



Bigger Than Us

James 1:12-18

[1] The Blessing of Endurance [12]

Trial → The Crown of Life

[2] The Truth about Temptation [13-16]

Driven by Our Own Sinful Desires

[3] The Ultimate Influence [17-18]

[a] Argument: The concept of God's goodness rules out the possibility that he would send an influence as destructive as temptation. [EBC]

[b] Father of Lights: points to God as the creator and sovereign ruler [consistency]

[c] Firstfruits: James uses this term to refer to the 1st-century believers — whose faithfulness would be the start of an unimaginable number of people coming to Christ.

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

Matthew 13:55 Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?

John 7:5 For not even his brothers believed in him.

Acts 15:13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me . . .

Galatians 2:9 . . . when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds [Matthew 5:12],³ for you know that the testing of your faith [1 Peter 1:7] produces steadfastness. [Romans 5:3, James 5:11, Hebrews 10:36]⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete [1 Thessalonians 5:23], lacking in nothing.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast [endures] under trial [James 5:11, 1 Peter 3:14], for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life [1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 5:4], which God has promised to those who love him.

James 1:13-16 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, [Psalm 7:14] and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. [Romans 5:12, 6:23]¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

James 1:17-18¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above [John 3:27], coming down from the Father of lights [1 John 1:5], with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.¹⁸ Of his own will [John 1:12-13] he brought us forth by the word of truth [1 Peter 1:3,23], that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. [Ephesians 1:11-12]

Study Questions

[1] Read James 1:12. What is the significance of remaining steadfast under trial, as mentioned in this verse?

[2] Read James 1:18 and Ephesians 1:11-12. What is the meaning of the term "firstfruits" used by James in this verse and clarified by Paul in Ephesians? How do you think this motivated the 1st century believers to remain steadfast?

[3] How does James' teaching on trials, steadfastness, and temptation apply to our lives as believers today?

[4] Read James 1:17-18. Make a list of the biggest blessings you've received in the past year. Pray through that list, thanking God for each "good and perfect gift". [LCSB]