

**James 1:12-22**

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures. *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

This text can be simply outlined as:

- **1:12-25** How we actually come to the stage in life that we welcome, find joy and are open to trials in our lives.
- **1:12-13** The reward in our lives if we accept trials in our lives
- **1:14-15** The consequences if we do not accept trials in our lives.
- **1:16-20** How we come to have the wisdom and learn to accept trials.
  - **1:17** Tells us that this wisdom and process comes from God
    - **1:18** This wisdom comes from the Word of God
      - **1:19** We must be quick to hear it and slow to speak over it
      - **1:10 – 25** Tells us that doing what the word says and that will give us the wisdom to prepare for trials.

This text tells us how we can prepare now, to welcome and find joy in the trials that will come in our lives. The reason we seek to strive or “consider” (**James 1:2**) how we approach, deal and accept trials as joyous – is that we know the person who endures, or goes through the trial, with an understanding of joy; because the outcome is the Christian who loves God.

Ultimately, we see that a “Christian” plus Trials will equal a Mature Christian (Note: no quotes); whereas, a “Christian” without (or less) trials will equal a “Christian” (Note: the quotes). You see, without trials, we can only “say” we are a Christian, we can’t prove we are a Christian. Sure, we can do “good works” and perhaps always give – but how do we know what you will be like when you are persecuted, or tested? If you go to college, and never have an exam or midterm – how can you be sure you know the subject matter you are “learning”? You do not know and the one who is not tested, no one knows if he or she is a Christian.

So far in this commentary we read how we need to react to trials, now we are going to read the consequences of our actions (Fulfilling **verse 1-11**). Yet, this leaves out a key point. What do we do with the rest of our lives? What do we do with the time between our trials? Do we just ignore God and His word or wisdom? What would it look like if you only came to God when there was a trial in your life? (It would probably look like prime time television). Do you believe that if you only come to God and ask Him for help when you need it that God would want to grow you or promote you a higher level of maturity as a Christian?

Let me give you an example. Let us take your job. What would happen if every time you worked at your best (100%) or came into work on time and stayed late was *only* around review time? Do you think your boss would promote you, perhaps give you a large pay increase or give you extra vacation time? Would that look like you only “suck up” when you want something? I bet it would, in fact, if that is your style – I would say that is mocking your boss. You only “do what you were hired to do” (By your associate handbook – i.e. your work’s “bible”) when you want a promotion or higher pay.

How about another scenario, let us say that every decision you make you *had* to run it by your boss. Do you think your boss would want to promote you (i.e. give you more responsibility, or give you more of your company’s money)? Of course they wouldn’t, they would realize that you aren’t ready to “move up” to the next stage and they will instinctually hold you back until you begin to make “your own decisions”.

The mature Christian wants to grow up, they want to take on their own responsibility, they want to do their best all the time – not just “when it counts”. The mature Christian does not want to become stagnant, they want to be more like Jesus – everyday. They get fired up (Say fired up) when they get to learn, develop and grow into the image of Jesus Christ.

This text will show us this exact point. This is pretty innovative isn’t it? Go to church, read your bible and do what it says? How “ground breaking” is that?!

This chapter we are going to walk through the text here line by line.

### **Verse 12**

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

We have touched this verse multiple times so far. To recap, this is the man who perseveres under trial, the one who endures the trial. This text says they will be blessed because, only those who love God will be blessed; therefore, it proves you love God if you endure and persevere through a trial. You get a “Grade A” stamp of approval. This reminds of “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory”, where Veruca Salt wants a golden egg. Willy Wonka just finished saying how when a goose lays a golden egg it rolls down onto a weighing station and if it is a bad egg it will fall into the incinerator, if it is a good egg the oompa loompa’s will pick it up and take it to the shops. Well, if you remember the movie, Veruca jumps up on the platform – at the end of her solo – and the weighing station says “Bad Egg” and she is tossed into the incinerator. This is the same concept, for those “Christians” who are a bad egg, they will not get the stamp of approval and they will be tossed into the incinerator (i.e. hell) to be burned forever.

Moreover, this text tells us we will receive the crown of life (**1 Corinthians 9:25**; **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**; **2 Timothy 4:7-8**; and **Revelation 2:10**) and this is part of the blessing that proves we love God. Ultimately this is the result of the Christian who goes through, not around, but through the trials with joy; because they know they will prove they love Jesus even when it hurts.

