

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

### DIVINE REVERSAL

James 1:9-11 “Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also, will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.”

D-I-Y projects! Renovations! Rehabs! All of these have become common activities that are now serialized through their own T.V. channel. HGTV is a favorite where many viewers witness the transformation of an eyesore-of-a-house into one that literally takes one’s breath away. These projects literally reverse the deterioration of a house into an appealing, attractive, desirable home.

One can say that verses 9-11 of James chapter one are about a different kind of reversal. James writes about a lowly brother being exalted and a rich one humiliated. His object lesson to describe what this looks like is from nature. In nature a beautiful flower or deep, dark green grass when scorched by the heat of the sun “wither and their beauty perishes.”

The context in chapter one is to ask God for wisdom to understand these reversals that happen in life. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why does God permit poverty? Why does God permit others to be rich or for a rich person to lose it all?

James has stated in his opening words that a Christian should “count it as all joy,” yes, even the trials and tribulations that come into their life. He uses the strong exhortation to literally “boast” when these reverses happen. The basis for this joy is the faith God grants in His Son Jesus. No matter what happens in your life, trials or blessings, Romans 5:2-3 says, “Through Him [our Lord Jesus Christ] we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand (see Ephesians 2:8-9), and we boast in the hope of (sharing) the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance.”

Divine reversals (God at work in your life) do not happen because of anything you do or do not do. Rather, God brings them into your life because of the abundance

of Christ's merit, earned and won by Him for you through His substitutionary life, death and resurrection. He did this through the greatest of reversals, "He lowered Himself, became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. This reversal was followed by yet one more, "God raised Him to life and granted Him all authority, gave Him a name that is above every name and at His name every person should bow in heaven and on earth." (Philippians 2:5ff) He did this so that you might become rich, an heir of heaven.

Prayer: Fill my heart, O Lord, with great joy no matter what is happening in my life at this time through the knowledge that by Your gracious gift of faith to me in Jesus I am a conqueror over all things that happen to me in this world. In His holy name. Amen.

Glorious things of you are spoken, Zion, city of our God;  
He whose word cannot be broken Formed you for His own abode.  
On the Rock of Ages founded, What can shake your sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded, You may smile at all your foes.

See, the streams of living waters, Springing from eternal love,  
Well supply your sons and daughters And all fear of want remove.  
Who can faint while such a river Ever will their thirst assuage?  
Grace, which like the Lord, the giver, Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hov'ring, See the cloud and fire appear  
For a glory and a cov'ring, Showing that the Lord is near.  
Thus deriving from their banner Light by night and shade by day,  
Safe they feed upon the manna Which God gives them on their way.

Savior, since of Zion's city I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in Your name.  
Fading are the world's vain pleasures, All their boasted pomp and show;  
Solid joys and lasting treasures None but Zion's children know.  
(LSB 648)