

James

Chapter One

The writer is James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem Council. The circumstances that the early Christians faced were daunting. They were constant persecution from the ungodly, false teaching and heresy abounded, and there was much confusion over Christian behavior amidst the world. A form of corrupt Christianity was finding its way into the church which stated that behavior didn't matter and worldly pleasures could be sought after without any threat of divine punishment. James writes to his recipients to emphasize the necessity of genuine Christianity, faith, works & deeds, wealth, and suffering.

FAITH COMES BY HEARING: Read Chapter One

SUMMARY: Verses 1-27

1. Persecutions and trials were to be considered as joyful. This is difficult to imagine because it is hard to fathom anyone could find joy amidst any trial.
2. Joy doesn't come from the trial but what you know about God during the trial. KNOWING THIS....First, trials are not against you, but against your faith. It's a trial of faith. So trials don't come from God. God is not trying to take your faith. God is the giver of faith.
3. Trials come via: The will of Satan, the will of others inflicted upon you, your own will and consequences, and being part of a fallen and corrupt worldly system.
4. Trials should produce endurance in you. Never give up. Faith will never throw in the towel.
5. Trials against your faith are trying to produce a DIVIDED LOYALTY. Double Minded: divided loyalty, having 2 opinions. To be double minded is to vacillate back and forth between "God CAN" and "Maybe God won't"
6. When you have divided loyalty it robs God of the power to do anything in your life.
7. Divided loyalty makes you unstable.
8. Trials face us all regardless of social or economic status. We are all at our core, humans. No human status exempts you from trials or temptations that come your way.
9. God wants us to endure the temptations that come to pull us away from His wisdom. James states that if we ever LACK WISDOM we can ask God. But every trial, every temptation, is to pull you away and make you doubt and second guess God's wisdom. God will never tempt you to evil, nor will He ever tempt you to NOT follow His own wisdom.
10. Temptation is not a sin. Temptation is the pull on our fleshly lusts to make us choose our own wisdom over God's wisdom. This leaning on our own lusts and wisdom gives birth to sin which ultimately produces death in us.
11. God's wisdom will come as we listen. Human emotions and responses never accomplish God's wisdom. God's wisdom is found in His Word - the perfect law of liberty. By hearing and doing we find freedom from sin.
12. Pure religion must have an impact on your whole life - mouth, actions, and care for others.

REFLECTION

1. How could James consider trials that come against us as an opportunity for joy?
2. Many times we know more about our trial and than we do about our faith. Why is it so easy to research the problem and focus on the trial rather than research the Word and focus on our faith?
3. Explain the phrase DIVIDED LOYALTY and why this is so detrimental to successful Christian living.
4. The real goal of any trial or temptation to evil is to pull you away from God's wisdom. How would you define the wisdom of God to someone who is going through a trial of their faith?

APPLICATION

1. Take time to research the Bible in any trial you are facing. Don't focus on the problem Focus on the promise.
2. How can you make certain to conquer the temptation of DIVIDED LOYALTY?
3. At every trial that comes your way, before you become emotional, seek the wisdom of God in the matter.

