

Trials, temptations, and testings. The three “T’s” we don’t like to talk about, but they are a reality of life! We face them everyday. There is nothing new under the sun. James understands what you go through; he went through it too! But he has answers for us. He can tell us how we can take something that seems so negative and turn it into something that can bring joy and victory to our lives. Are you willing to handle these three “T’s” God’s way? Then let’s see what James has to teach us.

DAY ONE

In James 1:2-12, you focused on the trials that are from without. Now, in James 1:13-17, you are going to focus on temptations that come from within. Remember to begin each day in prayer and tell God that you want victory in your life. Ask Him to teach you and direct you through His Word. And then as James teaches us, be doers of the word and not hearers only. Live in light of what you learn.

1. Begin by reading James 1:2-17. Watch the flow of the passage. When you read through these verses, can you see anything mentioned in verses 2-12 that may be considered trials in life? Record them and then examine your life to see if any are problems that you experience in your own life.

2. In verses 13-17, record what you learn about temptations. What are temptations that you deal with in your life. According to James, how can you combat these?

3. Let’s do a couple of word studies so you can better understand these verses. If you need instructions on how to complete a word study, you can go back and look at last weeks lesson on page 18.
 - a. lust - James 1:14

b. carried away (drawn away - KJV) - James 1:14

c. enticed - James 1:14

d. conceived - James 1:15

e. sin - James 1:15

f. accomplished (finished - KJV) - James 1:15

g. death - James 1:15

4. Take those definitions back to the text and read James 1:13-17 one more time. Do you have any greater understanding of this passage at this time when you understand the Biblical definitions of these words?

DAY TWO

1. James warns you not to say that you are tempted by God. Do you, do I, really do that? Do we blame others for our own problems. Scripture is replete with examples of those who do exactly that. That was a consequence of sin. Read Genesis 3. Where did Adam put the blame (there were two people he blamed)? Where did Eve put the blame?
 - a. Read Proverbs 19:3 and record what you learn from this verse?
 - b. Think of instances in your own life where you put the blame on others thereby justifying your own sinful actions. Do you recognize how quickly we all do that?

2. Now let's get personal. Think through these questions and answer them truthfully especially when it comes to examining your own life in light of these questions.
 - a. When people do things wrong, are they usually willing to accept the blame and responsibility for what they have done?
 - b. Are you quick to accept the blame and the responsibility or is your first reaction to blame others?

- c. How do people (you included) tend to excuse their wrong doings? What do they (you) tell themselves to help justify their actions?
3. Let's go back to the trials that were mentioned in James 1:2-12. You are to consider it all joy when you encounter various trials because there is a positive end result. What happens when you don't consider it joy and you don't bear up under the trails?
- a. What other reactions can someone have when trials come their way? Write down any you can think of.
- b. When you choose to not obey God's Word and you don't consider it all joy, you don't persevere, you don't become a mature believer, and you refuse to allow God's Spirit to control you, then what is controlling you?
- c. What does James 1:13-17 tell you about this? What does it say is happening? Be sure to include the progression of what takes place.
4. Read I Corinthians 10:13. How does this compare to James 1? How does this help you to deal with trials, temptations, and testings when they arise?

5. How do you think James 1:16-17 fits into what is being said in verses 13-15?
 - a. In light of what you have just looked at, how are we deceived and who is doing the deceiving?

 - b. Think through verse 17 and look up words if necessary and determine why James uses this example. Give this some thought.

6. What do you think James wanted his readers to understand when he wrote verse 18. Keep it in the context of the verses you have studied. There is a reason why God inspired him to write those words. What do you think that reason is?

7. You can check your commentaries to see what they say about James 1:13-17. Please don't go any further than that. You will study verse 18 a little more tomorrow which is why you are not looking at it right now.

