

The Testing of our Faith

La prueba de nuestra fe

What should we do when our faith is tested?

¿Qué debemos hacer cuando nuestra fe es probada?

1. Trust in God's _____.

Confía en la _____ de Dios.

James 1:2-4 (Santiago 1:2-4)

1 Peter 1:6-7 (1 Pedro 1:6-7)

2. Trust in God's _____.

Confía en la _____ de Dios.

James 1:5-8 (Santiago 1:5-8)

Matthew 7:7-11 (Mateo 7:7-11)

3. Trust in God's _____.

Confía en la _____ de Dios.

James 1:9-11 (Santiago 1:9-11)

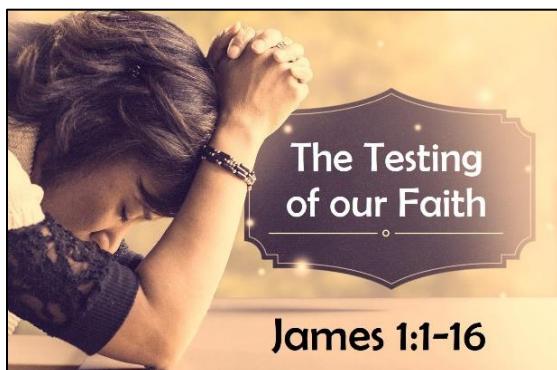
Colossians 3:1-3 (Colosenses 3:1-3)

4. Trust in God's _____.

Confía en las _____ de Dios.

James 1:12-16 (Santiago 1:12-16)

2 Peter 1:4 (2 Pedro 1:4)



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 1: May 4-11

James 1:1-16

The book of James was probably the first New Testament book written. There were two different apostles by the name of James. However, this James was the half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). He did not become a believer until after the resurrection of Jesus (Mark 3:21; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:7). This book is full of practical lessons that help us to put our faith into action. James Smith says,

James is the most practical book in the New Testament. It is as relevant today as it was when it was written. The exhortations of James concerning trials and temptations, response to God's word, favoritism, control of the tongue, and the lure of worldliness are strongly needed in the contemporary church. (Smith, 138)

Read James 1:1-16

1. How does the author describe himself in verse 1?
2. How does he describe his audience? (1:1)

Charles Swindoll writes,

The phrase “who are dispersed abroad” reinforces the fact that James was primarily addressing Jewish Christians, many of whom he had probably known in Jerusalem before they were scattered as a result of persecution of the church by the unbelieving Jewish authorities [Acts 8:1]. (Swindoll, 13)

3. According to verse 2, what should we do when we are facing trials?

Gary Holloway observes,

“Trials” (*πειρασμός, peirasmós*) is an ambiguous word that may refer to the ordinary troubles of life, to persecution for the faith, or to temptation to do evil (see 1:12-13). “Many kinds” (literally “multicolored”) implies James includes all these meanings in verses 2-4. Christians should not intentionally choose suffering. Literally in Greek, James says the brothers fall into trials. They do not seek them, but they come. To be human is to suffer. (Holloway, 31-32)

4. What does the testing of our faith produce? (1:3)

Swindoll notes,

Note that the object of God's testing is "your faith." Our heavenly Father is no mad scientist trying to torture his subjects to the breaking point. He's more like an expert trainer who knows which muscles to develop, what diet to follow, and what schedule to keep in order to bring about the best results. The goal is not to snap our faith muscles, but to stretch and strengthen them, producing endurance—the strength to "hang in there." (Swindoll, 21-22)

5. What does God want to accomplish through our perseverance? (1:4)

Holloway notes,

But even this heroic endurance is not an end within itself. It must be allowed to finish its work, to grow into "perfection" (*τέλειος*, *teleios*, a word James uses more often than any other New Testament writer). Perfection in the New Testament does not mean without flaw or error, but indicates maturity and completeness... Enduring trials thus produces joy because such tests shape believers into the image of Christ. In that image, one lacks nothing. (Holloway, 32-33)

6. What should we do if we lack wisdom? (1:5)

7. According to verse 6, how must we pray when we ask for wisdom?

8. What effect does doubt have on us when we pray? (1:7-8)

9. What should be our attitude when we have little or no money? (1:9)

Douglas Moo writes,

We may suggest, then, that exaltation includes the believer's present enjoyment of his exalted spiritual status as well as his hope of participation in the glorious eternal kingdom inaugurated by Christ. It is just this combination of present status and future inheritance that James singles out in a verse that is almost a commentary on the meaning of *hypsos* (2:5): 'Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?' (Moo, 70)

10. What will eventually happen even to the wealthiest people? (1:10-11)
11. What blessing comes to those who persevere under trial and love God? (1:12)
12. What should we never say when we are tempted to sin? Why? (1:13)

Holloway observes,

Perhaps blaming God is just the human way to escape blame: “A man’s folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord” (Proverbs 19:3). Adam blamed, “the woman you put here with me” (Genesis 3:12) for the first sin and so indirectly blamed God. Human beings have tried to shift blame from themselves ever since. (Holloway, 40)

13. According to verse 14, where do evil temptations come from?
14. What does sin produce? (1:15-16)
15. Why does God allow His people to go through trials?
16. What blessings have come out of a difficult situation in your life?
17. With what doubts have you struggled concerning God or prayer?
18. What can we do to stop an evil desire from becoming a sin?
19. What do you believe God is trying to teach you through the trials you are experiencing?
20. In what specific areas do you need to ask God for His wisdom this week?

Sources cited:

- Holloway, Gary. *James & Jude*. College Press, 1996.
- Moo, Douglas J. *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. InterVarsity Press, 1985.
- Smith, James. *New Testament Books Made Simple*. College Press, 2009.
- Swindoll, Charles. *Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter*. Tyndale, 2014.