

The outcomes of “trials”

James tells Christians that facing trials and temptations with faith & joy:

- Produces perseverance which leads to maturity (vs. 3-4)
- Tests our commitment to God (vss. 5-7)
- Equalizes rich and poor (vss. 9-11)
- Points us toward the true goal of life (vs. 12)

1. Discuss what kinds of “trials” and “temptations” in our lives today might have some correspondence with what James is referring to in chapter 1

2. Share and discuss a time when trials have produced greater maturity of faith and trust in the promises of God for you or someone you know

3. Think of examples of the sins that often result from people “falling” in times of trial and temptation.

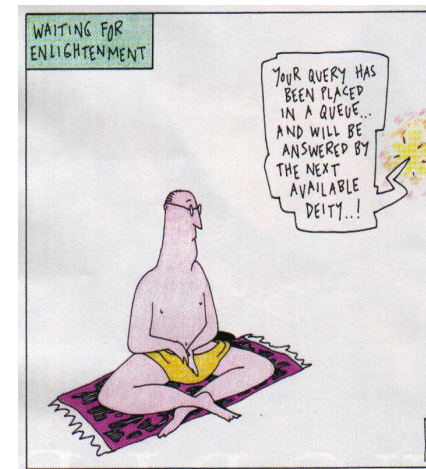
4. The Old Testament does say that God tests his people (e.g. Gen. 22:1; Judges 2:22; 2 Kings 20:12-19), bringing them into situations where their willingness to obey him is tried. However, James teaches us where the blame for inner temptation does not lie (1:13) and where it does (1:14-15). What can make a Christian more ready to respond to trials with a positive desire to go on with God, rather than to fall into sin?

5. What kinds of practical help can small group members give to others in times of trial and temptation?

Chapter 1 of James previews the rest of the letter

study #1

• Trials	1:2	▶	see 1:12-15
• Endurance	1:3	▶	see 5:7-11
• Wisdom	1:5	▶	see 3:13-18
• Prayer	1:5-8	▶	see 4:2-3; 5:13-18
• Faith	1:6	▶	see 2:14-26
• Riches	1:9-11	▶	see 2:1-13; 5:1-6
• Speech	1:19,26	▶	see 3:1-12; 4:11
• Action	1:22-25	▶	see 2:14-26



Human beings religiously pursue divine wisdom in life, often in vain, but the letter of James confidently claims that God “gives wisdom generously to all without finding fault” James 1:5



Connections to Jesus in James

Note the similarities in the teaching of James to that of Jesus in the Sermon on the mount...

Who was James?

1:1 “a servant (slave) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”

- Most likely writer=James, the brother of Jesus
“James the Just”, brother of Jesus, leader of the Jerusalem Church

The Original Readers?

1:1 “to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations”

- Points to a predominantly Jewish/Christian audience
- Perhaps to the “diaspora” ie, those scattered beyond Jerusalem throughout the empire

The Significance?

- The date of writing may be as early as AD 40’s (earliest N.T. letter??) giving us an insight into the very earliest of Christian teaching in the parts of the early church
- The “trials” spoken of may have included:

_____ (Acts 11:19)

_____ (Acts 11:28)

What other trials might have been experienced in the early church?

Rejoice in trials (Matt 5:12)

Count it a joy when you are tried (James 1:2)

Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find (Matt 7:7)

Let such a person ask from God . . . and he will give it (James 1:5)

Be therefore perfect (τέλειοι) as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48)

Let endurance yield its complete (τέλειον) work that you may be perfect (τέλειοι) and complete (James 1:4)

Blessed are the meek . . . peacemakers (Matt 5:5, 9)

Wisdom is both meek . . . peacemaking (James 3:17–18)

He that endures to the end will be saved (Matt 24:13)

The person who endures testing . . . will receive a crown of life (James 1:12)

Don’t judge, lest you be judged (Matt 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:1)

The one who shows no mercy will be judged (James 2:13)

Prohibition of oaths (Matt 5:33–37)

Prohibition of oaths (James 5:12)

In praise of meekness (Matt 5:3)

In praise of meekness (James 3:13; contrast 4:6, 16)

Against hoarding (Matt 6:19)

Against hoarding (James 5:2–3)

Chapter 1:1-18

Standing when it makes sense to fall—James 1:2-4

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”