›**

59 **Wisdom of Sirach 13:23** A rich man speaks, and all are silent, and they exalt his word to the clouds; a poor man speaks, and they say, 'Who is this?' and if he stumbles, they will help to overthrow him. **read ›**

60 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:23** Before you pray, prepare yourself, and do not be like a man who tests the Lord. **read ›**

61 **Wisdom of Sirach 27:5** The furnace tests the potter's vessels, and the testing of a man is in his reasoning. **read ›**

62 **Wisdom of Sirach 29:8** Yet be patient with a man in humble circumstances, and do not keep him waiting for an act of mercy. **read ›**

63 **Wisdom of Sirach 34:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

64 **Wisdom of Sirach 50:27** Jesus the son of Sirach of Jerusalem has engraved in this book instruction in understanding and knowledge, he who poured forth wisdom from his heart. **read ›**

65 **Baruch 3:14** Learn where sound judgment is, where strength is, where understanding is, so that you may also know where length of days is, and life, where the light of the eyes is, and peace. **read ›**

66 **1 Enoch 77:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

67 **1 Enoch 94:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

68 **Matthew 7:7** Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. **read ›**

69 **Acts 7:11** A famine came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great distress, and our fathers could find no food. **read ›**

70 **1 Corinthians 3:14** If anyone's work which he has built upon it remains, he will receive a reward. **read ›**

71 **Hebrews 10:36** For you need endurance so that, having done the will of God, you may receive the promise. **read ›**

72 **James 1:2** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, **read ›**

73 **James 1:3** knowing that the testing of your faithfulness produces endurance. **read ›**

74 **James 1:4** Let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **read ›**

75 **James 1:5** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **read ›**

76 **James 1:6** But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. **read ›**

77 **James 1:8** He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. **read ›**

78 **James 1:10** and the rich in his humiliation, because he will pass away like a flower of grass. **read ›**

79 **James 1:12** Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to those who love him. **read ›**

80 **James 3:13** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show his works by good conduct in the meekness of wisdom. **read ›**

81 **James 3:17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. **read ›**

82 **James 4:3** You ask, and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. **read ›**

83 **James 5:7** Be patient therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receives the early and late rain. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *51 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Isaiah 53:4

Jeremiah 9:23 · 24:1 · 29:12

Matthew 5:8 · 5:23 · 5:25 · 5:40 · 6:6 · 6:32 · 9:16 · 10:42 · 13:12 · 13:58 · 14:31 · 16:27 · 17:19 · 17:20 · 18:21 · 19:9 · 21:22 · 25:38

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Mark 2:21 · 6:5 · 9:37 · 11:24
Luke 2:14 · 5:36 · 6:37 · 8:45 · 11:8 · 12:42 · 15:3 · 15:11 · 18:1
John 3:30 · 3:31 · 11:33 · 12:27 · 13:21 · 15:5
Romans 1:22 · 7:18
1 Corinthians 12:8 · 14:15 · 15:19
Ephesians 4:26
Philippians 4:3
Hebrews 13:2
2 Peter 3:16
1 John 5:14

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “How are trials and wisdom connected in James 1:5–11?” on May 17, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY