

# INTRODUCTION

## WHO WROTE JAMES?

“James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings” (James 1:1).

But which James?

1. The martyred James, son of Zebedee (Acts 12:1-2)? No. He died before the book of James was written
2. The Apostle James, son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:2-4)? No. He was an apostle and there is no evidence that the writer of James was an apostle.
3. James the brother of Jesus?

James the brother of Jesus and a leader in the Jerusalem congregation is believed to be the author of the book of James based on internal and external evidences

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT JAMES?

1. James was a half-brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55).
2. Early on, he did not believe in Jesus (John 7:5).
3. The resurrected Jesus appeared to him (1Cor 15:7)
4. He waited in Jerusalem with the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 1:14)
5. He stayed in Jerusalem where he married and had children (see no. 6 below with 1 Cor 9:5 and 1Tim 3:2, 4).
6. Later he became a highly respected elder in the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 12:17, 15:6, 13, 21:18; Gal 2:9).

## **THE TIME OF THE BOOK OF JAMES?**

Some Biblical scholars believe that James was the first New Testament book written – perhaps dating from as early as AD 44.

They base this on what it does NOT contain – i.e., any mention of Gentile Christians or of related problems.

Other place the limits between

- About AD 40 (see James 2:7)
- And about AD 65 when James was reported to have been killed

## **THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BOOK OF JAMES?**

*“To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:”*

“The Twelve Tribes...”

- Refers to Christians in 1 Pet 1:1
- Refers to Jews in John 7:35

In this context it refers to

- Christians (James 1:2, 19, 2:1, 14, etc.)
- Who were primarily Jews
- And who were dispersed – probably because of persecution

## **THE REASON FOR THE BOOK OF JAMES?**

1. Persecution caused many Jewish Christians to flee to other countries.—  
*“At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”* It was from the Jews (Acts 8:1) and from King Herod and the Romans (Acts 12:1).
2. There were many problems that tested their faith — *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”*  
(James 1:3).
3. James wrote to encourage them and to provide practical teaching —  
*“James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.”* (James 1:1).

## **THE GOSPEL OF COMMON SENSE**

*“The epistle of James is not, nor was it intended to be, a formal, theological treatise, but a simple, sober presentation of Christian principles, the design of which was to enable the readers thereof to resist the sins particular to the age; to exhort them to live in such fashion as to merit, and to receive the appropriation [grace] of Christ; and to cope with the difficult social problems then prevailing. The letter, because of its eminently practical nature, has been quite properly styled ‘the Gospel of Common Sense.’”*

Guy N. Woods

# CHAPTER 1

**Trials** (v2-4)

**Wisdom** (v5)

**Confidence in Prayer** (v6-8)

**The Lowly and the Rich** (v9-11)

**Temptation** (v12-15)

**The Obedience of Faith** (v16-27)

## ABOUT TRIALS

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-3 – NKJV).

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing” (NLT-Paraphrase)

**Peirasmos** – Greek  
**Trials** – NIV, NKJV  
**Troubles** – NLT  
**Temptations** – KJV  
**Testing** – GWT

## **ABOUT TRIALS**

### **What is a Trial?**

**Trials are not the same  
as temptations**

(as the word is commonly used today)

## **ABOUT TRIALS**

### **What is a Trial?**

#### **Barnes Notes on the Bible regarding the word “**trials**”**

“It is now commonly used in the sense of placing allurements before others to induce them to sin, and in this sense the word seems to be used in James 1:13-14 of this chapter. [Here](#), [however \[in verse 2\], the word is used in the sense of trials, to wit, by persecution, poverty, calamity of any kind.](#) These cannot be said to be direct inducements or allurements to sin, but they try the faith, and they show whether he who is tried is disposed to adhere to his faith in God, or whether he will apostatize. They so far coincide with temptations, properly so called, as to test the religion of men ...”

## **ABOUT TRIALS**

### **What kinds of Trials May Have Beset these Jewish Christians in Exile?**

#### **Adversity such as:**

- Poverty
- Business problems and distractions
- Health problems
- Relationship problems
- Isolation and loneliness. Separation from family and friends
- Persecution by non-Christian Jews, the Roman authorities, and/or the local gentiles in their new homeland.
- The list of potential trials is almost endless

**And the same types of issues test Christians today.**

## **ABOUT TRIALS**

### **SOME TRIALS MAY BE AVOIDABLE WHILE OTHERS ARE NOT**

#### **Example:**

- “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters....
- Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this” (1Pet 4:15-16).

#### **Another Example:**

- One can avoid the trials of broken relationships and financial loss that come from their own alcoholism.
- One cannot avoid the trial of a failed economy, unfair treatment by others, health problems, or other afflictions.

**But be that as it may** James deals with the here-and-now of trials “fallen into” – and not their origin or who is at fault.

## **“COUNT IT ALL JOY...”**

- The godly man does not seek or welcome temptations. Instead he prays, “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt 6:13).
- Even the godly man does not find the Lord’s chastening to be “joyful” (Heb 12:11).
- And, as we have seen, rational man of the Bible did not seek or welcome trials in the form of adversity.

**So here is the question: When such trials “fall upon you” unannounced, unexpected, and unwelcome, how can you regard the matter with joy?**

## **“COUNT IT ALL JOY...”**

**“My brethren, count it all joy  
when you fall into various trials,”**

**WHY?**

**“knowing that the testing of your faith  
produces patience.”**

**In other words, ‘Even though there may be great discomfort in your trials, you should still find room for genuine rejoicing at the prospect of their providing valuable spiritual benefit**



## “COUNT IT ALL JOY...”

Let us use other passages to expand the thought intended by James:

- “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4).
- “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint...” (Rom 5:3-5).
- “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” (Jam 1:12).

