

James Chapter 1 Lesson 1

Verse 1

James, the half- brother of Jesus, is the most likely to have authored the book of James.

James' physical relationship to Jesus nor his leadership in the church gave him no authority to admonish other believers, but rather it was his spiritual relationship to Jesus that qualified him to speak and serve.

James and his brothers didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah until after His death and resurrection.

James wrote this letter sometime in the mid-to-late 40's (AD) approximately 15 years after Christ's ascension.

James is writing to the twelve tribes- Jewish believers scattered abroad. These Jewish Christians have been scattered by persecution that began with the stoning of Stephen.

Verse 2

God is more concerned with growing us than He is sheltering us. He knows the storms of life are necessary to make our faith stronger, resilient, and mature.

James reminds us there is purpose in our trials and we will miss it, if our focus is off.

Point #1: Trials test our spiritual eyesight.

We are not going to see God in our storms with us, if we are not looking for Him.

To look upon our trials with joy to see them from our heavenly perspective. (Eph. 2: 6)

It is only from this view can we evaluate them in the light of what God is doing and appreciate the work they are doing in us.

Verses 3-4

Trials produce patience and persistence.

Trials are the only way God can develop these attributes in our lives.

Immature people are impatient people and give up easily.

Verse 5

Point #2: Trials test our need for God.

When we go through trials, especially severe ones, we are going to need God and those things that only He can provide.

Wisdom is more than just common sense. It's the ability to view life from God's perspective and the knowledge that only He can give to help you endure and not give up.

This knowledge is not of saving faith, but one of sustaining faith.

Point #3: Trials test our knowledge of God.

Resources: Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary James 1 & 2 Peter; The NIV Application Commentary James; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, The Pillar New Testament Commentary The Letter of James; NLT Parallel Study Bible; The Jeremiah Study Bible; www.biblegateway.com; www.biblehub.com; www.ministry127.com

There is a divine wisdom of God and who He is and what He can do that only comes from being in His presence and holiness. And sometimes it's our trials that usher us there.

Verses 6-8

The opposite of faith is doubt.

Doubt is double-minded faith and your loyalty to God is divided, meaning your trust is not in Him alone.

Point #4: Trials test our stability.

Instability and immaturity go hand and hand.

A double-minded person is also one who wants his or her will along with God's will at the same time.

Matthew 14: 22-33

In life there are storms of correction (when God has to discipline us). And then there are storms of perfection (when God grows us).

Jesus deliberately sends them out into the storm.

Every storm we endure, God is testing our faith and surrender to Him. No trial is without purpose.

Truths we can remember to help us through our storms.

1. Know that God brought you here.
2. Know that Jesus is in heaven interceding for you.
3. Know that He too will come to meet you in the storm.
4. Know that God will help you grow the faith that fully trusts and surrenders to Him.

Verses 9-12

Earthly wealth doesn't matter. The only thing both, the rich and poor, have to boast about is their high position in Christ.

Whether rich or poor, those who remain true under the weight of trials will be blessed.

Verses 13-15

Sometimes trials can be so difficult to withstand that we look for an easy way out. And Satan is right there to provide it.

Temptation is the avenue to achieve a good thing in a bad way.

It is of Satan to tempt us and of God to test us.

James clearly shows us that temptation always follows a consistent process.

First, there is desire, the emotional aspect. Desire in of itself is not a sin.

Second is deception, the intellect aspect. Satan gets into our minds to distort and distract us.

Next comes disobedience which gives birth to death.

Verses 16-18

Truths to help you overcome temptation.

1. Dwell on what's truly good. (Phil. 4:8) Because our thoughts produce action, we need to think on what's good so that only good comes from us.
2. Hide God's word in your heart. (Ps. 119:11) When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He overcame with the word of God, speaking truth to every temptation that satan threw at Him.
3. Pray. Ask God for help. He is ready and able to give you a way out.

Whether trials or temptations, God is always there ready to supply His good and perfect gifts to help you endure and give you victory in His name.

ABC'S of Trials

Although things are not perfect
Because of trial or pain,
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame.
Even when the times are hard,
Fierce winds are bound to blow;
God is forever able—
Hold on to what you know
Imagine life without His love;
Joy would cease to be.
Keep thanking Him for all the things
Love imparts to thee.
Move out of "Camp Complaining"—
No weapon that is known
On earth can yield the power
Praise can do alone.
Quit looking at the future,
Redeem the time at hand.
Start every day with worship;
To "thank" is a command.
Until we see Him coming,
Victorious in the sky,
We'll run the race with gratitude,
Exalting God most high.
Yes, there'll be good times; and, yes, some will be bad, but...
Zion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!—Unknown

Homework Questions

Are you concerned that what was happening to the believers in James' letter is beginning to creep into our country today? Explain why or why not?

Do you consider trials an opportunity for great joy? Why or why not?

Why is it important that Christians mature in their faith?

When it comes to trials, how good is your spiritual eyesight? Explain.

Do you agree that our outlook determines our outcome? Explain.

To look upon our trials with joy is to see them from our heavenly perspective. (Eph.2: 6)
What things can we **do** to help us view our trials from this perspective?

Describe a time God was growing your patience and persistence.

Describe a time you needed wisdom in a trial and God gave it to you.

Why is wisdom so important when going through a trial?

Have you ever come through a trial and later was able to understand the purpose God had in it?
Explain.

When has doubt ever caused you to waver in your loyalty to God?

List ways to combat double-minded faith?

Which do you think you experience more of: storms of correction or storms of perfection?
Explain why.

Describe a time a trial turned into a temptation.

Why does God allow temptation in our lives?