

“The Testing of Our Faith”

James – Doing Church Right #1

INTRODUCTION

In this sermon series we will investigate the book of James. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest Epistle written. This book was written by James, the brother of Jesus, to the Jewish believers (the “twelve tribes scattered abroad”). In this book’s five chapters we find out how real, personal faith should be demonstrated. This week our focus is on the purpose of trials and temptations.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Are there any tests you’ve had to repeat several times before you “got it right”? (e.g. driver’s test, SAT...)

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Is Our Personal Faith Real?

Q1. Read James 2:18-20

In his epistle, James helps us examine our faith with new eyes. Most of us have heard his statement that “Faith without works is dead.” In this epistle, James shows us five different ways that our real faith is demonstrated. Let’s start this study with a quick self-assessment in those areas.

On a scale of 1 (not so good) to 10 (doing great) how well is your faith being expressed in each of these areas?

How You Face Trials & Temptations.	1 _____	10
The Way You Treat People.	1 _____	10
What You Say.	1 _____	10
How You Deal with Sin in Your Life.	1 _____	10
Your Prayer Life.	1 _____	10

Which one of these would you most like to see change?

Our Faith is Tested in Our Trials.

Q2. Read 1 Peter 4:12-13, James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5, Isaiah 43:2

When we are tested by trials we may learn new things about ourselves. One of the first things revealed is our attitude. What

attitudes are we encouraged to have when facing trials? (see 1 Peter 4:12-13, James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5) Few of us find these attitudes to be our first response, but what are the benefits of trials that we *can* rejoice in, according to James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5? What promise in Isaiah 43:2 helps us to endure the pain of trials?

Our Faith is Tested in Our Temptations.

Q3. Read James 1:13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 37:4

James says we are tempted when we are “lured” by our own evil desires (James 1:14). A lure draws us out of a place of safety, to a place of danger. What are some of the things that commonly “lure” us toward sin? You may have experienced the tug of that lure, but what do we know God is faithful to provide? (1 Corinthians 10:13). When we delight ourselves in the Lord, the desires of our heart will be for Him, not for evil. What are some of the ways you and your group can enhance taking delight in God? (You can start by sharing with each other some of the things about God that bring you delight.)

Wrap-Up

God really can bring great good out of difficult and seemingly hopeless situations. It is through those times of testing that we learn more about ourselves, and allow ourselves to be changed when needed. God may allow painful trials to produce endurance, character and hope in us. But it is our own evil desires that tempt us to sin. Nevertheless God is faithful to provide us a way of escape, if only we will choose to look for it and seize it before we “take the bait.”

Memory Verse

... God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13b ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: _____

Challenge: The next time you feel yourself being tempted to sin, don’t linger in that place of danger. Stop immediately and ask God to show you the way of escape, because He has promised to provide it.

James 2:18-20 NKJV - 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

1 Peter 4:12-13 ESV - 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Romans 5:3-5 ESV - 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

James 1:13-15 ESV - 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.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV - 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be

Psalm 37:4 ESV - 4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Prayers Con't: _____

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