

MEDITATIONS

TESTED

(James 1:1-27)

DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings.

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

1. Do we ever associate trials with joy? How can trials produce joy?

2. What is wisdom? How do we get it?

3. What does it mean to be double-minded? How does that relate to asking for wisdom?

DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁹The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. ¹⁰But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

1. What kind of pride should the poor (those in humble circumstances) have? How do they have a high position?

2. How do the rich have a low position?

3. Is this the way we usually think of rich and poor?

DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and

enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

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

1. *Why is it important that God does not tempt us?*
2. *How is sin a process? How does it help us to understand that process?*
3. *Why is it important that the Father does not change? How does this help us when we are tempted?*

DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁹My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worth-

less. ²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

1. *Why are most of us quicker to speak than to listen? What can we do about it? How does this tendency relate to anger?*
2. *What is the point of the mirror illustration?*
3. *Are caring for the needy and not being polluted by the world related? How?*

DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:

1. *How are we tested by life in the following areas: Difficulties? Money? Speech? Caring for the needy?*
2. *When do we particularly need wisdom? How can we get it?*
3. *How does God plant his word in us? How does that word save us?*

MEDITATION ON JAMES 1:1-27

As a student, I hated tests. Having taught for almost thirty years, I've given hundreds of tests.

Am I a hypocrite? I hate tests but I give them. Am I mean to my students? If I care for them, should I plague them with tests?

I test because I care. I test because I want them to learn.

That's the difference between a test and a temptation. God

tests our faith because he wants us to learn and grow. Satan tempts us through our own desires because he wants us to fail. God never tempts. He only gives good gifts. He is consistent in his giving.

So the same trial can be a test or a temptation. A test if we pass. A temptation if we fail. But how do we overcome temptation?

Through wisdom. Wisdom is being skilled at living life. Such wisdom is not merely natural but is a gift from God. A gift he gives to us if we only ask.

God's gift of wisdom can keep us from the lure of wealth. It can cause us to open our ears and close our mouths. It creates true religion where we care for those in need and stand against the ways of the world.

Boy, how we need wisdom. All we need to do is ask.

"Father, in full assurance we ask for your wisdom today. Keep us from divided hearts and minds. May we trust fully in your goodness."