

Reflection Guide - James 1:12-18

HEAT: What circumstances are God's trial for your right now?

□“TRIALS AROUND US CAN PROMPT ALL MANNER OF TEMPTATIONS WITHIN US”

□God will allow trials / tests into your life...that the genuineness of your faith may be refined through them and you may grow through them...wisdom from God to interpret them rightly and respond rightly...but don't ever fall prey to the lie that God allows trials into your life to destroy you. □He will never tempt you to sin. □

[13] 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. □

James understands that temptation is an expected reality... “when”, not “if” □Some of you are particularly sensitive and the presence of temptation in your heart causes you great concern...you will be tempted / sometimes it will feel more intense than others...don't be surprised...but you need to understand it! (Jesus faced it) □Who's responsible for it? □Our reflexive response is to not take responsibility. □James highlights our tendency to actually blame our temptation to sin on God. □(after all, isn't he sovereign over all things?) □

If we can't pin the blame on God, we blame someone / something else:

“If my spouse was more present, I wouldn't be so easily irritated”

“I my roommates, coworkers were easier to get along with they wouldn't bring out the worst in me”

“If my boss wasn't so demanding I wouldn't have to lie.”

“If my parents would have...”

“If my pastors were more...” then I wouldn't be so angry, bitter, □“God This is b/c of what you allowed into my life.” □[

Rather:□[14] But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. □

- Our own desires are the cause of our temptations. □
- The trial may be the occasion for your temptation and sin...but it is not the cause

THORNS: What sinful ways are responding to this circumstance?

[responses will vary]

BAD ROOT: What heart issue lies at the root of these sinful responses? What new HEAT is created by our sinful response? What about God are we failing to believe in our THORN responses? What are we showing is our “overdesire”?

● The test was just the occasion to see what was in there... □Vs. 14:15 uses this word Desire = epithumia = overdesire...disordered desire...disordered love □

● Usually good things we love but in a disordered way...we tend to set our hope and affection upon them □

● Smith “ what makes us who we are is what we love...our identity is shaped by what we ultimately love or love as ultimate...what at the end of the day gives us a sense of purpose, understanding, orientation to our being in the world.” □Anything that becomes a way towards identity, meaning, above and beyond God...that's a disordered love □

● In the OT sin is not just rule breaking but spiritual adultery (HOSEA) □

● we're enticed away by other lovers □(healthy body = driven by image; friends = suck life destroy it) □James using hunting / fishing as an illustration: □These disordered loves lure you...like bait covering a hook...and entice you. We set our own hook! Hunter and prey!

● every time I say something that I should not say, every time I do something that I should not do, every act of impatience, or lust, or greed, or vengeance, or anger, all of those reveal what's happening in my heart □

● I would rather win an argument than have unity and peace. I'd rather indulge my appetites than live in a healthy, godly way. I would rather fill my life with way more material possessions than I actually need than to live my life in pursuit of the work of God's Kingdom. ☐he changes illustrations and moves to birth::☐

¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death..☐

We think sometimes that if we just indulge the sin the desire will go away...what a deadly mistake!☐Sin when indulged will grow and take a life of its own. ☐

- One that will ultimately destroy you...l ittle shop of horrors ☐
- You'll find yourself doing things you never thought imaginable. ☐[

CROSS: How is God or his grace displayed in the text?

16] Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ☐

Nature of temptation and sin...or about who God is...we bit the hook of temptation b/c we have believed a lie about the temptation and/or about God ☐Knowing how easily you and I give in to our over-desires. James doesn't want to leave us ☐without HOPE! How could we possibly escape the lure of our own desires? The trials of our own temptations? ☐

While God is not the source of our temptations, He is the source of our triumph over our temptations:

☐[17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ☐

Every good and perfect thing that we need, to interpret and remain steadfast, is coming to us graciously from a loving dad whose generosity is inexhaustible.

☐“Every” = all that we could possibly need...no end to it...holds nothing back☐“Good / perfect” = as though it gets better (sin starts small and grows)

- gives us exactly what we need...word implies “ reaches its mark” , “ matches it’s objective” ☐
- Our need is the objective, a heart that loves Him, and His gift meets it perfectly and endlessly...through the Work of His Son and His Spirit (new affection) ☐In this giving...God is changeless. ..we will not ever come to HIm in our need and find that now he’s unwilling to help or unavailable...He is DEPENDABLE ☐

“He never changes his position; he never alters either the fact or the intensity of his outshining goodness.” Spurgeon

James reminds us then of 1 particularly good thing that our Father has freely given us that that when believed daily, will cultivate a deeper love for HIm in our heart and a grace driven steadfastness and response in trial...a “no” to temptation: (Expulsive Power)☐

[18] Of his own will, having made His decision, he brought us forth by the word of truth,

- Used 4 times in NT...2 other times it’s defined as “the gospel” ☐
- Ephesians 1:13 says, “ You also heard the word of truth, that is, the Gospel of your ☐salvation.” The word of truth is the Gospel of your salvation. ☐
- Colossians 1:5 says, “ On account of the hope laid up for us in heaven, which you heard ☐about in advance by the word of truth, the Gospel.” ☐

God has given us new life...new birth...by the Word of the Gospel...the Word about His Son who is “The Word” and “the Truth”! (John)

GOOD ROOT: What should I believe about God because of the cross? What could I desire now MORE than before? How does Christ enable me to obey his commands? How is Jesus the solution / motivation for transformation and action?

God set His affection on your to change your heart...His son was sacrificed...He was tempted...twice ...do I follow through or take the easy way...he interpreted in light of God's eternal purposes (i.e. wisdom)

He went to the cross....he faced temptation and did not give in for us...he died in our place for our sins..when you see that you will begin to see Him as glorious. (new affection) that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

● We're His, our lives are His...He considers us the crown of creation...He'll keep His promises to "keep us", "hold us fast" and complete the work that He has begun. □

● When we fail we are reminded to turn to Him for mercy...as we remain steadfast in love, we know we'll receive the crown of life. □Reminded We will ultimately triumph over temptations...God is the source of our triumph. The Gospel that saves us, brings new birth and keeps us and renews us also assures us that b/c of the work of Christ for us...we do not have to live in limbo as to whether or not we will ultimately remain steadfast and receive the promise of eternal life.□Communion:□The Good news about the Son of God who stood steadfast in trial...who stood the test for us...who earned the crown of life for us.□He wore the crown of thorns so that we could wear the crown of life... □You triumph over temptation, remain steadfast, b/c U love Him b/c he first loved you. □You were purchased by the blood of the one who perfect for you. □

● He resisted to the point of sweating blood...his heart was failing...that you would be brought home to God. □

● have you resisted to the point of death...he did for you...that will cultivate in you the love, joy to remain steadfast.□James calls us back to faith in and love for the One who stood steadfast for you. □

FRUIT: What would the expected fruit of the gospel be in this situation? What does obedience look like for you personally? Does it speak of this in the text? Where else in the Scriptures is this?

How will I respond differently because of the cross and a reordering of my affections?