

Trials and Temptations

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: James 1:1-17

This lesson is the first in a series on the book of James. James is a very practical book. It shows us how we are to live as Christians. In this first lesson, we're going to be studying about trials and temptations.

Joy in Trials (v. 2-4)

- Trials are meant to test our faith (v. 2-3) – they are not pleasant to endure; they can be discouraging, causing some to question their faith while others strengthen theirs
- Testing our faith produces endurance (v. 3) – it is like exercise; through resistance we grow stronger
- This leads us to be perfect and complete (v. 4) – we will be who the Lord wants us to be

Praying for Wisdom (v. 5-8)

- As we endure trials, we need wisdom in order to navigate those challenges – pray for this wisdom; James said to pray for wisdom, not knowledge; we are responsible for gaining knowledge ourselves (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter. 3:18)
- However, wisdom is the ability to properly apply what we know to various circumstances we face – therefore, gaining wisdom will necessarily mean going through trials; so count it all joy (v. 2)
- If we desire wisdom, we will receive it (v. 5-6) – tied to our faith and our trust in God

Recognizing Our Circumstances (v. 9-12)

- James then addressed some different circumstances we may encounter in this life – yet we are not to look at our circumstances the way the world would
- Poverty brings hardship – yet there are benefits we gain from this (endurance, perfection, wisdom); therefore, “glory” in this if we face it (v. 9)
- Wealth is temporary – therefore, we must not look to it as our source of hope; if this is our situation, we are to “glory in our humiliation” (v. 10); all of this will one day be gone
- Regardless of our circumstances, we hope for a reward that comes from the Lord (v. 12) – always remember this

The Source of Temptation (v. 13-17)

- Finally, James addressed the topic of temptation – not the same as trials; as defined here, temptations are from within us and trials impact us from the outside

- God will never tempt us to sin (v. 13) – so do not be deceived and blame Him for this (v. 16); He is the giver of every good thing (v. 17)
- Temptation is rooted in our desires (v. 14-15) – following our lusts leads to sin
- The end result of sin is death (v. 15) – this is not God’s desire; He desires to save us [more on this in the next lesson in this series]

Conclusion

- All of us will face trials and temptations in life – we must choose how we respond to them
- We could use our trials to grow stronger in our faith
- Or we could give in to our temptations and be headed toward death