



October 6-7, 2020

Series: James

Message: James 1: Temptation

Teacher: Michael Farrell

The Main Thing: *Consider it ALL joy.*

Scriptures: James 1:2-4 (main focus), James 1:13-15, Matthew 4:22, Romans 6:18
(See BIBLE BACKGROUND NOTES at the end.)

SMALL GROUP TIME

Icebreakers:

Why do we need community to live a Christian life?

Questions:

Who "owns" you? (Ex. Christ, yourself, other people)

A false gospel teaches that if you become a Christian, then you will receive material blessings and have a wonderful life.

What things are wrong about this teaching?

What does the Bible say about what happens when we become a Christian?
(We'll share in the sufferings of Christ, etc)

What does the word "trials" mean in James?

What "trials" have you experienced as a Christian?

Have you ever been made fun of for your faith or the things you chose not to do? How did you feel?

How does the testing of our faith make it stronger?

What does it mean to be "refined"? How is it painful?

What is joy? Is it related to your circumstances?

Where does temptation come from? (James 1:13-15)

Why do we desire to do what is wrong?

How should we respond to temptation? Who can hold us accountable?

Where are you right now in comparison to the river that Michael talked about?

What situations have you been "dipping your toe in" that you know you shouldn't?

Where is God in relation to the river? Where is He working in your life right now?

Have you been in a tempting situation where you had the opportunity to walk away? What did you choose to do and why?

How can giving in to sin ruin our character?

How can we help lead our friends away from temptation?

BIBLE BACKGROUND NOTES:

The Book of James (Intro):

- James (writer of the book) was the brother of Jesus; he was admired for his piety.
- James reads like a "letter-essay," which makes an argument, rather than communicating greetings, similar to letters from respected leaders in the Jerusalem church.
- Economic tensions ran high at this time between the landowners and the peasants, many of whom were driven out of business by high taxes or cuts in territory, leading to a revolt in AD 66 and the fall of Jerusalem.
- In context, James addresses the pride of the rich, persecution by the rich, and pay withheld by the rich. He addresses those tempted to retaliate with violent acts or words. He gives a call to wisdom, faith, and patient endurance.
- James seeks the creation of true community, marked by mutual care and interdependent responsibility. He calls sin by its name and calls followers to take responsibility for their own actions and any evil that occurs from our inaction.
- James wrote to a church facing problems including: divisiveness, intolerance, favoritism, and desire for wealth and status.
- James points out that adversity can be used by God to purify and strengthen those whom He loves. Other themes include suffering, prayer, faith, testing, sin, poverty, and wisdom.

James 1:2-4

-James addresses the question of trials: What is the source of them? Why does God allow difficulties in our lives? How are we to respond to them? He answers that prayer and the wisdom of God are tools to answer these questions.

-James is specifically addressing the trials of poverty and oppression experienced by the poor Jews of his day.

-He says that testing should be received with joy and results in benefit, and wisdom is needed from God to perceive it that way. Controlling one's response to trials can bring contentment through endurance.

-“Pure” from “pure joy” translates as whole, complete, utter, overflowing joy.

“Trials” (Greek=peirasmos): to prove the quality or worth of someone or something through adversity. Testing can be linked to Satan, it is subtle and multiform, he can and does entice humans to sin. Jews often believed people experienced misfortune due to sin.(Ex. John 9:1-2)

-We face trials just as Jesus did. (Luke 6:22, Jesus calls us blessed when persecuted for the Kingdom) They can be allowed by or sent by God. We should respond not with anger or disappointment, but utter joy.

-Trials have a purifying quality. (See also Psalm 66:10-12, Proverbs 3:11-12)

-The result of testing is perseverance or endurance—a highly praised trait. It doesn't come from one act, but steadfastness and determination through adversity with hope.

-We need wisdom to cope with trials, because it provides a clear view of our situation from God's perspective. What the world calls misfortune is an opportunity for God to bring about His purpose.

-The “complete” person is fully formed to Christian standards.

-We become people of integrity, single-minded in devotion and loyalty to God.

-Maturity is the imitation of God, developing His character traits within ourselves.

Sources: The IVP Bible Background Commentary OT/NT; The NIV Application Commentary: James (David P. Nystrom)