

Lessons From James

Trials & Tribulations

(Ja 1:2-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning.
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons from the Book of James.
 - a. We looked last week at the introductory material.
 - b. We noticed most importantly the context and content that was under consideration.
 - i. Context is that it was written to Christians converted from Judaism and were most likely not predominantly wealthy as was the case with many Christians at this time, early 40's.
 1. As Jews they would have been persecuted by Gentiles.
 2. As Christians they would have been persecuted by Jews.
 3. Being poor they were being persecuted by the wealthy.
 - ii. Content is dealing with moving from spiritually being immature to spiritual maturity.
3. Let us now take a close look at the content of this wonderful book.

I. Various Trials

- A. Trials are different than temptations
 1. Trials are what God puts us through.
 - i. "'to try,' either in the sense of attempting, e.g., Acts 16:7, or of testing, is rendered 'to prove' in John 6:6." (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (495). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - ii. "to try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing—'to test, to examine, to put to the test, examination, testing.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (331). New York: United Bible societies.)
 2. Thus God tries us to help us improve and grow spiritually.
 - i. **Ja 1:3-4** "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."¹
- B. Temptations are different than trials
 1. Temptations are what Satan, his followers, or our own desires put us through in the hopes of sinning.
 - i. "to endeavor or attempt to cause someone to sin—'to tempt, to trap, to lead into temptation, temptation.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (774). New York: United Bible societies.)
 2. Thus tempting's purpose is to cause to stumble and sin while the purpose of trials is to cause one to mature and thus grow spiritually.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- C. The Greek word "πειρασμός" or "peirasmos"
 - 1. This word is that which is used and defined previously.
 - 2. Obviously context is that which determines its translation and as we see trails is the appropriate translation.
- D. The various trials under consideration
 - 1. The lack of wisdom (5).
 - i. Knowing that one lacks wisdom can be daunting to say the least.
 - ii. Some will shy away from growing their faith by not asking for wisdom.
 - a. Because wisdom is learned through the application of knowledge.
 - iii. Thus you will have those that either don't want to put the time in to gain the needed knowledge or you will have those that don't want to be put in the position of needing to use that knowledge.
 - iv. Example:
 - a. "I need to study on mechanical instruments because I heard my coworker talking with someone about it but I don't know that much really...I'll make time tomorrow for the study, then tomorrow after that and so on and so on."
 - b. "That guy/girl is coming over here and I haven't studied hopefully he/she won't ask me about it."
 - 2. The doubt in God's willingness to answer prayer (6).
 - i. Many people pray to God without expectation of Him answering, and then they wonder why it wasn't answered the way they wanted.
 - ii. Because of this James says there ends up being a conflict in the person.
 - a. First this is because they have the knowledge that God does answer prayers.
 - b. Second this is because they have a lack of understanding concerning the answering of prayers.
 - iii. Thus because they don't understand prayers and yet have the knowledge of God answers prayers, they become indifferent in their prayers.
 - 3. The lack of financial security (9).
 - i. Not being financially secure is very difficult and can be very taxing on a person.
 - a. Most people are financially secure they just live outside their means.
 - b. What I mean by financially secure is having so much money that you never would have to worry about spending too much again.
 - ii. Thus one that worries about money will struggle with life in general because life runs based on money.

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II. Overcoming Various Trials

- A. Overcoming trials is based on being steadfast and enduring them
 - 1. That is being steady in faith not wishy-washy.
 - i. **Ja 1:12** "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial..." (ESV)
 - ii. **Ac 11:23** "When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (ESV)
 - iii. **He 12:1** "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"
- B. Overcoming trials leads to happiness
 - 1. There are few greater feelings then overcoming a trail one has been blessed to be a part of.
 - i. **Ja 1:12** "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trail..." (ESV)
 - ii. **Jb 5:17** "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty."
 - iii. **I Pt 3:14** "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled" (ESV)
 - iv. **Ja 5:11** "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."
 - a. Job was dealing with temptations not trials yet overcoming them still left happiness.
- C. Overcoming trials leads to a crown of life
 - 1. Overcoming leads to trails because overcoming leads to the strengthening of our faith.
 - i. **Ja 1:12** "...for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."
 - ii. **He 10:36** "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise"
 - iii. **II Ti 4:8** "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."
 - iv. **Rv 2:10** "...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

III. Temptations Are Not From God

- A. There is a huge difference between trials and temptations mentioned earlier
 - 1. Trials are from God.
 - 2. Temptations are not from God.
- B. Thus one can see the problems that arise from people saying God tempts them to sin
 - 1. This is the atheistic view.
 - i. God asked His children to kill innocent people thus He asked them to sin.

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2. This is the denominational misunderstanding of hell.
 - ii. God gave us freedom of choice and thus would be tempting, since we can sin, and would be a tempter if any person goes to hell.
 - a. Ergo there can't be a hell or there can't be any person in hell according to many denominational groups now-a-days.
 3. These views are just simply false concerning temptations.
 - i. James makes it clear "we" are responsible for being tempted.
 - ii. In other words we can be lured and enticed by our own lusts.
 - a. If I love this world I can be lured away from the assembly easily.
 - b. If I love always being the center of attention I can be lured away from telling the whole truth & thus embellishing/lying telling a story to one up someone.
 - iii. We are lead away by our own lusts we are not tempted by God.
 - a. **I Jn 2:16** "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."
- C. These lusts lead to death every time if not controlled
1. Whereas steadfastness brings a crown of life sin brings death.
 - i. **Ja 1:14-15** "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."
 2. There is no getting around it sin leads to death.
 - i. **Ro 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - ii. **Ps 7:14-16** "Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood. 15 He made a pit and dug it out, And has fallen into the ditch which he made. 16 His trouble shall return upon his own head, And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown."

IV. Good Comes From God

- A. Thus God cannot tempt
 1. Temptation leads to sin and sin leads to death it's not from God.
 - i. This is not saying temptation guarantees sin but only leads to it.
- B. God's gifts
 1. The good gift.
 - i. This is the Greek word "δόςις" or "dosis."
 - ii. It means "to give an object, usually implying value—‘to give, giving.’" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (565). New York: United Bible societies.)

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2. The perfect gift.
 - i. This is the Greek word "δῶρημα" or "dorema"
 - ii. It means "that which is given or granted—'gift, present.' (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (566). New York: United Bible societies.)
- C. Thus what we learn about God and these gifts
 1. The idea being presented is thusly that every time God gives it is good and that which He gives, ie gift, is full or perfectly complete.
 2. In other words God is perfect in both the giving and gift which He gives.
- D. The perfect gift that was good when given us...
 1. Eternal life in Christ.
 - i. **Ro 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (ESV)
 2. Eternal life based on Christ gift to us His life.
 - i. **He 12:2** "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

CONCLUSION

1. Jim Elliot once said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose." (<http://goo.gl/siuVO>)
 - a. Jim Elliot said this concerning his motivation to go into a headhunter tribe to teach the Bible where he lost his life. "They killed him, but the tribe later heard the Gospel, received Christ, and was totally transformed." (Ibid)
 - b. I don't know if this person was a member of the New Testament church or not but his dedication is something none-the-less to admire and use as an example.
2. Let us ask this question of ourselves...are we ready to take on the trials & tribulations and be steadfast in our faith?
3. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**