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## “COUNT IT ALL JOY...”

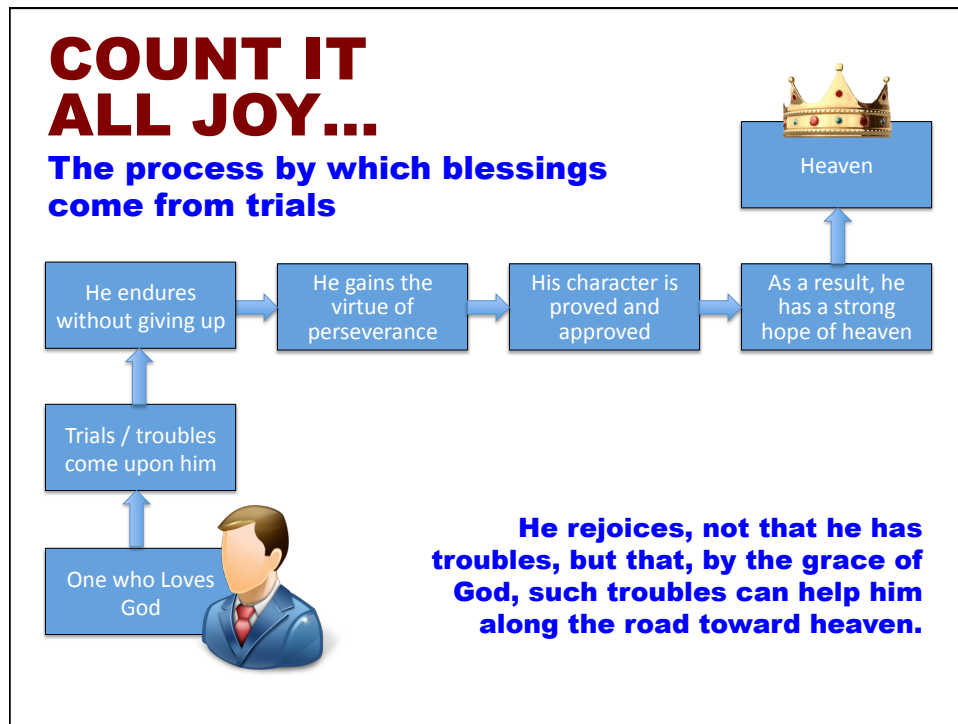
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## “...KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE”

- **“Knowing”** – You can know this truth with confidence. And such knowing makes the joy possible.
- **“that the testing”** – i.e., proving. Not just to inform God about our true character but to refine it. “For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined” (Ps 66:10 ).
- **“of your faith”** – Not just a test of how strongly we believe but whether we believe strongly enough to keep on obeying. Includes belief and trust in the Lord as well as the commitment and submission that such belief motivates.
- **“produces patience”** – the ability to stand unwavering without yielding to any outside pressure and to exhibit steadfastness and constancy in the face of the most formidable difficulty. This characteristic allows believers to endure trials bravely without falling.

## DOES EVERYONE BENEFIT FROM THEIR TRIALS?



- There is no inherent and inevitable benefit in suffering trials.
- The world is full of people who are suffering greatly.  
“Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble” – Job 14:1.
- And many (or most) of them will realize no resulting blessing nor reason to “count it all joy.” Why?

## DOES EVERYONE BENEFIT FROM THEIR TRIALS?

Paul promises that those who experience trials may enjoy wonderful spiritual benefits. But are such blessings an unconditional gift to all who experience trials?

**Some Bible characters experienced trials but without apparent spiritual benefit:**

- **Pharaoh** endured plague after plague but only hardened his heart more (e.g., Ex 8:32).
- **Job’s wife** suffered greatly then urged her husband to “curse God and die” (Job 2:9)
- **Demas** endured much with Paul but then fell away from the faith (2Tim 4:10)
- **The seed sown among the thorns** (Matt 13:22)

**Others seemed to become more godly people as a result of their trials**

- **Paul** endured persecutions (2Cor 1:8-9) and a thorn in the flesh (2Cor 12:7-10). As a result, he learned to lean on the Lord more.
- **The Thessalonians** learned patience through trials (2Th 1:4)

## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM TRIALS?

Each of us will inevitably experience trials but will we benefit from them? Will we use them as a springboard to greater faith or to a downward spiral into apostasy?

List some characteristics of those who will enjoy the benefits of trials that God intends.

Those who benefit from trials will know that:

- God chastens those He loves (Heb 12:4-11)
- We will not be tempted more than we can bear (1 Cor 10:13)
- God can make all work together for good (Rom 8:28)
- Our sufferings are nothing compared to the joys of heaven (2 Cor 4:16-18; Rom 8:16-18)
- Trials can produce endurance (Jam 1:2) and we cannot go to heaven without endurance (Jam 1:12)



## WHO WILL NOT BENEFIT FROM TRIALS?

List some characteristics of those who will not enjoy the benefits of trials that God intends.

**Men will not benefit from trials if they ...**

- Are bitter and negative
- More fearful of worldly adversity than of God
- Untrusting
- Worldly minded – focused on the here and now
- Blaming God
- Rebellious

**Such people will...**

- Seek to avoid trials at all costs
- And when they are tried, they will quickly look for the easy way out – even if it means leaving the faith
- They will not grow in endurance but instead become weaker and weaker – eventually unable to withstand even the slightest trial

## WITHOUT ENDURANCE WE CANNOT BE SAVED

- “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But **he who endures to the end shall be saved**” (Mr 13:13).
- “**If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.** If we deny Him, He also will deny us” (2Ti 2:12).
- “**For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise**” (Heb 10:36).
- “**If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons;** for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (Heb 12:7).
- “**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” (Jas 1:12).
- “Indeed **we count them blessed who endure.** You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” (Jas 5:11).

