

FAITH AND TESTING

JAMES 1:12-19

SERMON POINTS

- The temptation in temptation
- The source of sin
- The gift giver

MAIN IDEA: When we face trials of various kinds we are tempted to believe that God is tempting us and to believe that God is not good. James shows us that sin comes from our own selfish desires and that God is always good and the giver of every good gift.

*GROUP LEADERS>dont' forget to read the passage as a group before you begin. Encourage your members to open the Bible on their phone or a hard copy.

BOOK OF JAMES BACKGROUND:

Similar to Wisdom Literature

James is often likened to Old Testament Wisdom Literature (think Proverbs) or the OT Prophets (think Isaiah or Amos). James is extremely practical speaking to us about things like trials, temptation, poverty and wealth, favoritism, justice, how we use our words, worldliness, pride, planning, illness, and prayer. While James mentions faith 14 times, he issues 59 different commands and calls those of us with faith to actually live it out.

Themes of James

TRUE FAITH ACTS! TRUE FAITH WORKS.

James challenges us, saying, "while we are saved by grace through faith alone" true faith will most definitely produce good works in the lives of believers. Today many of us bristle under that type of language and many would call it legalism, but not James.

James says, "You don't just listen to the Word of God--you do it. Faith with no works is a dead faith.

QUESTIONS:

Q: Read 1:13 What is the temptation in temptation that James talks about in this verse?

Q: When we face various trials we are often tempted to sin in the midst of it, but there is an even greater temptation in the midst of it and it is the temptation to doubt God's goodness. For example in a financial trial we are tempted to go in debt, perhaps to steal or to do something foolish, but also we are tempted to doubt God's goodness and willingness to provide for our needs. In a trial you have recently faced, what were the temptations to sin and how were you tempted to doubt God's goodness?

Q: Read 1:14-15. James shows us the source of sin and the anatomy of it. According to James how does it happen and who is to blame?

Q: How do our desires lead us to sin when we are tempted?

*Leaders notes on the issue of desire. James says that temptation flows from our desires. Desire is not intrinsically evil or fallen. We desire to be loved, to be known, to have intimacy, to be filled, to be at peace, to be safe--these are all good and a part of God's design. Since the fall of Adam and Eve humanity is affected by sin in our whole person. We experience it in our bodies--we are dying. Our emotions are affected. Our relationships are affected, **and a key factor is that our desires are affected--they have been bent towards selfishness and loving ourselves more than God and others.** The Greek word James is using (epithumia/ἐπιθυμία) means "over-desire" or disordered desire and this is when we take a good thing and make it an ultimate thing. We were created to find our soul's satisfaction ultimately in God because he alone can fill us. But when we elevate a good thing into an ultimate thing for us--it disorders our desires and our loves and they become temptations for us.

Q: Read James 1:16-17. James warns us to not be deceived into believing that God is not good and reminds us that he is the giver of every good and perfect gift and that he never changes. Why are we so tempted to believe that God is not good and that we can't trust him?