### Verse 13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

Here is the verse that James begins to expound on what happens when we do not endure nor ask for wisdom in a trial. Just as **verse 12** was the answer for those who follow the word of God (i.e. asking for wisdom to endure the trial), **verse 13** tells us what happens when we do not follow the word of God – we immediately look for someone to blame and look to God, saying it must be “His fault” because “had He not put the trial in my life, I would have not sinned”. This is fallen logic. Do you remember the history of Adam and Eve (**Genesis 1 – 3**). They were created innocent and they walked with God in the Garden of Eden (i.e. perfection). God gave them guidelines to live by; He told them they can eat anything except from one particular tree. Then Satan came in and enticed them, they ate from that tree and because they did not do what they were originally created to do (not eat from that tree) they disobeyed God (sinned). Was that God’s fault? No, it was their own lusts. In fact, Genesis 3:6 tells us that when Eve saw the tree she saw it was good for food (lust of the flesh), a delight to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and it was desirable to make her wise (boastful pride of life) - she was taken by her own desires, her own inner cravings and rather than trust, believe and obey God she gave into her own choices.

Satan did the same thing too. He was created for a purpose; that was, to Glorify God. Satan was an anointed Cherub (**Ezekiel 18:14**) and the scriptures tell us that God was most frequently written to be enthroned on the Cherubim or to travel with the Cherubim as His chariot (**Exodus 25:17-22; Psalm 18:10; Ezekiel 10:1-22**). Moreover, Satan wanted something more than what God created him for (**Isaiah 14:11-15; Ezekiel 29:1-19**); where Satan wanted to be glorified as God is. This is *his own lust* carrying him away (sin).

We see this today all the time. We see this especially in marriages, where the woman is like a dripping faucet (**Proverbs 19:13; 27:15**) and she drives her husband insane with her nagging. The man then decides to drink his problems away, rather than be a Godly leader as God created man to be. Then he begins to run out of beer faster and has to go out to get more. This leads to just going to the bar and getting tanked out of his mind. Ultimately, we have a professional drunk driver who then one day gets into a car accident and kills someone in an oncoming car. Now, the question is – “Who killed the person in the oncoming car?” Was it the wife, who if she didn’t nag her husband, he wouldn’t drink and if he didn’t drink he wouldn’t drive drunk and kill that person or was it him – who made his own choices and ignored his responsibility as a man. The answer is, it is the husband’s fault. No one put a bottle to his mouth and told him to drink. He did that out of his own will, because he’d rather drink than be a real man. This type of man is a coward, weak, frail man – who is demonic and embarrassing to all men who live.

That is what leads us to the next verse:

#### **Verse 14 - 15**

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

As you read, this verse tells us exactly what the Eve, Satan and the drunk husband were all guilty of – being enticed by their own desire. See, when our desire is not God’s, then it is sin. The whole reason a person does not endure a trial but seeks to get out of it is sin. Remember, God placed the trial in your life to make you more like Jesus; therefore, to not want to go through with what God put in your life is *not* God’s desire but your own. This comes from a fallen sinful mind. Why on would God save you, make you holy and then tempt you to sin and try to make you break His commands? The answer: He wouldn’t. It just doesn’t make sense. God wants you to be sanctified and holy – so when He puts a trial in your life it is to make you fall on your knees and realize you need Him; so, He can deepen your relationship with Jesus and make you like His Son. If you do not want that, then you are in sin. You are

either moving toward Jesus (progressive sanctification) or moving away from Jesus (progressive sinfulness).

This is a good time to recap chapter 1.

- James 1:2-4 Count trials as joy, because you are fired up about the outcome or result of enduring the trial; becoming more like Jesus.
- James 1:5-6 If you can't do the previous, then you need to ask God for wisdom to endure the trial to so you can fulfill the Will of God – to become more like Jesus.
- James 1:7-11 If you do not do the previous verses you will prove that you do not love Jesus nor do you have a focus to be more like Jesus and the eternal life; rather, you love your sin and the limited/short term life, but want the benefits of Jesus without the sweat. The person who quits the trial or runs away is in sin, because they do not want become more like Jesus.

Let us look at this example:

<u>Governing Body:</u>	<u>A Budget</u>
Positive:	Income
<u>Negative:</u>	<u>Spending/Expenses</u>
End Result:	Savings

What you see on the left side in the top cell is a “Governing Body”; meaning, the authority over how you reach your “End Result”. For instance, in order to have savings, you need to have a budget – now depending on who you are, your budget can be very detailed or very simplistic. Either way, it is still a thought out plan to manage your money.

Then you will see a “Positive” row – this is the row of addition into your “Governing Body”. For instance, if you want the “End Result” of “Savings”, you need “Income”.

Followed by a “Negative” row – this is the row of subtraction into your “Governing Body”. For instance, you cannot have the “End Result” of “Savings”, if you keep subtracting from your “Income”. Let us call that “subtraction”, “Spending” or “Expenses”.