## ENDURANCE LEADS TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

**“But let patience [endurance] have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (James 1:4) “... knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, [proven] character; and character, hope” (Rom 5:3-4)**

Those who endure:

- Gain even more perseverance
- Grow in the strength to successfully plough through obstacles
- Gain the wisdom to deal with a variety of difficult situations
- Their character is proven and becomes the basis of a stronger hope in heaven

How does this process work? How does enduring lead to more endurance? To proven character? To hope?



## TRIALS CAN PRODUCE ENDURANCE

Suppose an aspiring weight lifter always stopped in practice when the reps got tiring and the weight a struggle – would the task ever get easier? Would he grow at all in his lifting capacity? Would he be more or less likely to persevere in the stress of competition – or just quit?

What about the Christian who never successfully endured any adversity or other tests ...



**Afraid God has put too much weight  
on your bar? See 1 Cor 10:13**

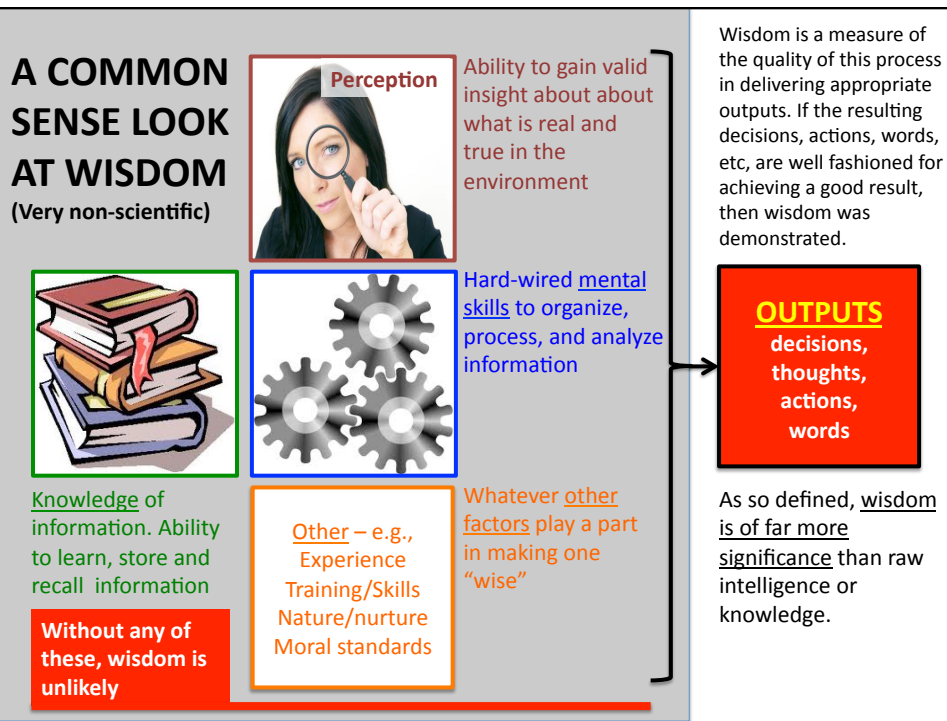
WHAT ABOUT  
**WISDOM**

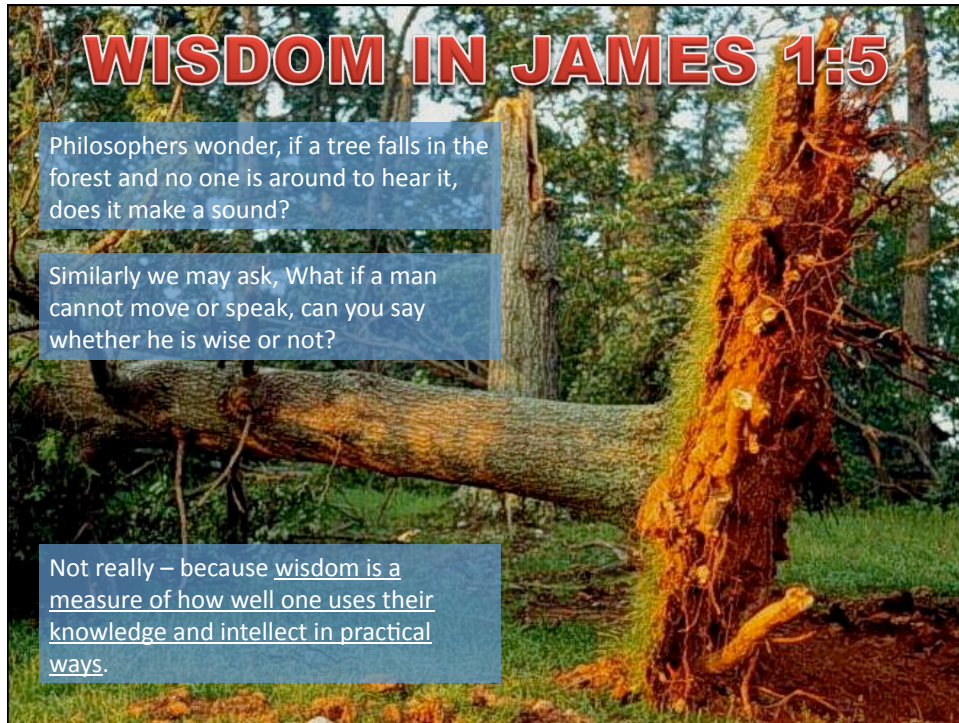
# WHAT IS WISDOM?

