

James

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF JAMES

UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 2 - *JAMES 1:12-18*

LEADER NOTES

There are two paths of life that every individual must decide to walk: the path that leads to death or the path that leads to life. This theme is repeated throughout the biblical narrative. Harships are not the only difficulty we face. We also know the struggle of temptation, but all must choose which path they will take.

Please continue to complete the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).

You can find other sermons from our Teaching Pastor's [HERE](#).



COMMUNITY

OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.

START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT EVERYONE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

OPENING QUESTIONS:

WHAT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT SEASON OR CIRCUMSTANCE THAT YOU HAVE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED WHERE YOUR FAITH WAS TESTED? HOW DID IT CHALLENGE YOUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD?

SCRIPTURE

TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.

THE POINT

EVERY PERSON MUST DETERMINE THE PATH THEY WILL WALK.

James 1:12-18

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.[d] 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.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), James 1:12-18.

STUDY NOTES

This week we're continuing our study in the book of James. Again, James challenges how we handle trials and temptations. The temptation to sin has been present since the fall of man, when Eve gave in to Satan's temptation in the garden. However, some of James's readers were blaming God for the temptations they experienced. James stated emphatically that believers are responsible for any pulls to evil their trials bring. Temptations to evil don't arise from God. No pull to evil can touch Him because He has no vulnerability. The morally perfect God who is, at heart, a loving Father doesn't use temptations to evil to test His people.

James places the responsibility for temptations on the individual. Temptations arise from within the person but in themselves don't constitute sin. Entertaining temptation, however, can set in motion a tragic process. First, the person is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. Then, joining one's will with evil desire produces sin, and full-blown, unrepented sin leads to spiritual death.

Path of Death

The path of death is depicted as a journey filled with temptation and deception. It begins with desire, which, when conceived, gives birth to sin. Sin, once fully grown, leads to death. James warns against being misled by the allure of temptation. Sin lies to us. It promises good but never delivers. Instead of good, sin destroys the very things God created for us to enjoy. It lures us by lying to us, creating broken relationships with others and of course, with God. Our sinful nature gives in to our own selfish desires. This process leads us down a path that isn't honoring to God. Oftentimes, the temptations that lead to sin create a slow fade away from the God who loves us and into a self-centered life filled with worldly desires, which ultimately leads to death.

Path of Life

To the contrary, the path of life is one that endures trials, resists temptation, and is dependent on God. Those who chose to endure and trust in the Lord will be rewarded with the crown of life promised by God. While walking with God we will be tempted in the deceptive nature of desires. James provides hope by reminding believers that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights. James highlights the importance of recognizing and embracing God's gifts, rather than being swayed by fleeting desires that lead us astray. During difficulties,

God is good. His faithfulness is unwavering. His grace is abundant. In essence, James depicts life as a battleground between perseverance and temptation, urging readers to remain steadfast in their faith, trusting in God's provision and rejecting the allure of sin.

For more resources for this week's sermon and curriculum, click [HERE](#).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Spend a few minutes discussing temptation and its reality in our world. Consider questions such as: Is being tempted a sin? Does everyone experience temptations to the same things and in the same ways? Explain your answers.*
- *If temptations promise good but never deliver, why do we so often say yes to them?*
- *Why do you think people try to blame God for the temptations they face, as James's readers evidently were doing?*
- *According to James in 1:13-15, who is the real culprit we're to blame for our sins?*
- *When we can endure the trials, what does James say God promises? What does the "crown of life" mean?*
- *Why do you think some people choose to be deceived by sin and allow it to lead their life on the path of death?*
- *What are some specific ways you've seen God's power at work in your life when you've faced temptations? What role did prayer play in those situations?*
- *What would you say are 3 important ways to help the believer endure temptation and trials?*

COMMISSION

AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.

- ***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?***
- ***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? A PHONE CALL OR TEXT? NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT?***