

James 1 Testing Your Faith

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; 10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. 18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character

Paul's observations and insights

1. What is a bondservant?
2. Israel's identity was sustained because she held on to her historical heritage.
3. Why would you see a trial as a joy?
4. Ask for wisdom in all your decisions because God longs to advise you.
5. How does the testing of faith produce endurance?
6. Persevering under trials is a must, because giving up is to fail.
7. 'Perfect and complete' is a return to innocence.
8. Why are we so ready to be deceived by lies and deceptions?
9. Notice it is the Word that saves your soul?
10. 'To look' is to see the law of God. To see what God's intention was at the making of that law.
11. To be double minded, is to be confused and unconvinced.
12. To ask believing, is to already know your request has been approved.
13. A lesson for the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is that we all end up with nothing.
14. The award, of the crown of life, is for those who finish the race over life, still in relationship with God through Jesus.
15. God tempts no one, but so many people blame God, for the hardships that they go through in life - why?
16. Temptation is not the problem; it is the surrender to temptation that is the problem.
17. We succumb to temptation, when we allow, who we were to take charge of who we are.
18. The 'giving birth to sin', is to bite into the apple.
19. When you accept and believe, God is the giver of good things, you stop blaming God for the bad things that go wrong in your life.
20. A shifting shadow is the character of uncertainty, but God's character does not change.
21. He is good.
22. The word of truth is Jesus.
23. It is through Jesus we have become a new creation to occupy the earth.
24. 'To hear' is to understand.
25. 'Slow to speak', is to give yourself time to think.
26. Let the new you take charge of the old you.
27. God's good, can't be brought about by man's wrong.
28. We need to stop playing with the devil's toys!

29. It's through the Word, implanted into your spirit, that God brings us into sanctification.
30. 'Soul saving', is alignment to what God thinks, what God feels and what God does.
31. Sayers 'say', but they don't 'do'.
32. Hearers do what they say.
33. 'To delude yourself', is to live in self-deception, that is, to deny what you know is true.
34. Self-awareness is having an honest understanding of who you are.
35. Being blessed by God, is an automatic reality to living life Gods way and not a reward.
36. Taking charge of the tongue, so that it speaks well, is a life challenge.
37. 'To deceive your own heart', is to deceive your spirit.
38. The practice of 'love in action', is God's idea of religion.
39. To be 'unstained', is to stay on the side of God's line of righteousness and justice