**“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” (James 1:5)**

**The word “wisdom” is used in multiple ways in the Bible**

- The character and work of God (Psa 104:24; Eph 3:10)
- Skill as a seamstress (Ex 35:26)
- Leadership skills (Deut 34:9)
- People skills (2Sam 20:22)
- Animal behavior (Job 29:17)
- Political / diplomatic skill (Ecc 9:15-18)
- Business / money-making skills (Ezek 28:4)
- Secular learning (Acts 7:22)
- Human religious ‘wisdom’ (1Cor 1:17-19, 2:4-5; Col 2:23; Jam 3:15)
- True understanding of God and His will combined with actions consistent with such understanding (Col 1:9, 2:4)





## WISDOM IN JAMES 1:5

Wisdom is a measure of the quality of the mental process in delivering appropriate decisions with associated thoughts, actions, and words. If one's decisions, actions, words are well fashioned for achieving a good result, he may be said to be "wise."

**James is not so much addressing knowledge as he is the ability to use knowledge in reaching good decisions and to take appropriate actions**

**... particularly (in this context) with regard to enduring troubles**

**'Father, please give me the wisdom to face my trials, deal with them, endure faithfully, and grow spiritually'**


Is it possible to have wisdom with no knowledge?

Is it possible to have great knowledge but no wisdom?

Is it possible to have wisdom without mental skills?

Is it possible to have wisdom without the ability to perceive reality?

**UNDERSTANDING 'WISDOM'**



## **“IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM...”**

Are you wise or are you lacking wisdom? James calls on his readers to consider this question.

How do you know? How can you know if you are wise?

Is it possible to think you are wise and when you are not?

- “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him”(Pr 26:12; also 1Co 3:18; Rom 11:25).

Is this a problem? Why?

What characteristics influence a man’s ability to accurately judge whether he needs wisdom?

## WHAT WISDOM IS UNDER CONSIDERATION?

It is right to ask God for wisdom in a wide variety of areas:

- Wisdom in choosing a mate and an occupation
- Wisdom in defending the truth and teaching others
- Wisdom in serving the Lord in an effective and acceptable manner
- Wisdom for elders, national leaders, fathers, and others

In this context James seems to refer specifically to the wisdom needed to endure trials.

## “...LET HIM ASK OF GOD...”

### GOD IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE WISDOM

- **FOR SOLOMON** – “And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore” 1Ki 4:29 .
- **FOR EZRA** – “And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom ...” (Ezr 7:25).
- **FOR DANIEL** – Da 2:23 “I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might ...” (Dan 2:23).
- **FOR US TODAY** – “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God...” (1Cor 2:1-7).

**IF WE WANT SUCH WISDOM, WE MUST GO TO HIM** (Col 1:9; James 1:5)

## **“...LET HIM ASK OF GOD...”**

**IT IS TRUE THAT** the “... *Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him*” (Matt 6:8).

**NEVERTHELESS** we are to pray “always with all prayer and supplication (Eph 6:18 ).

**AND NOTE THAT** “*Yet you do not have because you do not ask*” (Jam 4:3).

## **GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUE WISDOM** **But how does He dispense it?**

### **Wisdom comes:**

- Through His written word – the Bible (Jer 8:9; Col 3:16; 2Tim 3:15)
- Through instruction – preaching – teaching (Prov 1:3, 4:8)
- Through chastening (Prov 29:15)
- Through experience and practice (Heb 5:11-14).

This process takes personal effort: seeking – listening – studying (Prov 2:2, 4:5, 19:8) and time (Job 12:12).

**Can we hope to enjoy the blessings of God-given wisdom if we neglect the fountain from which such wisdom flows? What if we pray for wisdom but ignore the scriptures by which wisdom is dispensed?**

## **“WHO GIVES LIBERALLY”**

### **We do not serve a stingy God!**

“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? “Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:11-13).

**Also Mal 3:10; Luke 6:38; Eph 3:20-21**

## **“WHO GIVES ... WITHOUT REPROACH”**



## **“...AND IT WILL BE GIVEN...”**

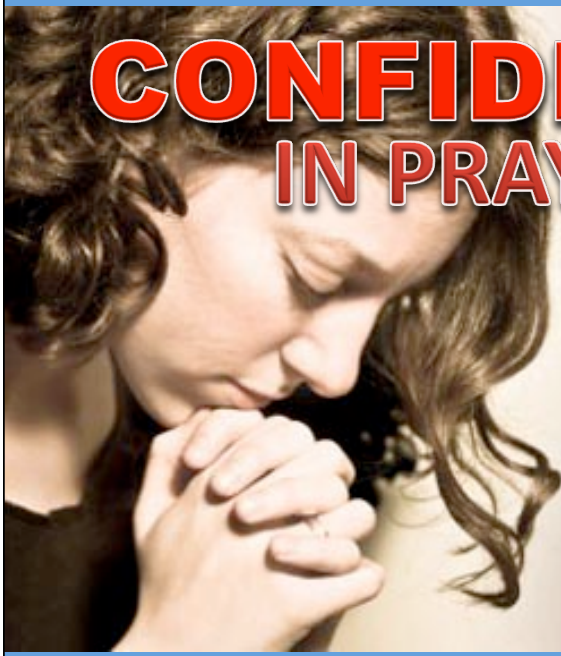
“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and [it will be given to him](#)” (James 1:5).

- This is a clear promise from the Father
- And He does what He says He will do
  - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness...” (2Pet 3:9).
  - “In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (1Tim 1:2).
  - His counsel is immutable (Heb 6:13-18)
- Now the question is – Will we pray for wisdom with confidence in God’s promise or with a heart full of doubt?

