

James 1:13-27

Roxborough Bible Chapel

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OUTLINE

- **Review of James 1:1-4**
- **Review of James 1:5-12**
- **Loving God Through Temptations - James 1:13-18**
- **Qualities Needed in Trials - James 1:19-20**
- **Our Response to God's Word - James 1:21-27**

James 1:1-4

- **1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.**
- **2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,**
- **3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.**
- **4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Review of James 1:1-4

- **Author = James (verse 1)**
 - The half-brother of our Lord Jesus
 - Bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ
- **Recipient = The 12 tribes that were scattered abroad (verse 1)**
 - We can consider it to be written to us as well
- **Trials (verse 2)**
 - Counting them for joy
- **Testing of our faith produces patience (verse 3) which then results in perfection (verse 4)**

James 1:5-12

- **5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**
- **6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**
- **7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;**
- **8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**
- **9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,**
- **10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.**
- **11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.**
- **12 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.**

Review of James 1:5-12

- **Through our trials, ask God for wisdom (verse 5)**
- **Ask for wisdom in faith with no doubting (verses 6-8)**
- **Perspective of Rich and Poor (verses 9-11)**
 - **Lowly brother (poor) should glory in his exaltation**
 - **The rich should glory in their humiliation**
- **A crown of life for those who stands up under afflictions (verse 12)**

James 1:13-18

Loving God Through Temptations

- **13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**
- **14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**
- **15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**
- **16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**
- **17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**
- **18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.**

James 1:13-18 - Loving God Through Temptations

1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

- Trials (or temptations) of the previous verses are difficult times (not temptations to do evil)
 - Sent from God.
 - Designed to bring out the best in us.
- The subject now in verses 13-17 shifts to unholy temptations
 - They do not come from God.
 - Designed to bring out the worst in us.
- God cannot be tempted by evil! God cannot sin! (the doctrine of the “impeccability” of Christ)
 - The Lord’s temptations were simply proving that He could not sin.
- God wants to save people from sin
 - He does not tempt men to sin.
 - He wants to deliver men from sin.

James 1:13-18 - Loving God Through Temptations

1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

- Man is always ready to shift responsibility for his sins.
 - Sin comes from within us, from our old, evil, fallen, unregenerate nature.
 - Jesus said, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19).
 - Every one of us is tempted.
 - Are we helpless victims then, when we are drawn away by our own desires and enticed?
 - No (Philippians 4:8)
 - Proverbs 18:10

James 1:13-18 - Loving God Through Temptations

1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

- Why do we sin?
 - When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.
 - Lust conceives and a hideous baby named SIN is born. (NO abortion!!)
 - If we think about a forbidden act long enough, we will eventually do it.
 - David and Bathsheba (II Samuel 11:1-27)
- And sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death
 - First of all, the sin of Adam brought physical death on himself and on all his posterity (Genesis 2:17).
 - But sin also leads to eternal, spiritual death—the final separation of the person from God and from blessing (Romans 6:23A).

James 1:13-18 - Loving God Through Temptations

1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

- Don't be deceived. (Don't blame God.)
 - Only good gifts come from God. In fact, He is the source of every good and every perfect gift.
- James describes God as the Father of lights.
 - Father - Creator or Source. Therefore God is the Creator or Source of lights.
 - Lights - But what is meant by lights?
 - the sun, moon, and stars
 - But God is also the Source of all spiritual light as well.
- So we should think of Him as the Source of every form of light in the universe. With whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
 - God is unlike the heavenly bodies He has created. They are undergoing constant changes. He never does.
 - Declining brilliance of the sun and stars
 - The expression shadow of turning may mean shadow caused by turning (rotation of the earth around the sun or eclipses)
- Challenge Questions: Let us test our faith on the subject of unholy temptations. Do we encourage evil thoughts to linger in our minds, or do we expel them quickly? When we sin, do we say that we couldn't help it? Do we blame God when we are tempted to sin?

