

## THE GIFT OF PITY

*“The Lord is very pitiful”* – James 5:11

### UNWANTED PITY

It is probably more of a male sentiment than a female one, but we’ve all heard expressed from someone facing challenges, “Don’t feel sorry for me. I don’t want your pity.” Implicit in this request is a feeling of being looked down upon: poor little thing. He just can’t take care of things because of some weakness of character or other failure. To those who take it in that way, it is certainly unwanted.

### PITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A New Testament reader will not come across the word pity often. Just the once in Matthew 18:33 when Jesus talks about the man who was forgiven a debt he owed and then refused to forgive someone who owed him. He was guilty of a lack of pity. That didn’t work out well for him. The word pitiful appears twice in the New Testament. In I Peter 3:8, the apostle, among other admonitions, urges believers to be pitiful to one another. He is instructing us to have compassion for, and be sympathetic to others needs and situations.

### GOD’S PITY

The other appearance of the word pitiful in the New Testament showcases an Old Testament hero. His name is Job. His story is familiar to most. In mentioning him, James the epistle writer, highlights a couple of points to consider.

- Endurance – Job was rewarded eventually with happiness because he endured – James 5:11
- Patience – His endurance resulted from his patience – James 5:11

His endurance and patience allowed him to see, *“the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”* (James 5:11).

### PITY AND MERCY

The connection made between pity and mercy in James 5:11 is not something to quickly pass over. Because even though the word pity only appears once in the New Testament, the word translated pity in that singular verse is *eleeo*, which appears over thirty times in the New Testament and is almost always translated mercy. One such instance is in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus said, *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”* (Matthew 5:7).

### GOD’S WONDERFUL PITY

I came to write these words because as I was thanking God this morning for many things, I heard myself thanking Him for the pity He has had toward me. His pity is a manifestation of His mercy and I have no hesitation to declare my need and desire for His mercy. You should thank God for His wonderful pity directed toward you. And then remember the other reference and extend pity to those around you who need it. It’s what the Lord would have you do.