## **A FINAL WORD ON TRIALS**

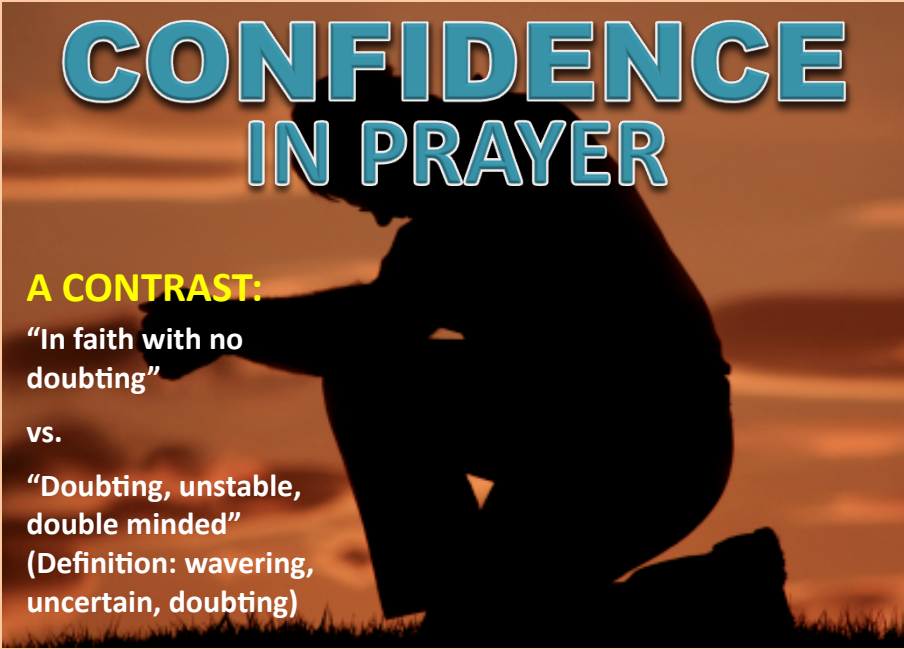
- [Everyone](#), saint or sinner, will “fall into various trials” in this life.
- This certainly includes you and me.
- Christians [may](#) gain spiritual benefit from such trials – or they may be beaten down
  - The question is, ‘Will [we](#) benefit?’
    - If so, we must:
- Have the right attitude: “Count it all joy”
  - Refuse to give up: Endure





# CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

“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. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6-8).



# CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

**A CONTRAST:**  
“In faith with no doubting”  
vs.  
“Doubting, unstable, double minded”  
(Definition: wavering, uncertain, doubting)

## CATEGORIES OF PRAYERS

1. **The prayers of rebellious sinners** – God will not hear such prayers
2. **The misguided prayers of redeemed and faithful ones – misguided because of spiritual immaturity** – Such miscues are inevitable as we grow in knowledge and faith. God knows best and will do what is good and right in accordance with His will – and that might involve a resounding “NO!” to such a prayer.
3. **The prayers of redeemed and faithful ones offered in accordance with God’s will** – Without any doubt, God will hear and answer such prayers. Although He may offer a different solution than we ask or a different time frame a favorable outcome is assured.

## GOD DOES NOT HEAR SINNER’S PRAYERS

- “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” (Isa 59:1-2)
- “The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous” (Prov 15:29)
- “Then they will cry to the LORD, But He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, Because they have been evil in their deeds” (Mic 3:4).
- “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him” (Jo 9:31).

<p>"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks the door will be opened" (Matt 7:7).</p> <p><b>ALL PRAYERS? NO!</b></p>	<h2 style="color: blue;">WHAT PRAYERS CAN WE BE ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT THAT GOD WILL ANSWER?</h2>	<p>"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matt 21:22).</p>
<p>"...if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him" (Jo 9:31).</p>	<p>Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1Jo 5:14-15).</p>	<h3 style="color: blue;">WHICH PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED?</h3>
<p>"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (Jo 15:7, also Eph 3:11-12).</p>	<p>Approach God with "boldness" and "full assurance" because of forgiveness through Jesus (Heb 10:19-22).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prayers from Christians, those who have been saved by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19-22)</li> </ol>
<p>"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (Jo 16:23).</p>	<p>"... the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" Jam 5:16.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Prayers from those living in obedience to the will of God</li> <li>3. Prayers that are according to His will (e.g., fervent, believing, not lustful)</li> </ol>
<p>"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1Jo 3:21-22).</p>	<p>In faith, with no doubting" (James 1:6).</p>	<p>But even those offering these prayers do not have perfect knowledge of the will or God nor of His specific plans for working in our lives (e.g. Job - Job 6:8-10; Paul - 2Cor 12:7-10)</p>
<p>Not selfish – "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jam 4:3)</p>		

# WHAT ABOUT THESE PRAYERS?

## How much confidence can you have in the answer being unqualified "Yes"

1. That you will win a lottery for a Corvette? (James 4:3)
2. That rulers will rule so that Christians can lead quite and peaceful lives? (1Tim 2:1-4)
3. That a man who just endured an amputation will be whole again? (James 5:13-15)
4. That a woman in the hospital with a very serious infection will recover? (James 5:13-15, Luke 22:42)
5. That an unpleasant situation may be cease to trouble you? (Luke 22:42; Phil 4:6; Heb 12:4-12; Jam 1:2-3; 1Cor 12:7-10)

## WHAT ABOUT THESE PRAYERS?

**How much confidence can you have in the answer being unqualified "Yes"**

6. That you will have the wisdom to deal with a specific trial in our life? (Jam 1:5; but note Prov 4:1-13).
7. That a friend will be converted (consider Matt 19:22). What might be a better prayer?
8. That your sins will be forgiven (Acts 8:22; 1Jo 1:9; Matt 6:14-15)
9. That we grow in holiness.
10. That our attitude in the just completed services was acceptable in God's sight.
11. That an interview for a new job may go well?
12. That a particular situation may not lead to temptation and sin? (Matt 6:13, but also 2Tim 2:22)

**IN CONCLUSION**

**THE BASIS FOR  
CONFIDENCE  
IN PRAYER**

1. The blood of Jesus (Heb 10:18-22)
2. Obedience to God (1Jo 3:21-22)
3. Asking according to His will (1Jo 5:14-15)

## EXALTATION AND HUMILIATION

**James wrote**, “Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. 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” (James 1:9-11).