Finally, we have our “End Result” – this is the row of your achievement or result of your “Budget”. Therefore, if you have no “Savings” then you either a.) did not have any “Income” (Positives) or b.) had too much “Spending/Expenses” (Negatives); therefore, you prove you did not have the budget in place

nor did you follow it – otherwise, if you did have a budget and followed it you would have savings. The more you follow your “Budget” the more “Savings” you will have.

<u>Governing Body:</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
Positive:	Spiritual Disciplines
Negative:	Sin
<u>End Result:</u>	<u>Mature Christian</u>

The same goes for our Christian lives. If our “Governing Body” is Jesus, then the result of that “Governing Body” will be (Not *might or should*) will be a “Mature Christian”. Otherwise, you will prove you never had the “Governing Body” of “Jesus” to guide your “Positives” and “Negatives”. You see, as a Christian you will love and desire to follow the Spiritual Disciplines. Maybe you don’t do all of them, but you will do what you can do. One of those Spiritual Disciplines is “The Word”. How much of the Word do you take in? Do you read it? Do you meditate on it? Do you memorize it? Do you study it? As you do more of the Spiritual Disciplines, you will be training your mind and heart to weed out the sin in your life. Naturally, if you input more Spiritual Discipline, you will take out the sin in your life – which leads to Spiritual Maturity. The opposite is true to, the more you sin, the less Spiritual Disciplines you input – this leads to Spiritual Immaturity and this is you being carried away by your own lusts.

Now, this is not a “perfect” example – but I think you get the point. The Mature Christian desires, longs and attempts to weed out sin by drawing near to Jesus through Spiritual Disciplines. (That includes, but is not limited to, church, reading your Bible, fellowship, celebration, fasting, worship etc.)

### **Verse 16**

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

This is just one of those verses that just say “Hello, McFly” to me. It is so honest and straight forward. Do not be deceived by thinking you love God when you truly do not love God. Perhaps, you believe you do love God, so here is a list of questions to prove you love him:

- How do you react when God intervenes in your life?
- What does your Christian life look like when the rubber hits the road? When it really matters in a bind?
- Do you thank God for the trials in your life and seek Him for guidance and wisdom so you can prove you love Him?
- Do you curse God or blame Him for your own shortcomings?

Those are some simple questions, we all want to answer “The Biblical Way”; however, let us be honest, because God knows the answers – but do you? Do not be deceived, as James says.

### Verse 17

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Here this verse tells us that what comes from God is perfect, full of light and not darkness. Meaning that what you see is what you get – there is no “catch”. God gives trials to grow you not to tempt you to sin. God does not vary in His purposes to grow you, His “Yes” is “Yes” and His “No” is “No”. Jesus taught this in **Mathew 5:37** and James speaks on it again in **James 5:12**.

### Verse 18

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Here is the meat and potatoes of chapter 1. In my opinion all of chapter 1 hinges on this verse. Because, from the very beginning of the Epistle of James, we see James calling us to believe God’s word in all He says and does. Here if we believe God and follow His word (To count trials as joyous and/or ask for wisdom to endure the trial as joyous – so we prove we love God) then that will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness.

One of the greatest things about this verse is that it is God who gave us the word (i.e. The Bible) and it is God who gives us the trials to apply the word (i.e. The Bible). The term “In the exercise of His Will” is a term that means to “*will deliberately, have a purpose, be minded or intend*”. God deliberately had a purpose to intend to bring us forth by His word. This is pretty awesome, because we have a God who thinks before He speaks. (A lot of us could learn that) God uses His word to call us.

This makes me think of the Emmys. When someone is nominated, they are tested against other nominees by their money they brought in, their impact of their role and their ability to act. Then when the Emmys is on television, the results of the tests are in and someone is called out as the winner of that Emmy. Then that winner comes forth by the announcement, proving they are a winner. In our lives, we are called and when we receive and respond to the call of His word, we come forward to receive the blessing (**James 1:12**) because we proved we love God by enduring and persevering through the testing/trial.

James tells us the importance of His word. Because His word prepares us beforehand for trials, it creates a foundation of security in our lives; so, when a trial or hardship comes into our lives we will understand its purpose to grow and mold us. To be constantly focused on His word, soaking it in, meditating on it, praying about it, and studying it – we are preparing for the future and strengthening our faith in the one who wants to give us wisdom and make us like Jesus.

### Verse 19-20

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Here James is telling us that we already should know that the word is what we need to be in. We know we should read our Bibles, we know we should study our Bibles to strengthen our faith, but the problem is that some of us are slow to listen and quick to speak.

