

**GreyStone EDU James: GS.EDU 2020**  
**SESSION 02 TRIALS/TEMPTATIONS**  
**WEEK OF 6/09/2020**

Welcome back! Thank you for registering for our Distance-Discipleship Summer Study: JAMES by Matt Chandler; hosted by Grey Stone EDU with Small Groups by Lifeway! We are going to grow spiritually over the next 13 weeks by studying this vital book together!

**Video reminder:** In order to view the video teachings each week, you will need to download the **Lifeway Small Groups Application**. The study videos are FREE on your ROKU, APPLE-TV, or AMAZON FIRE TV devices (as well as the Apple Store for i-Pad & i-Phone and Google Play for Android devices). Simply search for the "Small Group by Lifeway Application" and install it. After installing the app, open it on your device and look for the JAMES Study to access the 13-week study. (Note: There are several other free studies available as well.) You can even download the video to watch later.

\*\*\*Every Tuesday, registrants will receive an email link with the Resources, Video Teaching information and weekly Study Notes. The study runs from June 2 -August 25, 2020 online.

### **MAIN POINT**

As believers, we'll face trials and temptations that test our faith in and dependence on God. But enduring adversity ultimately brings joy.

### **INTRODUCTION**

- **In what ways is your faith growing? What's one thing you learned through personal study or family discipleship this past week?**
- **When did the message of James seem especially relevant this past week? How did you apply what you're learning to your daily life?**

Remember, James focused on teaching the church that genuine faith in Jesus will result in living for Jesus. Faith works. We want to believe the truth in God's Word and put it into action in our lives. This week, we're going to begin examining the first major theme that runs throughout the Book of James.

**Watch the session 2 video featuring Matt: James: Trial/Temptations (use the Small Groups by Lifeway app)**

### **Video Teaching Notes:**

As believers, we'll face trials and temptations that test our faith in and dependence on God. But enduring adversity ultimately brings joy.

Trials will come, but count it all J\_\_\_\_\_ because God is good.

\*James says "When" they come, not "if they will come..."

How can we find Joy in trials?

### **AW Tozer Quote:**

*Here are two kinds of ground: fallow ground and ground that has been broken up by the plow. The fallow field is smug, contented, protected from the shock of the plow and the agitation of the harrow. Such a field, as it lies year after year, becomes a familiar landmark to the crow and the blue jay. Had it intelligence, it might take a lot of satisfaction in its reputation: it has stability; nature has adopted it; it can be counted upon to remain always the same, while the fields around it change from brown to green and back to brown again. Safe and undisturbed, it sprawls lazily in the sunshine, the picture of sleepy contentment. But it is paying a terrible price for its tranquility; never does it feel the motions of mounting life, nor see the wonders of bursting seed, nor the beauty of ripening grain. Fruit it can never know, because it is afraid of the plow and the harrow.*

### **How Do We View Trials as Believers in Christ?**

1. Trials are a P\_\_\_\_\_ to maturity. (v. 1:3-4)
2. Trials help me be consciously aware of my need for God.  
Learning by failing (see the AW Tozer quote above)

**Two Fights:** the D\_\_\_\_\_ fight and the C\_\_\_\_\_ fight. (see v. 1:9-12)

(See the Instagram study on comparison one's mentality leading to depression)

God honors the fight you have.

**Two Prayers** in This Text (v. 1:6-8)

1. Grant me W\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Increase my faith. (Kill my doubts).

\*See Matthew 17:20 (Mustard seed of Faith & moving mountains with faith).

& Mark 9:20-24: "Help my unbelief."

One of the greatest anchors for your soul in the trials that come, regardless of the intensity of those trials, is the greater your knowledge of the goodness and grace of God on your life, especially in the world of just common grace, the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm.

God chose you. It was of His own will that He called you to Himself.

Our dark heart says:

- If all goes well, I did it.
- If it goes bad, it's God's fault.

\*\*\***Joy, Pathway, Doubt, Comparison, Wisdom,**

**Scriptures used in today's session:**

- James 1:2-28
- Mark 9:20-24
- Mark 9:25-27
- Matthew 17:20
- Acts 12:1-5
- Job 1:1-2:10
- Hebrews 2:18 & 4:15
- 1 Corinthians 10:13

**Conclusion & Remarks:**

1. In your Bible, circle the word "joy" and put a square around the word "trials."
2. Today we've laid a foundation for the Book of James and addressed the fact that life is difficult—even for Christians. In life, especially when facing trials and temptations, we'll constantly face the same decision: Will we do what God's Word says? That question will present itself in different circumstances, but underneath the surface the central point is the same.