**Don't forget the context – trials.** Also note that that both riches and poverty can be a trial and can result in temptations . Remember the words of Prov 30:7-9.

**David prayed to God**, “Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches – Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, “Who is the LORD?” Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

## EXALTATION AND HUMILIATION

James 1:9-11

### Perhaps it means:

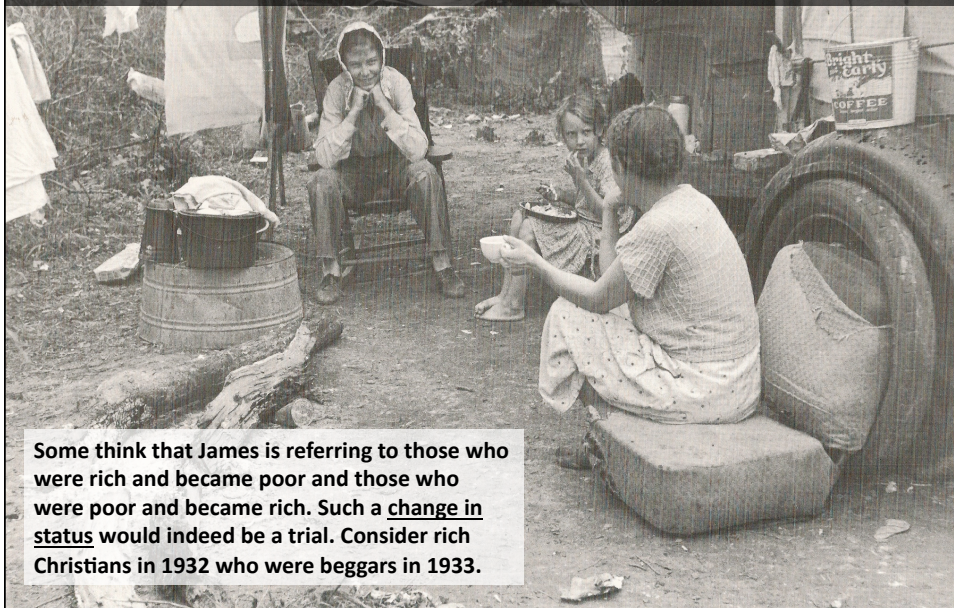
- **Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation**
  - Certainly not the exaltation of his position in this life. But his earthly financial status is irrelevant to God. In spite of poverty he can glory in his redemption, adoption as a Son, and hope of heaven (2Cor 4:17)
- **[Let] the rich [glory] in his humiliation**
  - Perhaps the humiliation of coming to the cross as a wretched and condemned sinner; wholly dependent on the Lord's mercy and fully submissive to his will. Also the humility of his uncertain and temporary existence.
  - The one who glories in his riches displeases the Lord (Phil 3:19). Instead, such a one should say like Paul “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:7-8). Certainly all such early 'glory' will soon fade away anyway.
  - Paul also said, “But he who glories, let him glory in the Lord” (2Co 10:17).

## EXAULTATION AND HUMILIATION

James 1:9-11

- [Let] the rich [glory] in his humiliation, continued
  - “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance” (Rom 5:3).
  - “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever” (1Pet 1:24-25).
  - “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2Cor 12:10).
- **Clearly this leaves both rich and poor in the same boat – with no room to glory about fleeting earthly riches but every reason to glory in their spiritual blessings**

## THE HUMILIATION OF NEW POVERTY



Some think that James is referring to those who were rich and became poor and those who were poor and became rich. Such a change in status would indeed be a trial. Consider rich Christians in 1932 who were beggars in 1933.

## EXAULTATION AND HUMILIATION

James 1:9-11

### Those adopting this interpretation would say:

- **“Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation”** means he should glory in his new-found ability to do good with his riches.
- **“[Let] the rich [glory] in his humiliation”** means he should glory in this reminder of the temporary fragility of things related to this life for soon he and all his activities will cease.

## TEMPTED BY GOD?

James 1:13

**“Temptation” is to try or test one's faith, virtue, character by enticement and solicitation to sin (not the same word as in verses 2-3)**

James writes, “Blessed is the man who endures temptation ...” (Jam 1:12)

- But some will fall to temptation and will not endure
- And will blame their failure on God:
  - Adam blamed God for his sin – “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen 12:3).
  - And James speaks of those who claimed, “I am tempted of God” (Jam 1:13)

This is a false claim! “God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone” (Jam 1:13).

- God intends trials to mature us (Jam 1:2-4) and chastening to instruct us (Heb 13:5-11; esp. v10) but not to break us.
- He “is not will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2Pet 3:9) and says, “I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” therefore turn and live!” (Ezek 18:32).

## BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT TEMPTATION

### 1. Satan is responsible for temptation

- “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt 4:1).
- “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one” (Mt 6:13).
- “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you” (1Cor 7:5).
- “For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, “ (1Thes 3:5).

### 2. We are tempted by allowing ourselves to lust for forbidden things

- 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. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (Jas 1:13-14).

## BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT TEMPTATION

### 3. Temptation can cause men to fall from the faith

- “But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away” (Lu 8:13).
- “For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain” (1Th 3:5).

### 4. We must avoid, resist, and overcome temptation

- And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things
- Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life ...” (Jas 1:12).
- “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1Co 7:5).
- “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak” (Mt 26:41).



