

A Test Of Faith

(James 1:1-18)

An Introduction To James

The book of James was written by James, the brother of Jesus. During Jesus' life on earth James was not a believer, but was converted when Jesus appeared to him after his resurrection (1 Cor 15:7). From the book of Acts we learn that James is a leader of the church at Jerusalem.

The book is a letter that was written 'to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations' – meaning that it was written to other Jewish people who were living outside the area of Palestine. In the letter James encourages those who are suffering because of their faith, but at the same time he urges his readers to not only be listeners of the word, but also to be doers of what they hear.

1. How would you describe the typical way in which people respond to tough situations that they find themselves in?

Read James 1:1-18

2. What does James say that our mental attitude to trials should be? (verses 2-8)
We should be joyful.
3. Why should this be our attitude? (also verse 12)
*We should be joyful in **all** situations because of the hope that we live for, and when we are tested this leads to perseverance, which leads to a solid faith.*
4. Draw the two men of verses 5-8 and their situations.

A) verse 5 <i>Prays confidently, knowing that God will hear him.</i>	B) verses 6-8 <i>Doubts God's ability to hear and answer prayer.</i>
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5. What kind of wisdom do you think verse 5 is talking about? How do we obtain it?
Godly wisdom. So what is godly wisdom? (cf Matt 7:24) – Basically doing what God says – ie obedience.

6. Why do you think Mr B 'should not think he will receive anything from the Lord'? (verse 7)
Because he doesn't expect God to be able to deliver. (Contrast with 1 Kings 18:24-39 if time allows)

7. From verses 13-18 where does sin / temptation come from?
It comes from ourselves. Can we blame God / the devil / anyone for our sins? No.

8. How does this passage contrast 'trials' and 'temptations'?
Trials – Leads to positive effects. We can see as positive. Temptations – the natural enticement to evil within our human heart. We should view as negative.

9. How then can we avoid succumbing to it, but instead overcome it?
Some practical application. Get them thinking about the right Christian attitude, and what will actually get that into their minds.

Summary

Be joyful in trials because it leads to perseverance which leads to a solid faith. We should approach God confidently when we pray, not doubting. Temptation leads to desire, which gives birth to sin, which when full-grown leads to death.