

Book of James



LESSON 2

Scripture

James 1:12-25

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.

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

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The Big Idea

James opens verse twelve with the word blessed, reminding us of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter five, "Truly happy is the man that endures trial." James is suggesting that not only do trials perform an inward work in your life producing things

like steadfastness and growing in perfection, but secondly, you'll be rewarded by God.

James says, "Blessed is the man that endures trials" not temptations. If the word was temptation, he wouldn't be using the word endure. You don't endure temptation; you resist temptation. James makes the point that no one will make it to heaven unless he passes the tests and receives the crown of life, the picture is of a wreath given to publicly honor someone who finishes the race. It expresses, "Well done, good and faithful servant." One needs to run the race of endurance like Jesus did, and he will receive eternal life. God has promised this crown to everyone who loves Him. Loving God and enduring testing go hand in hand. James now has given us two reasons for rejoicing in trials; we grow personally into perfection, and we will receive eternal life.

James declares the character of God is such that it is impossible for God to tempt man because there is no evil in Him; He is good. How could God make a man commit sin when He hates sin? Jesus says the same thing but in a different way in 1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." God will, at times, test us, but He does not expect us to fail. It is, in fact, a part of the way we can grow in Him. The problem with temptation is man himself. James says one is lured and enticed by his own desires. James enforces this by saying that only from God does perfect gifts come from. God is defined as the Father of Light. God is always good, and He gives good gifts. That's a vital part of His never changing nature. This is His character and His purpose is to make us like Himself.

James insists that we should reflect God's character. He is calling for a total cleansing of one's life, laying aside all evil, and to give one's self completely. God's will is revealed through His Word that is implanted (take root) in us. There has to be action taken in response to hearing God's word. "The man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does."

The Conversation

1. What attitude do you have with trials or persecution? What does James suggest?
2. What are the differences between trials and temptations?
3. How do evil imaginations work in us to produce wrong actions?

The Take Away

There's really one of two attitudes that you can have. One can be, "Woe is me!" Or we can look at things from God's perspective that we are blessed, even the trials that come our way point to real blessing.

We must realize that loving God is more than just a feeling. James makes loving God and enduring synonymous. If we say we really love God, we're going to be able to endure these things that may come our way. Love is faithfulness. It's enduring.

We never like to blame ourselves; it's always somebody else's fault. We blame God for things, we even blame the devil. It's only when we're responsible for our sin and confess it that we can be forgiven.

It's the battle between our sinful nature and the Spirit of God that indwells us. That means that we shouldn't toy around with evil imaginations because that's the open door into an altering of our conscience, and finally, the acting upon it. James makes a strong point about being slow to speak and quick to listen. We need to be that way with God and others too. Carefully listening to the other person first helps us make the right response.