

# TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

## LESSON 1: JAMES ON BUSINESS

### CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe is the production manager of the company and a good friend and right-hand man of the owner, Manny. In the last few months when Joe and Manny do their usual lunch and exchange notes on this week's sermon from church Manny has been very stressed about the current situation with his business. Joe has been able to meet every production demand from their biggest and oldest client every month and does an excellent job but now things have changed. Their client has undergone a major shift in leadership and while the production expectations remain the same the contracting and payments for services has really gone south. Now Manny has major issues with cash flow as there is not even enough in the bank account to make Friday payroll! He confides these things and more with his dear friend about their client that holds over 50% of their work. Now Joe is getting a little nervous as well and really doesn't know how to console Manny.

- Q. What Godly advice would you give Joe to be able to console Manny?
- Q. What do you think Joe could do to help in this situation?
- Q. How much should Manny share with Joe?

### JAMES 1:1-18

*<sup>1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. <sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup>But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup>Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

*<sup>9</sup>Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. <sup>10</sup>But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wildflower. <sup>11</sup>For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.*

*<sup>12</sup>Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

<sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

<sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

- Q.** If we are to find joy in our trials, how is joy different from happiness?
- Q.** James moves from teaching about trials, perseverance and prayer to a discussion about temptation. What is the connection there?
- Q.** What is *the crown of life* for those who stand the test and persevere under trial? Is it only a reward we receive in heaven, or is there also a reward here on earth?

James encourages believers to consider trials as opportunities for growth and endurance. He doesn't say it will be fun, but there's an eternal reward for those who persevere with unwavering faith. It's tempting, however, to try to get past the hardship by relying on our own resources apart from God. That, or we pray for help but don't really trust God to intervene. Both reveal a lack of faith.

God may allow trials for any number of reasons, but they should always remind us that we are not in control! He created us for relationship and wants us to seek Him, follow Him and depend on Him. The poor will generally understand dependence easier than the rich because they're unable to provide everything for themselves. With that same mind of trust and dependency, God wants us to seek Him for wisdom, trust His goodness, and wait on Him.

Which of those 3 is hardest for you? How can you turn that into a prayer?

## WHO IS JAMES?

*This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! James 1:1 NLT*

Most scholars believe James was written by Jesus brother James, who became the leader (bishop) of the church in Jerusalem. Matthew’s Gospel records - *He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, “Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?” Then they scoffed, “He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?” And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.” Matthew 13:54-57 NLT*

James was transformed after the resurrection. Can you relate to James with a transformed life?