3. Let's slowly and carefully walk through these verses watching closely the path James seems to be following.
 - a. In verse 15, James presents an illustration of conception to birth. Watch what he says. Lust is conceived and it gives birth to sin, and when sin wreaks havoc in our lives, it brings death. It has accomplished its purpose. Remember that Satan is a murderer and his purpose from the beginning was to bring death to mankind - to separate man from the God who loves him and desires him to have life abundantly. In James 1:18, he uses the same concept. There was another conception - "He brought us forth" (begat us - KJV) with the word of truth, so we could be born into His kingdom - first fruits among His creatures. Sin brings forth death, God's Word brings forth life. Sin is conceived through unregenerate man who follows after his own lusts. A believer is conceived by God's will through His Word and follows after the will of God.
 - b. In verse 18, James introduces the discussion about the Word of God. He shows three different aspects of the Word.
 - 1) it is a seed that roots itself in our hearts (the "word implanted" in verse 21)
 - 2) it is a mirror which reveals who we really are (in verse 23-24)
 - 3) it is the perfect law of liberty - bringing freedom from sin (in verse 25)
 - c. In verses 22-25 James contrasts those who are hearers of the Word only and those who become effectual doers of the Word. The rest of his letter will focus on the necessity of being doers.
4. So as you can see, the flow of thought comes through all these verses, so the question then is, how do verses 19-20 fit into all of this? Do they somehow relate to the "Word" and if so how?

James begins by saying "this you know." What do they know? How do they know it? In verse 18 they were reminded of the regenerating power of the Word of God. If they have been regenerated by God's Word then they need to be living that out in their everyday lives. There needs to be a connection between what they know and how they live (hearers versus doers). A new birth leads to a new life that is directed by the very Word that saved them. The phrase "everyone must be" is in the imperative mood which means that it is a command. It is in the present tense which means an ongoing lifestyle. Everyone is to be quick to hear. Hear what? God's Word! Everyone needs to be a hearer but then they need to be doers as well which means they are slow to speak (he will address the power of the tongue), slow to anger, and faithful about putting aside all filthiness and wickedness (21).

5. So how does this apply to us today? As the church, the body of Christ, we are (as a whole) guilty of knowing very little about God's Word, and even less about what it means to be living it out on a daily basis. Do we walk by our lusts or walk by the Word? Are we quick to speak about our "faith" and then live in the world's filth? Do we half-heartedly listen to people and then quickly jump in with our own opinions? Do we sing praises to the Lord and then unleash hell's fury on others with that vile little thing called a tongue? What in your life proves that you are a doer of the Word and not a hearer only? When others look at your life what do they see? Take time to meditate on the questions. Examine your life. Open your heart up before the Lord and allow Him to hold His mirror up so you can examine yourself. Write out your thoughts, answers, and prayer below.

DAY FOUR

Let's take a couple of minutes to set the historical setting of this book. This letter was written to the Jews who had been dispersed abroad due to the persecution that was coming upon the early church. Stephen had been stoned and people ran for their lives. This letter was most likely the earliest of the letters of the New Testament. Paul's letters have not yet been circulating, so what did the people have available to them? They had the Old Testament writings and they had proclamations being given about a New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. There would have been public readings and oral instructions. This was a time of transition and they needed instruction, so James commands them to be quick to hear, to listen eagerly and attentively. There were not to shut their ears, make hasty decisions, or get angry because they didn't like the message. They needed to learn what it meant to live for Christ. With that background, let's move on in our study.

1. Let's examine some Scriptures that talk about the Word being given to those who made up the early church. Read each passage and note how the Word was given and how they responded.

a. Acts 2:42

b. Acts 11:25-26

c. Acts 17:1-5

d. Acts 17:11

e. Acts 28:23-28

2. Look up the word for “anger” in verse 19. Record what you learn about this word.

3. What do you think verse 20 means?

4. Read through James 1:21-27. Make a list of all the things that a child of God is responsible to do. Personalize the list by starting each one by writing, “I am to”

5. Time for a few more word studies.

a. Filthiness - James 1:21

b. All that remains of wickedness (superfluity of naughtiness - KJV) - James 1:21

c. Humility (meekness - KJV) - James 1:21

d. Souls - James 1:21

6. Read verse 21 thoughtfully and prayerfully. What is the Word able to do in your life? What is your responsibility in this? Don't just write out the verse, but explain it thoroughly. Think through this.

DAY FIVE

1. Read James 1:21-27 carefully. How do verses 26-27 tie in with verses 21-25?
2. What does it mean to bridle your tongue?
3. If you don't bridle your tongue, what does that say about your Christianity?

6. You can see what you commentaries have to say about James 1:18-27.