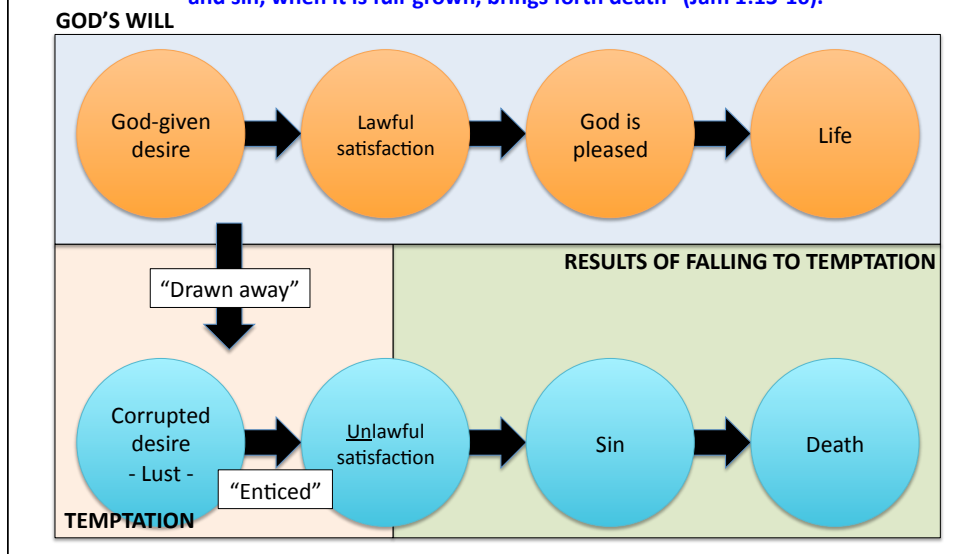
## BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT TEMPTATION

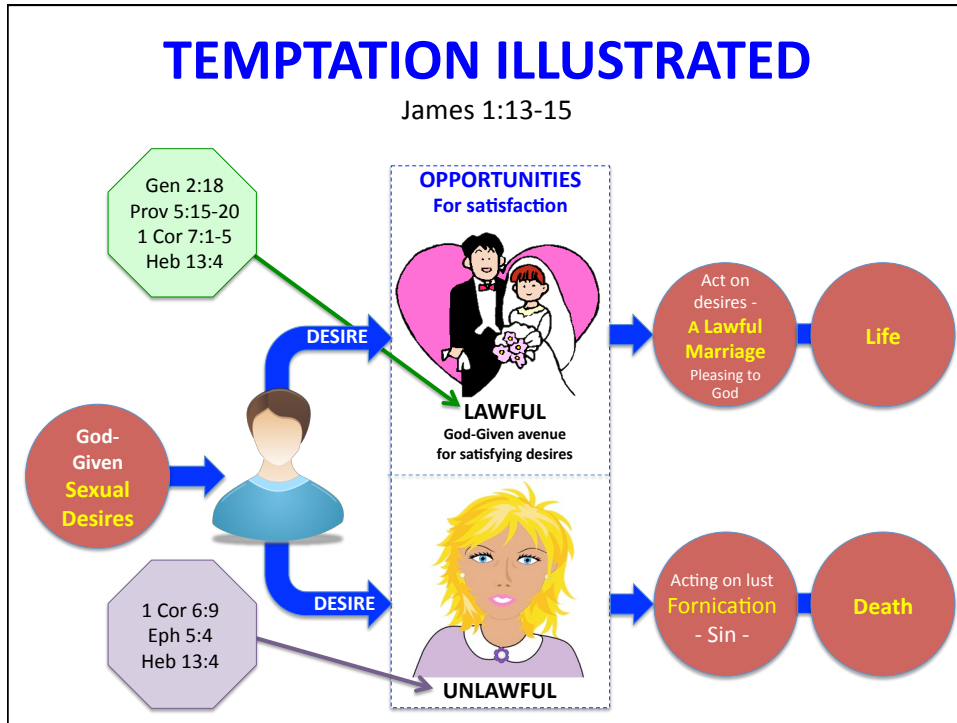
### 4. God will help us in our battle with temptation

- "... the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" (2Pe 2:9).
- "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1Co 10:13).
- "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak" (Mt 26:41). Pray like this: "And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one" (Mt 6:13).

## THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

"... each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (Jam 1:13-16).





## THE TRUE NATURE OF TEMPTATION

“...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:14-15).

THE PRINCIPLE	ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM AND EVE
Natural, God-given needs and desires	Need for food (Gen 2:9)
Opportunities for lawful and unlawful satisfaction	Every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:15-17)
Opportunity for unlawful satisfaction	“You shall not eat” (Gen 2:17)
Lust / desire – longing for what is forbidden – for unlawful satisfaction	The fruit looked good (Gen 3:6)
Enticement – the state of being effectively enticed – giving in to the lustful desire	“She took of its fruit and ate” (Gen 3:6)
Sin is born	“the woman ... fell into transgression” (1Tim 2:14)
Sin matures and hardens – One grows more set in sin, rebellious – refusing to truly confess and repent	She just made excuses (Gen 3:13)
Spiritual death	“You shall surely die” (Gen 2:17, 3:23-24)

## WHAT ABOUT THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS?

The scriptures say, Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be **tempted by the devil**" (Matt 4:1) and **He was "in all points tempted as we are**, yet without sin." (Heb 4:15).

