

05/24/26 Message

Part of Real Religion A Journey Through the Book of James
May 23, 2026

Message: Bring on the Test

Series: Real Religion

Background

This series is an exposition of the book of James, written by Jesus' brother who "found faith" after His death, burial, and resurrection. James was writing to a persecuted church, and he wanted them to understand the difference between man-made religion and true, genuine, real religion.

We see something happen in James that should be what happens to us once we grasp who Jesus really is. James became full of the Holy Spirit who lit a fire inside him that made people notice this man was changed!

—Pastor Chad

Tests Will Come

James 1:1-12 (NIV)

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower.

11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James stops short of saying, "Christians, you're gonna face hell week." But he basically says, "You'll face the influences of hell throughout your life!" He doesn't say 'if' you face trials, he said 'when!' Jesus isn't trying to punish you. He's training you! He's not trying to break your faith; He's trying to build your faith!

—Pastor Chad

Trials Are Opportunities

- Trials are not ACCIDENTS trials are ASSIGNMENTS
- James 1:1-4

Satan is going to work overtime convincing you, your life is over. You're worthless. You're hopeless. Ever been there? Know what that feels like? If you haven't, I promise you, there will be a point in your life you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. Satan wants you to get so bogged down in the mud of it all, all you see is dirt. God says, "Look past the mud and see heaven." Know, it's gonna happen, you will be down and out, soiled, defiled, hopeless, and surrounded by darkness, but look past it.

—Pastor Chad

- Wisdom is available to EVERYONE who ASKS
- James 1:5-11

Our religious systems of the 21st century aren't much different than what James was challenging. Tradition and

legalism have taught us that religion must follow a specific set of rules. Yet the rules can change from church to church, from denomination to denomination, from community to community. James is saying, "Stop believing that nonsense!" True wisdom only comes from God, not people playing God.

—Pastor Chad

- The CROWN is for those who ENDURE
- James 1:12

I can picture James looking at us and saying: Do you get it? Do you really get it? If you do, the best is yet to come! Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him (v12).

—Pastor Chad

Help for Today

If you're going through a trial:

- Name it
- Take it to Jesus
- Ask for wisdom
- Trust Him to help

Choose endurance over escape. Choose perseverance over pulling the plug. If you're tempted to quit, avoid, or seeking anything and everything to numb it out, make a different choice! Choose victory over defeat!

—Pastor Chad