



[James 1:1-4](#)

(1) James, a servant of God and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings! (2) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, (3) Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (4) But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything.

A Faithful Version

James addresses his book, "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Since the breadth of this address does not indicate that the people were enduring any common experience, James is likely giving counsel of timeless and general application that is indispensable to growth in godly character to all sorts of people under every circumstance. At the very beginning he writes,

My brethren, count it all [joy](#) when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your [faith](#) produces [patience](#). But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (1:2-4)

Is patience that important? How important is it that we grow to be perfect and entire? James is clearly saying that patience is a vital ingredient to achieving this. Notice that he does not perceive patience as passive. It works! The fruit of its work can be either another virtue it is producing or in preserving itself, for that, too, is sometimes necessary.

Patience is not merely a fixed determination to hold our place in the teeth of the wind, but to make actual progress in spite of it. A ship may ride out a strong wind with a snug anchor and strong chains, yet another may set the sails to take advantage of the wind to bring it closer to its destination. It is this latter attitude that James is bidding us have and use.

[Christ](#) is a good example of this. [Luke 9:51](#) says, "He steadfastly set His face to go to

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Jerusalem." All His life the shadow of His crucifixion hung over Him, yet without faltering, swerving, or resisting, He took every step of His path and nothing turned Him aside because He came into [the world](#) for that hour. His resolve never broke. He would not blench from carrying out His duty.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[The Fruit of the Spirit: Patience](#)

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