

James 1

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James 1:1-18

If temptation and trials are going to be part of the Christian's life, as prepared as you are to persevere, what is the best way to choose your steps in moving forward?

1. Wisdom. Verse 5. Wisdom is the means by which the godly can both discern and carry out the rich person to will of God. Praying for wisdom shows a shift in worldview from a closed world system to an open world system in which there is a God who is sovereign and lovingly acts on behalf of His people. Wisdom is more than knowledge.
2. Without Wavering. Doubting is the opposite of faith. This is the character mentioned in Pilgrim's Progress called "MR> FACING_BOTH-WAYS."
3. No instability. They have no inner or outer restfulness. Two questions are important here.
 - Is our heart one with God without any division of loyalty?
 - Are we proving the reality of that sole allegiance to God in the place of prayer?

4. Perspective Verses 9-11 help us with one scenario that gives us perspective. Riches and poverty. This is one place where you really need wisdom. He tells the poor Christian to boast in the fact that he is a child of God. He tells the rich person to remember that all wealth is transitory (Isaiah 40:6-8; Psalm 103:15,16). The point is that believers must look beyond the world's understanding to God's viewpoint.

Jeremiah 9:23, 24

5. Trials from another view verses 12-15. James addressed this topic in verse 2, but verse 12-15 look at the subject from a different standpoint. Here James says "BLESSED IS THE MAN. He wants us to know that there is a great reward at the end of the race – the CROWN OF LIFE. Don't give up. Don't falter. Don't stop in your pursuit of holiness. Jesus will see you through. The blessings God will give are summed up in THE CROWN OF LIFE. In the Bible, the wearing of the crown speaks of dignity of position (Psalm 21:3). It speaks of gladness and rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19); it is given to the victor (1 Corinthians 9:25; it is the prize at the end of the race (2 Timothy 4:8). Specifically, it is the reward of FAITHFUL ENDURANCE (Revelation 2:10).
6. Anatomy of Sin 1:14, 15 each *person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.* THE CONCEPT OF DESIRE HERE IS HUGE! The word he uses is **OVER DESIRE**. OUR PROBLEM IS NOT THAT

WE WANT BAD THINGS, BUT THAT WE WANT THINGS SO BADLY.

Conception is something that starts inside you and works its way outward. All sinful actions start as little embryos in the heart. **Notice something very interesting here. Satan is not mentioned. The enemy is not within the camp, within the heart, the enemy is the heart itself.** *C.S. Lewis wrote a novel called THE GREAT DIVORCE. He shows the subtlety of sin and how it is conquerable, but so manipulative. It is not just doing wrong things, but wanting the wrong things too greatly and wanting the right things too lightly.*

7. The Fount of Every Blessing – James finishes up this passage with two important thoughts.
 - (1) Every good thing in our lives comes from God. With every gift we should be reminded of the moon. None of them have any real light in and of themselves. They reflect light from the giver of light – THE SUN.
 - (2) We need a constant reminder of THE WORD OF TRUTH. Without this, nothing else really matters.

These are 7 very important truths. Each is like an individual diamond in a bracelet. However, the whole of the bracelet is this: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE NEEDS TO BE YOUR PERSPECTIVE. The important thing in life isn't really the situation but how you are handling the situation. If it is upsetting to you then you have your first clue as to the fact that something is wrong. God is sovereign. Until that truth sinks deep into our souls we will be miserable creatures at the mercy of every circumstance that comes along in our life.

A friend sent me this quote from Spurgeon as an afterthought from verse 18. **Well can I remember the manner in which I learned the doctrines of grace in a single instant. Born, as all of us are, by nature, an Arminian, I still believed the old things I heard from the pulpit and did not see the grace of God. When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when first I received those truths in y own soul-when they were, as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron, and I can recollect how I felt that I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a man-that I had made progress in Scriptural knowledge, though having found, once for all, the clue to the truth of God. One night, while sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, "How did you come to be a Christian?" I sought the Lord. But how did I come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across my mind in a moment – God was at the bottom of it all. He was the Author of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day."**