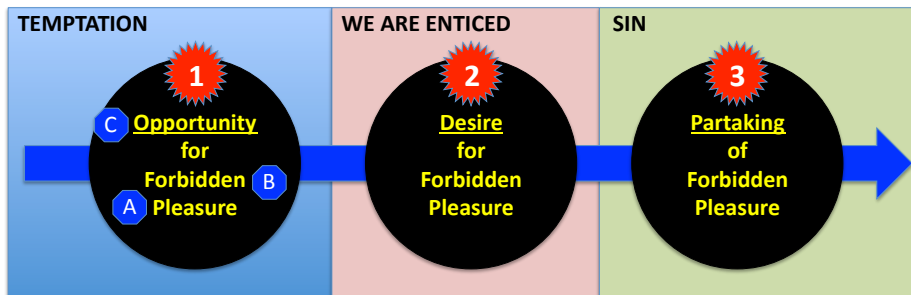
But they also say, "**God cannot be tempted by evil**, nor does He Himself tempt anyone" (Jam 1:13).

**Is this a problem?**

To "tempt" is **to attempt** to persuade or entice to do something, especially something morally wrong or unwise. To test one maliciously or craftily to put to the proof his feelings or judgment (3985 peirazw peirazo).

1. God is completely holy and has no desire for evil holy (1Pet 1:16). And everything of value is already His.
2. Jesus, while incarnate, was given the ordinary needs of humans to prepare Him as our High Priest (Heb 2:14-18, 4:15, 5:7-9).
3. He had the opportunity, capacity to desire and enjoy evil things (Matt 4:1-3).
4. But He never allowed Himself to lust for and be enticed by evil things.

## STAGES OF TEMPTATION



Jesus was tempted in this way. But unlike sinful man, He never proceeded past this point. He never had any desire for a forbidden thing. And He certainly never fell to the allure of temptation. "He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

Our testing with forbidden pleasures turns into a disaster when we began to lust after them "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed" (Jas 1:13-14). Jesus was not tempted in this way.

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

## GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS

*“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” (Jam 1:17).*

**Does God tempt men to sin? No way! Instead He graciously sends them perfect gifts!**

- God sends only good gifts. That which is corrupted and harmful does not come from Him. Nor does temptation. Would the one who gave us “the precious blood of Christ” (1Pet 1:19) also send us enticements to lose the benefit of that blood? Of course no!
- The source of all “good” and “perfect” gifts is God (Eph 1:3).
  - There is no place else where they can be obtained – we must come to Him for these gracious blessings.
  - No other source can be credited for such good. The thanksgiving and praise belong to Him alone.
- He is no ‘Indian giver, nor one who changes the terms of the contract mid-stream – He is consistent, reliable, and unchangeable. We can trust Him.

## FIRST FRUITS OF THE WORD OF TRUTH



*“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).*

## FIRST FRUITS OF THE WORD OF TRUTH

James 1:18

### **“Of His own will”**

- “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...” (1Pet 1:2).
- “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” (2Ti 1:9).
- “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will ... “according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph 1:11; 3:11).
- “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

### **He brought us forth by the word of truth**

- “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1Pet 1:23).

### **That we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures**

- These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb” (Re 14:4).

## WE ARE “FIRST FRUITS”– SO WHAT?

*“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).*

### **So what? What are the implications of our rebirth as God special holy people– His first fruits? James tells us as his writings continue.**

- “Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (v19)
- “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (v21).
- “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (v22).
- Practice “pure and undefiled religion” (v26-27).  
(Compare Eph 4:24-25 – “Put on the new man ... therefore ...”)

## “BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH”

James 1:19-20



### Be Swift to Hear

- Not just to be a better conversationalist
- To be more compassionate and less selfish (Prov 30:32; Phil 2:3-4)
- To objectively seek the real truth and gain wisdom (Prov 19:20)
- And especially (in this context) to avoid discord that leads to wrath (Jam 1:19-20)

## “BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH”

James 1:19-20



### Be Slow to Speak

- First inclination may be exactly the wrong thing to say
- “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col 4:6)
- Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Eph 4:29)
- “So speak ... as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (Jam 2:12)

## “BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH”

James 1:19-20



### Be Slow to Wrath

- Wrath – Strong, stern, or fierce anger; deeply resentful indignation
- “The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (Jam 1:20).
- Put it off (Prov 14:29; Rom 12:19; 2Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8)

## “LAY ASIDE ... RECEIVE”

Because we are brought forth as His first fruits ... *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21)

### Lay Aside

- Eph 4:17-24, 6:12, 14; Col 3:7-14; Heb 12:1

### Receive with meekness

- Receive with reverence and awe; with willing and complete submission
- “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1Thes 2:13).

### Able to save your souls – Will it save those who ...

- Hear only? (James 1:22; Matt 7:21-27)
- Believe only (James 2:14-26)
- Receive it just for a while without enduring? (James 1:12; Luke 8:12)

## 'MIRROR, MIRROR ...'

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **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; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.** 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 word, this one will be blessed in what he does.



She looks in the mirror to see if all is right – whether she meets her appearance standard. She does not. She has lipstick on her teeth and a makeup stain on her collar. But she turns away from the mirror and takes no action. Soon she forgets there is a problem.

## 'MIRROR, MIRROR ...'

James 1:22-25



The physical mirror helps us comply with our appearance standard – but only if we correct what is shown to be lacking. Similarly, when we look into the Word, deviations from God's will are identified. But this does us no good unless we fix what is shown to be wrong.



## 'MIRROR, MIRROR ...'

James 1:22-25



"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18 ).

- Who will be transformed to be like Christ and blessed?
- Who will not be transformed?

## "PURE AND UNDEFINED RELIGION"

James 1:26-27

**"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. 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."**

1. It is possible for one to think he is 'religious' yet be wrong
  - He is self-deceived and his "religion is useless" (Jam 1:26)
  - Jesus said, "And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt 15:9 and also, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt 7:21-23).
2. True religion is based on
  - "looking into the perfect Law of Liberty" and hearing its message
  - And continuing in it – being a doer and not a hearer only
  - For example, obey its command (a) on use of the tongue, (b) helping others, and (c) living a pure life
  - And in chapter two James will show that 'faith only' religion is useless religion