James 1:9-11: Rejoice, God Lifts the Humble Now. *"But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away."*

That seems to be an odd statement. "Humble circumstances" would refer to someone that is very poor with little hope for the future. So why would such a person glory in their high position? Probably, physically and financially nothing had changed. So, what had changed? Why was the message of Jesus Christ called "The Good News" or "The Gospel"?

For a slave, the poor, or workers that were barely above starvation, the message must have seemed incredible. They realized that there WAS hope. Their present physical position was immaterial. The past sins in their lives could be forgiven, and they would be viewed as children of God.

James 1:9-11: Rejoice, God Lifts the Humble Now

Paul wrote in *Romans 6:17*, "and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him*." Their lives would have meaning! When they died, they would NOT simply be forgotten. They could look

to the future with anticipation.

But for the wealthy, the message would bring a stark realization that all their wealth, their power, their influence, means nothing to God. James wrote, “because like flowering grass he will pass away”. Worldly wealth and possessions do not last. Who can name the richest men and women of 100 years ago? 50 years ago? How many streets or buildings have people’s names on them, and no one knows who they were?

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If anything, material possessions and power would be a real hinderance in being acceptable and pleasing to God. Remember the story of the rich young ruler. By every outward appearance, he was a righteous man, and the scriptures said that Jesus loved him. But he could not let go of his material possessions and wealth.

James 1:9-11: Rejoice, God Lifts the Humble Now

The world presents the idea that the poor “deserve” where they are. Of course, the other point is that the well off “deserve” their good

fortune. But the teachings of Jesus Christ and the writings of the New Testament teach the exact opposite!

All have sinned, there are none righteous, no not one. Rich and poor, slave or free are in the same condition. Everyone is spiritually equal. For the wealthy, there would have to be a complete change in their attitude and perception of others.

While the poor may be more receptive to the Gospel Message, they also will be required to make a change in life. Envy, resentment, anger, sinful pride must not exist in the relationships between Christians. That is why Christians often address one another as “brother” and “sister”.

The words of Jesus Christ, and every one of the letters in the New Testament emphasize that Christians MUST love one another. So, social and economic standing has no place in the Church. This is not an option. It is a command.