

Small Group Guide: James 1:9-20

Theme: Prideless, Perseverance, and Proof



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help group members honestly examine their own lives in light of Scripture.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share a time when you had to wait patiently for something important. How did that waiting period change you or teach you something valuable?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Be Prideless** - Whether rich or poor, our earthly status is temporary; our eternal hope in Christ is what matters
2. **Practice Perseverance** - God allows trials to strengthen us; the enemy brings temptation to make us fail

3. **We Are the Proof** - As believers, we are the "first fruits" - living evidence of God's coming kingdom
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Prideless (James 1:9-11)

1. How does our culture encourage us to find identity in our wealth, status, or possessions? What are some specific examples you've noticed?
2. The sermon stated: "There's nothing in life that you can gather to be prideful of." How does this challenge you personally? What are areas where you're tempted to take pride in your own accomplishments?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11. How does Solomon's experience echo what James is teaching about temporary earthly pursuits?

Section 2: Perseverance (James 1:12-16)

4. What's the difference between a trial (which comes from God) and a temptation (which comes from the enemy)? Can you share an example of each from your own life?
5. The sermon outlined the progression of temptation: Temptation → Desire → Sin → Death. At what stage in this progression do you find it easiest to intervene in your own life? Where do you struggle most?
6. James says "Do not be deceived" (v. 16). What are some common deceptions people believe about temptation and sin? How can we combat these lies?
7. The pastor confessed he's "quick to speak and slow to listen." How does being "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (v. 19) help us in spiritual battles against temptation?

Section 3: We Are the Proof (James 1:17-18)

8. What does it mean that we are "first fruits of His creatures"? How should this identity shape the way we live day-to-day?
9. Jesus told His followers to "love one another so that the world will know that we're his." In what practical ways can our group be "proof" of God's kingdom to those around us?

10. Reflect on God's patience in your own salvation story. How long did God wait for you? How does remembering this affect your patience with others?

Personal Reflection Questions (Silent Reflection - 5 minutes)

Take a few moments of silence to consider these questions personally:

- Where am I currently placing my pride—in earthly things or eternal things?
 - What temptation am I facing right now that I need to be honest about?
 - Am I representing Christ well as "proof" of His kingdom to those who know me?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Pride Inventory

- Each day, write down one thing you're tempted to be proud about
- Next to it, write how God made that possible or how it points to Him
- Thank God for His provision rather than taking personal credit

Option 2: Temptation Battle Plan

- Identify your top 2-3 recurring temptations
- For each one, write out:
 - The specific "desire" that gets conceived (what makes you look away from God)
 - A specific Scripture to memorize to combat it
 - A practical step to "keep your eyes straight" (like Solomon's wisdom)

Option 3: First Fruits Living

- Identify one person in your life who doesn't know Christ
- Pray for them daily this week
- Look for one opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love to them in a tangible way

Option 4: Swift to Hear

- Practice James 1:19 by setting a goal: In every conversation this week, listen twice as long as you speak
 - Journal about what you learn about others and yourself through this practice
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Group Accountability

Partner up with one other person from the group:

- Share which practical application you're committing to
 - Exchange contact information
 - Check in with each other mid-week about how it's going
 - Pray for each other regarding specific temptations or struggles
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Closing Discussion

1. What was the most challenging thing you heard in this sermon?
 2. What was the most encouraging thing?
 3. How can we pray for each other this week?
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Closing Prayer

Pray together, focusing on:

- **Confession:** Areas where we've been prideful or given in to temptation
 - **Thanksgiving:** For God's patience and the righteousness we have through Christ
 - **Petition:** For strength to persevere and to be faithful "proof" of God's kingdom
 - **Intercession:** For each other's specific struggles and commitments
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Additional Resources

For Further Study:

- Read the entire Book of James this week (it's only 5 chapters)
- Study Proverbs passages on wisdom and temptation (Proverbs 4:25-27; 7:1-27)
- Reflect on Jesus's temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) as a model for resisting temptation

Recommended Memory Verse: *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* - James 1:12

