

JAMES: HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

W1: A Believer Endures - James 1:1-18

We need instruction on how to live and act with our new life.

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

Over the course of the next 5 weeks, we are going to essentially do a survey through the Book of James in what I have entitled THE HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING. We will look at 5 total characteristics that a disciple of Christ is to embody:

1. A Disciple Endures
2. A Disciple Takes Action
3. A Disciple Controls His Words
4. A Disciple is a Peacemaker
5. A Disciple is a Prayer

By the end of the five weeks, I pray that every single one of us will look back to this day and recognize a noticeable difference in our life. Therefore, I pray that there will be those who come to salvation and then those will grow to maturity in Christ.

James gives us a number of responses a mature Christian has. But first, background.

Point 1: BACKGROUND

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

I. Author

- James is the brother of Jesus.

- Esteemed leader in the Church of Jerusalem.
- Addresses himself as a servant.

Romans 1:1

Philippians 1:1

Titus 1:1

Philemon 1:1

2 Peter 1:1

Jude 1

- Leaders in the Church take the position of a servant.

Mark 9:35

Mark 10:42-45

II. Audience

- Written to the Jewish believers in the dispersion.
- A Church that understands rough times.
- Have we been dispersed, exiled, or in a wilderness?

III. Dilemma

- Many have believed that James is arguing for works. That is false. Rather he is illustrating what saving faith looks like.
- He is not contradicting Paul's statements but complimenting.

Point 2: RESPONSE TO TRIALS (*James 1:2-12*)

Trials will happen and occur in the believers life. Think about the current situation of the Jewish receivers of this letter—they are under a trial. A heavy trial mind you. They abandoned their entire livelihood for the sake of the Gospel.

Romans 8:17

John 16:33

Acts 14:22.

I. Count it all Joy

James 1:2 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,”

- Tests Purify us.

Job 23:10

II. Understanding mind

James 1:3 “for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”

- You never know if someone is truly a Christian until he is put in a real world situation. The trial exposes the inside.

III. Surrendered Will

James 1:4 “And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- When something goes wrong in our life, our first instinct will be to get out. Scripture says allow it to have its full effect, and you will come out stronger on the other end.

IV. Believing Heart

James 1:5 *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*

James 1:6-8 *“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*

- That word faith in the greek is pistis. It means “leaning of the ENTIRE human personality upon God or the Messiah in absolute trust and confidence in his power, wisdom and goodness.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

V. Humility

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.”*

- The rich and the poor, while different on paper and to the layman, and even different to the world, are no different to God. We share the same spiritual blessings while differing socioeconomic realities. We also share the same

elevation, rich and poor, both heir with Christ. Poor boast, rich boast. One in his humiliation, another in his exultation.

***James 1:12** “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”*

Point 3: RESPONSE TO TEMPTATIONS

If trials are responded to poorly, it may lead to temptations. Trials **purify** us, temptations **lure** us into sin. God does not want to lure us into sin, rather He wants to purify us—conform us into the image of Christ daily.

***James 1:13** “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.”*

Why is James connecting testing with temptations? **Trials are on the outside teaching us to strengthen the inside.** However, if met with a poor outlook, the trials will not strengthen the inside, but reveal the true character on the inside.

Three facts to consider in order to overcome temptation.

I. How is sin birthed?

The process of sin being birthed is illustrated in James 1:14-16.

- A. Desire **James 1:14**
- B. Deception
- C. Disobedience **James 1:15**
- D. Death **James 1:16**

II. God's Goodness

James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”*

- God does not tempt because temptations lead to evil and not good. However, he will allow temptations in our life to see our response. God does not want to remove the temptations, rather replace the temptation with thoughts and desires of Him. BUT, He will not override our will.

1 Corinthians 10:13

- Evidence that God gives good gifts are all throughout the scripture, but let's look at Jesus' words in Matthew.

Matthew 7:11

III. God's Purpose for Believers

James 1:18 *“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”*

- Essentially, what is our purpose for being here? God does not want us to sin. That sounds rudimentary but it is true. Why? Sin separates us from Him. So no, you are not being tempted by God because He does not want you to sin.
- Just as He placed a desire within us for things like food, He also placed a desire in us for things of Him. We have absolutely abused that desire with anything BUT Him. However, when we come to Him, Jesus states this:

John 4:13-14

- Christ saves us for eternity, so we can be intimate with the Lord and KNOW Him, but also so we can be His hands and feet on this earth.

Ephesians 2:10

- A Disciple of Christ not only Endures, but Takes Action.