

ENDURING HARDSHIP; HELPING OTHERS

Cold Weather; Being Warmed

Cold weather, warmth and suffering hardship.

- 2 Corinthians 11:27 - Exposure to cold weather (without adequate protection) was one of the hardships Paul often had to endure, for the sake of the cross. [Read the context for some of the other things he endured.]
- James 2:16 - A person may express a desire for needy brothers or sisters to "be warmed." But if he is unwilling to help them, when he has the ability to do so, he is expressing empty words. (His *actions* prove whether his expressed desires are genuine or fake.)

TO THINK ABOUT...

Paul endured many hardships for Christ. What hardships are you willing to endure? Have you ever wished you were a "spiritual giant" who had the ability to endure great hardships, in order to accomplish great things for Christ?

- Do you complain about bad weather (one of the things that Paul often had to endure)? If so, maybe you can start to develop your spiritual "strength" by learning how to be content with the weather!

When others are experiencing hardships, how do you respond? Do you simply tell them to "have a nice day," or do you have an obligation to do more than that? James has much to say about the relationship between what is in a person's *heart* ("faith") and the actions that are visible in his *life* ("works"). You may wish to read the book of James and think about what it says.

- James focuses on the necessity of the *actions*. Other passages in the Bible focus on the foundation that makes those actions possible: a heart that has been changed by Christ. (This involves issues related to faith and repentance.) Both focuses are necessary; either one by itself (while ignoring the other) can result in a distorted perspective.
- NOTE: Encouraging and helping others can come in many forms. It is not restricted to the giving of money and possessions. There are many different types of needs and hardships.

The topic of "Helping Others" covers a wide range of issues. You may wish to look for other Scripture passages that focus on some of them.

- The passage in James (2:16) has a primary focus on our obligations to other Christians. (When James uses words like "brother" or "sister," he is referring to our brothers and sisters *in Christ*.)
- There are passages which show that we *do* have an obligation to non-Christians. However, our obligations to fellow Christians (our true family - compare to Matthew 12:49-50) is greater. Example: Galatians 6:10.
- Other passages mention times when we *shouldn't* help a person, such as when doing so would allow sinful conduct to continue. Example: 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

GREEK WORDS:

psuchos, cold; 2 Corinthians 11:27

thermaino, to make warm, to heat; to warm one's self; James 2:16