Notes for Group Leaders

- Be prepared to share vulnerably about your own struggles with pride and temptation
- Create a safe space where people can be honest without fear of judgment
- If someone shares a serious struggle, consider connecting them with pastoral support
- Keep the discussion moving, but allow for silence and reflection
- End on time to respect people's schedules

5-Day Devotional: Living Without Pride, With Perseverance



Day 1: The Equality of Eternity

Reading: James 1:9-11; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Devotional:

Whether you find yourself in poverty or prosperity today, your earthly station is temporary. Like flowers that bloom beautifully but fade quickly, our material circumstances cannot follow us into eternity. The lowly should glory not in what they lack, but in the exaltation promised through Christ. The wealthy should embrace humility, recognizing that riches cannot purchase salvation. Solomon discovered that all earthly pursuits are meaningless apart from God. What matters is not your bank account, social status, or influence, but your relationship with the eternal God. Today, examine where you've placed your identity. Are you finding worth in temporary things or in the permanent promise of salvation? Let this truth make you prideless before God, grateful that His grace levels all playing fields.

Day 2: Persevering Through Temptation

Reading: James 1:12-15; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Devotional:

Temptation is inevitable in this broken world, but its source is never God. The enemy presents temptations to derail your faith, but God provides trials to strengthen it. Understanding this distinction changes everything. When temptation arrives, it follows a progression: desire is conceived, sin is birthed, and death results. The key to victory is keeping your eyes fixed on Christ, like Peter walking on water. The moment you look away—to the right or left—you begin to sink. God doesn't tempt you, and when you fail, don't blame Him. Instead, quickly return to the cross where forgiveness awaits. Today, identify one recurring temptation in your life. What desire does it appeal to? Commit to keeping your focus straight ahead on Jesus when it next appears.

Day 3: Every Good Gift

Reading: James 1:16-18; John 3:16-17

Devotional:

Don't be deceived—every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights. The greatest gift ever given is salvation through Jesus Christ, making us "first fruits" of God's new creation. You are living proof of the kingdom that is already here but not yet fully realized. As first fruits, you represent the harvest to come when Christ returns. This identity should transform how you live. You're not just waiting for heaven; you're demonstrating it now. The early blooms in God's garden show the world what the full harvest will look like. This is why Jesus commanded us to love one another—so the world would recognize His kingdom through us. Today, consider how your life serves as evidence of God's coming kingdom. What fruit are you bearing that points others toward the ultimate harvest?

Day 4: Swift to Hear, Slow to Speak

Reading: James 1:19-20; Proverbs 18:2, 13

Devotional:

Jesus, whose words held infinite value, was remarkably quick to listen and slow to speak. He stopped for the woman who touched His cloak, waited as men dug through a roof to lower a paralytic before Him, and engaged the demon-possessed man. If Christ prioritized listening, how much more should we? Human wrath—our quick anger and hasty judgments—never produces God's righteousness. It stems from wounded pride, perceived slights, and self-centered perspectives. God's wrath, however, comes from long-suffering patience and eternal perspective. He warned Israel for centuries before judgment, always offering restoration. Even His ultimate wrath was poured out on Christ at the cross, satisfying justice while extending mercy to us. Today, practice listening twice as much as you speak. When anger rises, pause and ask: Is this about me or about God's righteousness?

Day 5: The Patience of God

Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-9; Romans 2:4

Devotional:

God's patience toward you has been extraordinary. Perhaps you ignored Him for years, willfully blind to evidence of His existence. Maybe after salvation, you stumbled repeatedly as you learned to walk in faith. Through it all, God remained patient, slowly drawing you closer, teaching you His ways, transforming your heart. His patience isn't weakness—it's love in action. The same God who has every right to be wrathful with our sin chose instead to be merciful, placing His wrath on Jesus at the cross. The most evil act in history—crucifying the innocent Son of God—became the greatest expression of love, satisfying divine justice while offering humanity salvation. God's patience leads to repentance, not because He's indifferent to sin, but because He desires none to perish. Reflect today on God's patience in your journey. How can His patience toward you shape your patience toward others?