You see, when we don't listen to the word, but are readily waiting to jump at every opportunity to speak about the word, we run into problems. First, if we never listen to God speak (I am including church attendance, Bible studies and reading your Bible as "listening to God"), then on what grounds or authority do we have to speak on? You know, I had someone one time get mad at me and tell me what I was teaching was wrong, because I taught that **Colossians 3:5** was speaking about pre-marital sex. **Colossians 3:5** states: "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." Very clearly you see, the "members" of your earthly body as dead (not living) to immorality, impurity, passion...which amounts to idolatry. Those terms are "sexual" terms. I later came to find out the reason that person was so quick to jump at me, they were having pre-marital sex. If they would just listen to the scripture, they would know; however they were slow to hear and quick to speak. That guy was very mad at me and was very angry at me (I could tell because I could see his face – and later people told me what he said about me). That, right there, is the rest of **verses 19** and **20**; they tell us the result of speaking quick and not listening is anger. The reason the result of not listening to God and being quick to speak up, is anger; because, they do not want to confront their sin because they are evil and no nothing of God and His holiness. They hear something they do not want to hear, so they argue. The mature Christian, will hear a brother out and will not rise to anger quickly, because the opposite does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Since then, that guy never came back to my class and is unwilling to discuss.

You know, I read in Nehemiah 8, it tells of the wall being rebuilt in Jerusalem and when it was complete, the people demanded the priest, Ezra, to “bring out the book” and they began to chant for it. Then they stood and desperately desired to listen to the word for approximately five hours. Where are those people? Where are the people who want to hear the word preached for five hours? Is that you? Does that sound boring or like hell to you? If so, guess what *that* is what heaven is going to be about, loving Jesus, praying, singing, worshipping God. If that does not sound awesome to you – then, you need to check yourself, before you wreck yourself. Do not be deceived, earnestly seek to hear the word of God.

This is exactly what was going to with these Jews that were spread abroad. They were “Christians”, but didn’t want to work for it anymore. Perhaps, they were “Freed” from following the legalistic guidelines of the Law that they became hyper liberals and decided that the grace of God did not need a response to do the Will of the Father. Whatever the reason was, they abandoned the faithfulness to God in a trial, blaming Him for their sin – then they stopped listening to the word and began to think they were the teachers, and when they were shut down they would get angry and cause divisions.

That is why James says in **Verses 21** and **22**

#### **Verse 21-22**

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

The one who puts aside, literally takes off, lays aside all sin and filling those “holes” with the living breathing word of God, is the one who is grown from the inside and will bear peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Here James is calling out the people who call themselves “Christian” and summarizes Chapter 1 of the Epistle of James very clearly; you either stop doing sin and start doing the word or stop calling yourself a “Christian”.

How about yourself – do you do what the Bible tells you to do?

For further application, I encourage you to do the **James 1:12-22** On T.A.P. study guide attached.

**THEOLOGY****James 1:12-22 - NASB**

- The results of a trial are revealing. Either a.) you prove you love God or b.) you prove you hate God.
- If we are not drawn, dependant or dedicated to Jesus it will show in our response to the trials in our lives, and how we will blame God for putting them in our lives.
- However, this is wrong because God does not put a trial in your life to make you sin, but to make you more like Jesus.
- It is your choice to run from that purpose, and the opposite of becoming like Jesus is to be become unlike Jesus (i.e. remain sinful, unclean, unrighteous, evil)
- God intends to call forth His troops by His word and His Word is what we trust and desire to know.
- Therefore, we seek out every opportunity to hear His word (i.e. read the Bible)
- Finally, if we are doing this (counting trials as joy, asking God for wisdom in tough times, seeking His word) we will prove that we love Jesus by doing what the Bible says.

**APPLICATION**

- Think of a trial (can someone recently went through and write out the outcomes if a.) the person endured it with faith and b.) Ran away, gave up or side stepped the trial. What are the differences? What did they prove about themselves?
- How about yourself? Do you see an area in your life that you need to change?
- Look at the last week of your life. How much “Jesus” did you put into your bank account and how much spending did you take out. Honestly examine yourself asking “Am I dedicated to the Spiritual Disciplines”? (i.e. Reading/Studying, Memorizing, Meditating on the Bible, Fasting, Praying, Celebrating/Fellowship, Confession, Service, Submission, Purity, Sacrifice etc)
- Do you have a sense of how much God invests in your life?
- What can you do this week to seek to know God more?

**PRAYER**

Take a moment and pray:

1. Adore God for His investment in you.
2. Confess any shortcomings you discovered in this study and His Word that proves it.
3. Thank God for His time in your life and how we can come to know Him more through Spiritual Disciplines.
4. Supplicate (Ask) God to give you grace to walk worthy of your calling and be more like Jesus. Ask God to bestow this grace on all other Young Adult Ministries in NWI.