James 1:13-18 - Loving God Through Temptations

1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

- Not only is God the Father of lights. He is our Father also, giving us a unique role in His creation. We can fulfill that role by obedience to the word of truth (vv. 19-27).
- **Of His own free will**—this tells us what prompted Him to save us. This should cause us to worship!
- **He brought us forth**—this describes the fact of our new spiritual birth.
- **By the word of truth**—the Bible is the instrument of the new birth.
- **That we might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures**
 - First, the **firstfruits** of a harvest was the first sheaf of ripened grain. The Christians whom James was writing were among the first believers in the Christian Dispensation.
 - Second, **the firstfruits** were offered to God in gratitude for His bounty and in recognition that all comes from Him and belongs to Him.
 - Third, the **firstfruits** were a pledge of the full harvest to come. James likened his readers to the first sheaves of grain in Christ's harvest.

James 1:19-20

Qualities Needed in Trials

- **19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;**
- **20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**

Qualities Needed in Trials (James 1:19-20)

1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

1:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- The rest of this chapter gives practical instructions as to how we can be firstfruits of His creatures.
- **Be swift to hear.** “Hurry up and hear!” It means that we should be ready **to hear** the word of God, as well as all godly counsel and admonition. We should be teachable by the Holy Spirit.
- **Slow to speak.** It is surprising how much James has to say about our speech! He cautions us to be guarded in our conversation.
 - “Nature has given to man one tongue, but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak.”
 - Solomon would have agreed heartily with James. He once said, “He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction” (Pro 13:3). He also said, “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Pro 10:19). Compulsive talkers eventually transgress.
- **Slow to wrath.** A man who is quick-tempered **does not produce the** kind of **righteousness** which **God** expects from His children. Those who lose their temper give people a wrong impression about Christianity. It is still true that “he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

Qualities Needed in Trials (James 1:19-20)

1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

1:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.



Be sure to
taste your
words before
you spit
them out. 🧠

James 1:21-27

Our Response to God's Word

- **21** Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
- **22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
- **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;
- **24** for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.
- **25** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.
- **26** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.
- **27** Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

- **Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness.**
 - **Filthiness** includes every form of impurity, whether spiritual, mental, or physical.
 - **Overflow of wickedness**
 - A holdover from our unconverted days.
 - Sins which **overflow** from our lives and touch the lives of others.
 - Or it may refer to abounding evil, in which case James is not so much describing an excess of evil, but the intensely wicked character which evil has.
 - The over-all meaning is clear. In order to receive the truth of the word of God, we must be morally clean.
- **Meekness.**
 - It is all too possible to read the Bible without letting it speak to us.
 - We can study it in an academic way without being affected by it. Our pride and hardness and sin make us unreceptive and unresponsive. Only those with submissive, humble spirits can expect to derive the maximum benefit from the Scriptures.
 - “The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way” (Psa 25:9). “But on this one I will look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isa 66:2).
- **The implanted word, which is able to save your souls.**
 - The Bible is the instrument God uses in the new birth.
 - He uses it in saving the soul not only from the penalty of sin, but from its power as well.
 - He uses it in saving us not only from damnation in eternity, but from damage in *this life*.

Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

- It is not enough to receive the implanted word; we must obey it.
- There is no virtue in possessing the Bible or even in reading it as literature.
- There must be a deep desire to hear God speaking to us and an unquestioning willingness to do whatever He says.
- There should never be a time when we go to the Scriptures without allowing them to change our lives for the better.
- To profess great love for God's word or even to pose as a Bible student is a form of self-deception unless our increasing knowledge of the word is producing increasing likeness to the Lord Jesus.
- To go on gaining an intellectual knowledge of the Bible without obeying it can be a trap instead of a blessing.
- If we continually learn what we ought to do, but do not do it, we become depressed, frustrated, and callous.
- Also we become more responsible to God. The ideal combination is to read the word and obey it.

Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Are you a
HEARER

or a **DOER?**



Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

1:24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

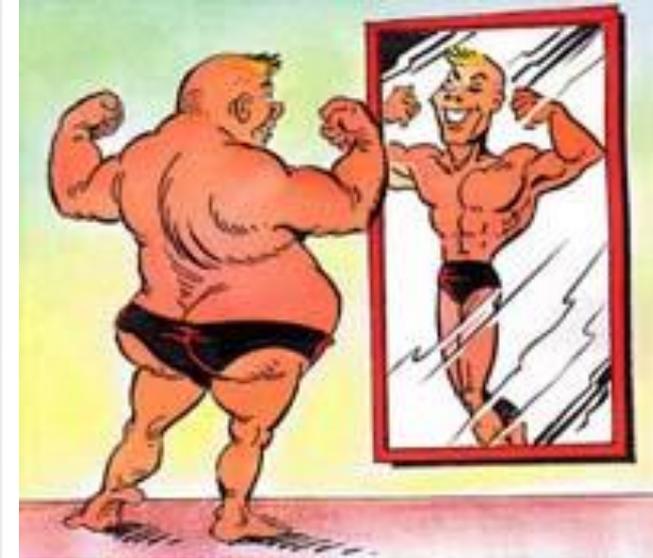
- **Anyone** who hears **the word** but does not change his behavior **is like a man** who takes a fleeting glance in the mirror each morning, then completely **forgets what** he saw
- It is easy to read the Bible casually or because of a sense of duty without being affected by what we read. We see what we ought to be, but we quickly forget and live as if we were already perfect. This type of self-satisfaction prevents spiritual progress.
- In contrast is the man **who looks into the** word of God and who habitually reduces it to practice. To him the Bible is **the perfect law of liberty**. Its precepts are not burdensome. They tell him to do exactly what his new nature loves to do. As he obeys, he finds true freedom from human traditions and carnal reasonings. The truth makes him free. This is the man who benefits from the Bible. He does not forget what he has read. Rather he seeks to live it out in daily practice. His simple childlike obedience brings incalculable blessing to his soul. **This one will be blessed in what he does.**

Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

1:24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.



Our Response to God's Word (James 1:21-27)

Jas 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.

Jas 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

- **Useless religion** and **pure and undefiled religion** are contrasted.
- **Religion** = the external patterns of behavior connected with religious belief. It refers to the outward forms rather than the inward spirit. It means the outer expression of belief in worship and service rather than the doctrines believed.
- **Useless religion (v. 26)**
 - **Anyone** who **thinks he is religious**, but cannot control **his tongue**. He might observe all kinds of religious ceremonies which make him appear very pious. But he is deceiving himself. God is not satisfied with rituals; He is interested in a life of practical godliness.
 - An unbridled **tongue** is only one example of futile **religion**. Any behavior inconsistent with the Christian faith is worthless. The story is told of a grocer who apparently was a pious fraud. He lived in an apartment above his store. Every morning he would call down to his assistant, "John!" "Yes, sir." "Have you watered down the milk?" "Yes, sir." "Have you colored the butter?" "Yes, sir." "Have you put chicory in the coffee?" "Yes, sir." "Very well. Come up for morning "devotions!"
- **Pure and undefiled religion (v. 27)** - What God is looking for is the practical type of godliness which takes a compassionate interest in others and keeps one's own life clean.
 - As examples of **pure and undefiled religion**, James praises the man who visits needy **orphans and widows**, and who keeps himself **unspotted from the world**.
 - In other words, the practical outworking of the new birth is found in "acts of grace and a walk of separation." These virtues are practical love and practical holiness.
- **Challenge Questions** - We should put *our own faith* on trial with the following questions: Do I read the Bible with a humble desire to have God rebuke me, teach me, and change me? Am I anxious to have my tongue bridled? Do I justify my temper or do I want victory over it? How do I react when someone starts to tell an off-color joke? Does my faith manifest itself in deeds of kindness to those who cannot repay me?

Conclusions

- Was this just a knowledge gaining meeting with no practical response?
- How do we respond to trials? (with joy?)
- How do we respond to temptations?
- How do we respond to God's Word?