

Read James 1.17-18

15. Looking at the whole of verses 1-18 what different things are we told that God gives to us? How do these things compare to the worldly riches of verses 10 & 11?

16. What is it about God that means that his promises and his gifts are sure and certain?

17. How is a disciple of Christ described in verse 18?

Pray

Pray that you and others might grow in maturity, and particularly for wisdom when facing trials.

Pray for those who are going through trials at this time.

Pray for your own prayer life, for the various areas of our Church prayer ministry (prayer chain, meetings, diary, after services, during services etc.) and for Ann in her role as prayer co-ordinator.

Pray for those who are sitting tests this term in the shape of SATs and exams at schools, colleges and universities.

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James

Week 1 : Trials & Temptations



The author of this letter is traditionally said to have been the half-brother of Jesus, later referred to as James the Just. He came to faith after the resurrection and became one of the leaders of the early Church. He seems to have been writing to fellow Israelites who had turned to Christ and were born elsewhere or had fled Judea because of persecution.

Read James 1.1-4

1. Why does James tell us to count it joy when you meet trials of various kinds? (We will see later that trials are not the same as temptations.)

2. We saw something similar in our studies on 1 Peter (1.6 and 4.13) where persecution was certainly one kind of trial. What other “kinds of trials” do people face and are there particular things you are struggling with at the moment?

3. Verse 4 in the ESV says “that you may be perfect...” which doesn’t here mean sinless. The word is translated elsewhere as “mature (eg Col 1.28 & Eph 4.13). Do you think you are maturing in faith?

4. What would a long distance runner have to do to be the best they can be? What does James say contributes to Christian maturity?

Read James 1.5-8

5. These verses have incorrectly been taken as a promise that if we ask, God will reveal secret knowledge. But how is wisdom different to knowledge? (*Solomon was renowned for his wisdom Mtt 12.42 - see 1 Kings 3.7-12.*)

6. How does wisdom help us to mature in faith, particularly when facing various kinds of trials?

7. The exhortation to pray in verse 5 is specifically about asking for wisdom so it would be foolish to apply what James said to praying for things that are ungodly or unhelpful. However, what does James say about the significance of faith and doubt in prayer?

Read James 1.9-11

8. In what ways might poverty or lack cause damage to our faith? (See for example Job 2.9.) What does James tell the lowly (ie poor) to do, and what does it mean in practice?

9. In what ways might wealth and riches cause damage for our faith? (See for example Hosea 3.5-6.) What does James tell the rich to do, and what does it mean in practice?

10. How ready are you for the things of this life to pass away?

Read James 1.12-16

11. What is the difference between trials and temptations?

The word "test"/"testing" in 1.12 & 1.3 is used of metals which are tested to prove they are genuine.

12. What promise do these verses give to those going through testing?

13. What part does God play when we face trials and when we face temptations?

14. Why might people claim that they are being "tempted by God" and how does this deceive people?