**Notes from Pastor Randall:**

- James 1 reminds us that God is sovereign over our trials.
- A "James 1:3" lifestyle endures because of testing, but requires us to have a God-centered perspective on life.
- We are responsible for our decisions during temptation, but God is faithful for our salvation: He has saved us from our sin and will see us through our sorrows.
- We learn to trust in God's wisdom because we are lacking in comparison to what God knows and what we think we know. (v.5)
- We learn to rely on God's resources, not our own riches. (v.9-11)
- We learn to live for the reward God offers. (v.12)

**My Personal Study:**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**Read James 1:5, 12-13, 17-18.**

- **Why is it vital to have a right understanding of God's character?**
- **Although it may sound overly simple to state that God is good, why is this specific quality a necessary truth to embrace?**
- **What does each verse reveal about God's goodness?**

One of the greatest anchors for your soul in the trials that come, regardless of the intensity of those trials, is the knowledge of the goodness and grace of God in your life. The greater the knowledge of God's goodness and grace, especially in the world of common grace, the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm.

- **How would you describe the difference between trials and temptations?**
- **What is the result of each of these?**

The difference between a trial and a temptation is huge. Trials lead to God's glorification. Temptations look for self-gratification. Trials build strength. Temptations seek weakness. Trials require perseverance. Temptations propose shortcuts. You'll be tempted to doubt God's goodness when you experience various trials.

It's important to distinguish between temptation and sin. Being tempted by something isn't the same thing as sinning. That may sound obvious, but a lot of people carry an oppressive burden of guilt about temptations they face. Even if they never give in to temptation and commit sin, they struggle through life feeling defeated and joyless simply because they're tempted.

God isn't looking down from heaven shaking His head and wagging His finger in disgust at and disapproval of our temptation. Jesus was tempted in every way (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). So temptation itself isn't wrong. Don't beat yourself up. But don't give in or dismiss it as no big deal either. Jesus resisted. And by His Spirit, you can too.

### **Read James 1:2-5.**

- **What promises or benefits did James say result from trials? How do trials provide a pathway to Christian maturity? How do trials make you aware of your need for God?**
- **Matt addressed two major struggles in relation to trials: doubt and comparison. How would you describe the struggle of doubt? The struggle of comparison? How can each of these struggles rob us of joy?**

James reminded his readers that the testing of faith produces steadfastness. The goal of the Christian life is a steadfast pursuit of Christ. So while trials are undoubtedly difficult, we can see the good that comes from them evidenced by a steadfast faith. James also promised that God will give wisdom to those who seek it from Him. One of the reasons that we so often give into temptation is because we are working in our own wisdom rather than seeking the wisdom of God.

### **APPLICATION**

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

- **What trial or temptation are you currently facing that you need God's wisdom for? How will you seek Him in this?**
- **How can you use this passage to encourage someone whom you know is struggling with trials and temptations, or to share your own with another person?**
- **How does the strengthening of our faith through trials and temptations lead us into further obedience to share the gospel with others? Who do you need to pursue in this way this week?**
- **What remaining questions or comments do you have regarding this session's video teaching?**

E-mail Pastor Randall with your questions or comments after today's session: [Randall@gsdurham.com](mailto:Randall@gsdurham.com)

**This Week's Companion Reading: James Session 2 from Lifeway:**

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product-family/james-bible-study>

**Next Week is Session 03: James Hearer/Doer – will be sent Tuesday 06.16.20**

### **PRAYER**

Pray for those currently facing difficult trials and temptations. Thank God that He uses even these hard circumstances of life to grow our faith and draw us to Himself. Pray for joy in the midst of trials because of Jesus.

### **COMMENTARY**

#### **James 1:5-18**

1:5 The world's harsh treatment tempts us to withdraw and refuse to expose our lack of wisdom for fear of being shamed by our peers, but God gives to all generously and without criticizing. Thus he who lacks wisdom should ask God freely.

1:6-8 A person should ask for wisdom in faith without doubting. The basis for confidence here is not just the fact that we exercise faith, but the person in whom we place our faith—God.

1:9-11 James offered two illustrations of people facing trials: the brother of humble circumstances (the poor) and one who is rich. In relation to eternity, neither the poor nor the wealthy have anything to boast about; they are equals before God.

1:12 Blessed reflects the understanding that a person who walks in the paths set by the Lord sees his plight in terms of the eschatological hope that awaits him. Set within this context, his current troubles seem fleeting.

1:13-18 The term trial (v. 13) connects this group of verses to the preceding section (vv. 2-12). God's relationship to temptation is made clear by two kinds of statements. On the one hand, there are assertions that clarify what God is not or does not do: God is not tempted... and He Himself doesn't tempt. On the other hand, there are assertions as to what things do come from God: every generous act and every perfect gift.

1:13-14 The twofold negative stance (God is not tempted and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone) emphatically denies that God leads people into temptation. The source of temptation is one's own evil desires. "Desires" focuses on the immediacy that carnal desire creates, spurring a person to act, to be drawn away and enticed like a fish is baited to bite a hook and is then pulled from the water.

1:17 Father of lights refers to God (v. 5), who created the lights that rule days and seasons (Gen 1:14-19). No variation or shadow cast by turning alludes to the fact that God's nature is unchanging and that His promises are secure.

1:18 Message of truth refers to the gospel, by which new birth comes. Firstfruits refers to the best that the harvest produces. God gives good gifts that yield wondrous fruit, not temptation that leads to death through wayward desires.