

James Small Group Guide 1

Faith in Trials James 1:1-18

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. ² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. ¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

I. God is Sovereign over Our Trials (1:2-12)

- Trials enable us to grow in maturity
- Trials enable us to trust in His wisdom.
- Trials enable us to rely on His resources.
- Trials enable us to live for His reward.

II. We are Responsible in Our Temptations (1:13-15)

- The origin of sin.
 1. God is perfectly sinless.
 2. We are utterly sinful.
- The anatomy of sin.
 1. deception
 2. desire
 3. disobedience
 4. death

III. God is Faithful for Our salvation (1:16-18)

- His goodness is unchanging.
- His goodness is undeserved.
- His goodness is unending.

Reflect and Discuss

How do unbelievers you know attempt to make it through painful circumstances?

How have you persevered through such times in your life?

What qualifies as a trial?

What about a temptation?

How do trials test the genuineness of your faith?

If true faith endures to the end, how is this not a way of earning your salvation?

How should the need to persevere in faith affect the way we counsel those who have just recently professed Christ? Explain how believing in God's sovereignty through our trials is crucial to persevering faith.

List some ways painful circumstances and unanswered questions can actually strengthen your faith.

Since God is sovereign, does this mean we are not at fault when we give in to sin? Explain your answer.

How does Scripture counsel us to overcome sin's attractions?

If someone no longer has an interest in being a Christian due to a trial, what should we conclude about that person's faith? How would you counsel that person?

What role does knowing our final reward play in enduring trials?