

# James 1:9-18

## Commentary: A Larger Perspective Needed (James 1:9-11)

James had been urging his readers to adopt God's outlook on their trials (v2-4), the secret to which lay in seeking His perspective (wisdom) on their trials (v5-8). James sought to broaden their perspective in regard to the trials some faced materialistically (v9-11). He encourages believers that are materially poor (humble circumstances) to derive joy (glory) by focusing their thoughts on their spiritual riches (high position) (v9). Conversely, those that are rich ought to remember that earthly riches are temporary (will pass away), and that one's real condition before God is a very humble one (glory in his humiliation) (v10). Our trials as well as our triumphs on the earth are only temporary. This fact helped James' audience endure the trials they faced and kept others from becoming self-confident in their triumphs; the cross of Calvary is the great leveller of men.

## Instructions:

Carefully read through James 1:9-18 and then attempt to answer the questions which follow.

Some commentators believe the "rich" (v10) James is referring to are unbelievers while others, believe these rich people were believers.

1) What word, used by James, tells us these rich people were indeed believers (v9)?

2) What is the warning James gives to Christians who are looking to their material wealth for security (v10-11)?

## Commentary: Victorious In Temptation (James 1:12-18)

James now turns his attention towards the topic of temptation. These early Jewish believers had been expelled from Israel, facing extreme persecution and the enticement to sin in the pagan nations where they were living. James desired his readers to know how they may be victorious in their trials and victorious over temptations. Using fishing terminology, James outlines the four stages of temptation: enticement, entrapment, endorsement and enslavement (v14-15). The believer that victoriously endures these trials/temptations are awarded the crown of life (v12).

Read how Dr David Jeremiah explains the theme of temptation in v12-18:

*'Whereas trials are to be counted as a reason for joy, temptations are to be renounced and abandon in the believer's life. Interestingly, in the original Greek, the*

*word translated as trials and temptations used in James 1 is the same. Only the context reveals whether the word should refer to outward troubles or inward enticements. The one word denotes two very different meanings. While trials and temptations are different, they do have some things in common. Without proper preparation in either case, the believer can be defeated. In other words, if we go into trials with no knowledge of what is going on (based on Scripture), we can be overcome by our trials and get so discouraged that we given up on God. Likewise, if we enter into life with no preparation for the temptations that we will face, we will quickly fall prey to the snare of sin. Nothing tests the integrity of our faith like our response to temptation.*

In the athletic events of the day, a wreath crown was given to the one who endured the trials and won the completion.

3) How does James say a believer wins the “crown of life” (v12)?

4) What does James say about the source of temptation (v13)?

The phrase “carried away and enticed” (v14) pictures a fisherman or hunter luring his prey from its safe retreat. The enemy uses various kinds of bait to lure the unsuspecting into his traps.

5) What does this tell us about the nature of temptation?

6) What does this tells us about the conflict that occurs between our old nature (the sin nature) and new nature (Holy Spirit in us)?

Refer to Paul’s own struggles in Romans 7:15-20

7) How can we overcome our old nature?

**Hint the answers can be found in:** James 1:16, James 4:7-8, Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16 and Psalm 119:9-11.

8) What does James say about the damage that temptation can cause (v15)?

James has been clear about the source of temptation and the devastating effects it brings to the life of a believer. He now contrasts those gifts of destruction with God’s good and perfect gifts.

9) How does James describe these gifts (v17)?

The term “first fruits” (v18) refers to the festival of First fruits in which Israel was to dedicate to God the first portion of the earliest crop (Lev 23:9-14). It demonstrated their reliance in God to provide a greater harvest to come.

10) If these persecuted early Jewish believers were “a kind of first fruit” (v18), what was the guarantee to come?

### Something a little extra for your enjoyment

There are five crowns mentioned in the Bible that are to be given to believers by Jesus at the Bema (pronounced vema) seat of Christ as rewards for faithful service.

11) Complete the “Reason” column on the page below

<b>Believers' Crowns</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Reference</b>
An imperishable crown		1 Cor. 9:25
A crown of rejoicing		1 Thess. 2:19
A crown of righteousness		2 Tim. 4:8
A crown of life		James 1:12; Rev. 2:10
A crown of glory		1 Pet. 5:4