

'Living the Christian life'

Study One: An introduction to the letter of James.

1. Do you think being a brother of Jesus might have made it easier or harder for James to become a 'servant of the Lord Jesus Christ' (v1) why?
2. What do you think James is saying by addressing his letter to the '12 tribes scattered among the nations'?
3. Read 1:1-18. Why do you think some people think the letter of James is more like a sermon than a letter? Do you agree with them?

We shall now look at a passage that will not be directly covered in our series on James.

James 1:13-18 (re-read the passage if you wish)

4. Can Christians be described as those who have 'evil desires' (v4)?
5. Give examples of temptations/evil desires that could be said to
a) 'entice us' and those that b) 'drag us away.'
6. Do you think it is a sin to be tempted? If yes, why? If no, why?
7. What do you think verse 15 means? Can you describe a situation that illustrates this process in action?
8. Read Luke 4:1-13 What are some of the different strategies the Devil uses here to tempt Jesus to sin?
9. How did Jesus keep himself from succumbing to temptation?
10. Is there a difference between being tempted by the Devil and being tempted by our 'own evil desires'? If so, what is the difference?
11. In the past some Christians have lived reclusive, solitary or monastic lives in order to avoid temptations. Do you think this is a good idea? If yes, why? If no, why not?
12. What can we do to keep ourselves from 'falling to temptation' and sinning?

Read Jude 24 -25

The letter of James:

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Study Two: 'Perseverance Leads to Maturity' James 1:2-5

1. In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 Jesus speaks of those who are 'blessed'. The Good News Bible translates 'blessed' as 'happy'. Do you think that is a good translation?

2. What is the difference between joy and happiness?

Read James 1:2-5

3. Share a 'trial'/time of hardship you have experienced in life. Do you believe God used that time to help you to grow in your faith and mature? If so, how?

Read Hebrews 5:7-10

4. We read of Jesus' prayer being heard but was it answered? If so, how?

5. What does this passage tell us about the role suffering played in the life of Jesus?

6. If God uses trials and suffering as tools to help us reach maturity in Christ does that mean it is wrong to pray for a miracle to instantly help/rescue us? If yes, why? If no, why?

Read Romans 5:1-5

7. Do you think Paul is saying the same thing as James? Are there differences?

8. James and Paul call us to persevere with faith in the face of trials and suffering. Suggest some reasons why we can be confident that our faith in God is not misplaced or in vain?

Read Hebrews 4: 14-16 and 11:39 to 12:3

9. What encouragement do you find in these passages to help you to 'have faith' especially in difficult times?

Prayers:

Pray that you may be those who respond to trials with faith.

Praise God that he will use difficult times in life to strengthen our faith and help us to grow and mature.

Thank God for his promise of a 'crown of life' to all who are faithful.

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4. We read of Jesus' prayer being heard but was it answered? If so, how?
5. What does this passage tell us about the role suffering played in the life of Jesus?
6. If God uses trials and suffering as tools to help us reach maturity in Christ does that mean it is wrong to pray for a miracle to instantly help/rescue us? If yes, why? If no, why?

Read Romans 5:1-5

7. Do you think Paul is saying the same thing as James? