

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
Study Guide
Lesson Two – James 1:9-27

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The first chapter of James introduces us to themes that will be developed more fully throughout the rest of the letter. Some of these themes include faith, temptations, finances, anger, living out the word of God, and bridling our tongue. Within the introduction of these themes, however, is the framework of very important doctrinal truths that the remainder of the letter rests upon.

Review James 1:1-8

Note: The words “trials” and “temptations” in the Greek are very similar. They both carry the idea of “putting to proof,” “to test,” or “to examine.” When we are tempted we are put to the test or examined to prove what our faith is made of. Will we choose to trust God or will we become fearful, anxious, or discouraged? God already knows how strong our faith is but we often believe we are stronger than we really are. God allows us to go through trials and temptations so we will be humbled, be reminded of His love at the cross, and grow stronger.

- 1) Read James 1:2-8 but this time replace the word “trials” with “temptations.” Why should we count it all joy when we are tempted (we can be tempted without giving into sin)?
 - a) From verse 5, when we are tempted, what should we ask for that God is glad to give us?

James 1:9-27

- 1) Read James 1:9-11. The first trial or temptation that James addresses revolves around financial issues. Finances can cause more stress in our life and in our relationships than almost anything else.
 - a) Read Exodus 20:17 and Proverbs 30:8-9. What are the dangers of being poor? What are the dangers of being rich?
 - b) Read Matthew 6:24. Why can't we serve both God and money?
 - c) Continue reading Matthew 6:25-34. The turning point in this passage is verse 33. When we are concerned about finances, what two things are we to seek? Think about this for a minute. Why do you think those two things are important? (This is a great discussion group question since the answers will vary!)

2) Read James 1:12-18.

- a) The word blessed means well off or happy. Have you ever NOT been steadfast in a trial (i.e. temptation)? Did you feel well off, happy, and full of life or did you feel confused or depressed? (If comfortable, you can share an experience with the group).

Note: Revelation 2:10 also refers to the crown of life. “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” The reward of salvation is eternal life but it is also abundant life here and now. In context, James is probably referring to the blessed life we experience when we remain steadfast. When we have come through a time of testing, and we see God’s love in a fresh new way, we sense life in our spirit as our love for Him is renewed.

- b) Verses 13 and 16-17 tell us that God does not tempt us. He is pure light with no shadow. He only gives us good things. When we doubt this and believe the lie that God does not have our best interest in mind, it causes us to doubt His goodness. When we doubt His goodness, our love for Him diminishes. From verse 12, who has God promised the crown of life to?

- c) James 1:14 tells us that when we are tempted we are “lured” and “enticed.” Read Genesis 3:4-6. From verse 4-5, how was Eve lured?

- i) In verse 6, what three desires enticed her?

Note: We see these same desires described in 1 John 2:16, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*” When you think about it, all sin is wrapped up in my lustful desires to please myself over honoring God and loving others.

**Sin takes you farther than you want to go,
keeps you longer than you want to stay,
and costs you more than you want pay.**

- d) In James 1:16-17, what kind of gifts does God give?

- i) Read 1 John 1:5-9. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. From 1 John 1:7 what are the two results of walking in Light?

Note: In the Old Testament, the Jews brought the first fruits of their harvest as a sacrifice to the Lord. James 1:18 refers to the fact that the Jewish people of the Old Testament were brought forth through God's Word of Truth. (Remember that the New Testament had not been written yet.) The Jews that were now Christians were the first fruits of the harvest of new believers in Christ. The persecution they faced, in a sense, was a sacrifice for all of the believers who would follow.

3) Read James 1:19-21.

a) There are two practical steps listed in verse 19 to keep anger in check. What are they?

b) What do the following verses have to say about anger?

i) Prov 18:13

ii) Prov 15:1

iii) Prov 17:14

iv) Eph 4:26-27

c) In James 1:21, how do we put away filthiness and wickedness?

i) Look up Romans 13:14. Who are we to "put on?"

4) Read James 1:22-25.

a) In your opinion, how do we deceive ourselves when we are hearers of the word but not doers?

Note: What is the law of liberty? It's found at the cross. I know I CAN'T be good enough. Romans 3:23 says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The more I recognize my sinful nature, the more I realize God's love at the cross. The more I stand at the cross, the more I'm free from performance based "law" and bound to the "law" of love. The law of liberty is the law of love for God.

