



Pointers and questions on the book of
James

Session 1

1:1-18

Trials and Temptations

Summary

- 1:2-4** After his short greeting James gets straight to the point. His readers are under great pressure, and by handling it correctly they can actually turn it into spiritual growth.
- 1:5-8** Trials, rightly handled, can produce perseverance—a quality of the mature. And wisdom is available for all who ask God for it.
- 1:9-12** The trials may include financial pressure. But we must all understand that wealth is not the answer to our problems. In fact it can be a problem itself and needs to be handled wisely. A ‘crown of life’ at Jesus’ return awaits those who persevere and keep their attitude right.
- 1:13-15** James then adds a caution: in testing times Christians should not regard the temptation to do wrong as coming from God. It does not. We should recognise that temptation all too easily leads to sin and death, and deal with it quickly lest we become deceived.
- 1:16-18** Our Rock in all these changing and dangerous circumstances is God himself, who gave us spiritual life and, with it, continues to give us ‘every good and perfect gift’.

Questions to get you thinking

1. In practice, how do we go about considering our trials as ‘pure joy’? (v2) Is this realistic? Be practical. If there was talk of redundancy at your workplace, or you were diagnosed with cancer, what would your reactions be?
2. Identify some of the ‘many kinds’ of trials (v2). Give some personal examples.
3. Do you think trials that are your own fault are included here? If the stair carpet has been coming loose for some time and you have been aware of it but not bothered to fix it, you may come a cropper one day. Should you consider this ‘pure joy’?
4. What do verses 5, 16-18 tell us about the character of God?
5. What are the penalties of being ‘double-minded’? How can you avoid this condition? (v6-7)
6. What does James teach us about money and wealth in v9-11? He will return to this subject later in his letter.
7. Note the words ‘perseverance’ and ‘perseveres’ in this passage. What do they mean? Consider marking them in your Bible. Are you good at persevering?
8. Some people teach that becoming a Christian will spell the end of all problems. What do you think James would say to such people?
9. What is ‘the crown of life’? (v12)
10. Where, according to James, does temptation come from? (v13-14)
11. Who was the prime mover in your being born again? (v17-18)

