

Lesson 1

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (James 1:12).

In the next several lessons, we are going to study the book of James to help us learn how to study the Bible on our own.

1. Write Psalm 119:11.

The best defense that we have for trials and temptations is the Word of God hidden in our hearts. As we saturate ourselves with God's Word, we can have power against sin.

The theme of the book of James is mainly practical advice on how to live the Christian life. This book addresses living out our faith when it comes to trials and temptations. James communicates that the Christian life should not just be a belief system and philosophy; rather, it is a way of life. It is something to be believed and acted upon.

When we look at the original Greek word for *trials* in James 1:2 and temptation in James 1:12, the meaning is the same: a beneficial test that will strengthen our Christian character. It is always good to ask questions about the biblical text to get a better understanding.

READ JAMES 1:2-4: THE PROFIT OF TRIALS

2. What is tested when we go through various trials, and what should be our attitude?

The NLT says, "When your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing"—and the temptation will go away. This realization creates a joyful attitude.

3. What do trials produce in our lives? See James 1:3.

4. What does patience produce? See James 1:4.

God puts our faith to the test, and sometimes to the breaking point of our abilities and resources, so we will learn to trust in Him instead of ourselves. We will be content. Our resources are limited, but when we look to God, we have unlimited resources. My strength is limited; but when I rely on God, He helps me to overcome sin.

READ JAMES 1:12-18: LOVING GOD IN TRIALS

5. Describe the man who endures temptation and what he will receive. See James 1:12.

6. How can we apply this wonderful promise when we are tempted to sin?

The word *blessed* means “being above reproach” (see Psalm 1:1-2), “having a good reputation, integrity, and obedience” (Isaiah 56:2), and “trusting God” (Psalm 40:4). When your conduct is “blessed,” you will be able to apply these biblical principles when you are tempted to sin. You will be above reproach. You will have a good reputation, be known as someone who displays integrity and obedience. You will also be content in all circumstances because you trust God.

7. Does God tempt us? See James 1:13.

8. How is a person tempted? See James 1:14.

9. Once you give in to temptation, it gives birth to sin. What is the result? See James 1:15.

Sin leads to death. Physical death, spiritual death, death of relationships, death of dreams, death of careers ... and the list goes on.

10. Why is a trial a gift from God? See James 1:17.

Trials are good and perfect and come from God, our Father. He doesn't change. The day He created the world, God was, and is, good. Today, God is good. And since He is a blessing God, we can infer that trials are also a blessing. It may not appear to be a blessing at first, but we will see in time that trials not only bring about good, but it also brings about Christian maturity.

READ JAMES 1:19-20: QUALITIES NEEDED IN TRIALS

11. Considering the nature of trials and temptations, what qualities are needed? See James 1:19.

Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. God gave us two ears and one mouth. When we talk too much and don't listen, we assert that we are more important than others. God tells us to listen and be slow to speak.

12. What happens when we lose our temper during trials and temptations? See James 1:20.

Anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. When we are angry, we cannot be an example of God. God is patient, tender, kind, longsuffering, and loving.

Enduring through trials and temptations is part of the everyday experiences of true believers. Reading, believing, and applying God's Word will help you to have victory.

We need to listen more, speak less, and let God be the Ruler and King of our lives. Focus on growing in your relationship with God, rather than fixating on your problem. Remain steadfast and faithful in trials, and be obedient and submissive to God in the face of temptations.

13. Write 2 Corinthians 12:10.