



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Teaching Title: Winning the Real Battle

Key Scripture: James 1:12–18

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Hebrews 2:15; 4:15–16; 12:1–2

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 10

Wednesday: Galatians 5

Thursday: Matthew 4:1–11

Friday: Genesis 39

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Fighting Temptation

MEMORY VERSE:

Galatians 5:16 NLT

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

We are in week 2 of our teaching series called *James: Faith that Works*. In his letter to the churches scattered throughout the Roman Empire in the 1st century, James gives instructions about common challenges they would face as Christians. This is James' most essential advice, or wisdom, rooted in the teachings of Jesus. In James 1:12–18, he addresses the topic of temptation. Temptation is a normal part of the Christian life. It's not a sin to be tempted, nor is it a sign of weakness or failure. Everyone, even Jesus, faces temptation! But acting on the temptations that arise from our own desires is what leads to sin. Overcoming temptation is possible—not by our own strength or willpower, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, run to Him, and flee from sin. It's not a matter of willpower—it's a matter of God's power.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What treat or food is most tempting for you?

1. Read James 1:12–18 together as a group. James begins with a "Beatitude" (similar to those in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5). How does James distinguish between God's testing and the temptation that comes from within? (See Digging Deeper)
2. Why might someone believe that God is the source of temptation?
3. According to James 1:14–15, what are steps that lead from temptation to sin?
4. What does James 1:17–18 reveal about God's character? (See Digging Deeper)
5. Read Matthew 4:1–11. What can we learn from how Jesus responded to temptation?
6. Read Galatians 5:16–17. Why are we tempted to sin, and how can we overcome it?
7. What specific steps can we take to resist sin when we're tempted? How can we support one another in this?

Digging Deeper

Question #1:

James patterns his letter after Jewish Wisdom literature as well as the teachings of Jesus. Below is a table revealing the connections to Jesus' teachings.

N.T. Wright and Michael Bird, *New Testament in its World*; Zondervan: Downers Grove, 2019. Page 742

Subject	James	Gospels
Joy in the midst of trials	James 1:2	Mt. 5:10–12 Lk. 6:22–23
The importance of perfection	James 1:4	Mt. 5:48
God's generosity	James 1:5	Mt. 7:7 Lk. 11:9–11
Faith and doubt	James 1:6	Mt. 7:7–9 Lk. 11:9–11
One who persevered will be saved	James 1:12	Mt. 10:22; 24:13
The danger of anger	James 1:20	Mt. 5:22
The importance of doing/obeying the word	James 1:22–25	Mt. 7:24–27 Lk. 6:46–49
Blessed are the poor	James 2:5	Mt. 5:3, 5 Lk. 6:20
Love-command	James 2:8	Mk. 12:38–44 Mt. 22:39–40
Keeping the whole law	James 2:10	Mt. 5:19
Do not murder	James 2:11; 5:6	Mt. 5:21–30
The importance of mercy	James 2:13	Mt. 5:7
Friendship with God	James 2:23	Mt. 6:24 Lk. 16:13
Blessed are the peacemakers	James 3:18	Mt. 5:9
Blessed are the pure in heart	James 4:8	Mt. 5:8
God exalts the humble	James 4:10	Mt. 23:12 Lk. 14:11; 18:14
Refusal to judge others	James 4:11–12	Mt. 7:1–5 Lk. 6:37–38, 41–42
Rich must weep and mourn	James 5:1	Lk. 6:24–25
Against hoarding of riches	James 5:2–3	Mt. 6:19–21 Lk. 12:33–34
The dangers of riches	James 5:4–6	Mt. 6:24–25 Lk. 12:33–34
Coming of the Lord who is at the door	James 5:8–9	Mt. 24:33
Patience of the prophets in suffering	James 5:10	Mt. 5:12 Lk. 6:23
Avoid taking oaths	James 5:12	Mt. 5:33–37
Restoring a straying brother or sister	James 5:19–20	Mt. 18:15 Lk. 17:3

Question #4:

“James stresses the great truth that every gift that God sends is good...What he is stressing is the unchangeableness of God. To do this, he uses two astronomical terms. The word he uses for changeableness is *parallage*, and the word for the turn of the shadow is *trope*. Both these words have to do with the variation which the heavenly bodies show, the variation in the length of the day and of the night, the apparent variation in the course of the sun, the phases of waxing and waning, the different brilliance at different times of the stars and the planets. Variability is characteristic of all created things. God is the creator of the lights of heaven – the sun, the moon, the stars... The lights change but he who created them never changes...by the sending of the gospel it is God's purpose that man should be reborn into a new life... That rebirth is a rebirth into the family and the possession of God. In the ancient world it was the law that all first-fruits were sacred to God. They were offered in grateful sacrifice to God because they belonged to him. So, when we are reborn by the true word of the gospel, we become the property of God, even as the first-fruits of the harvest did.”

—William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*. Westminster: Philadelphia, 1976. Page 54.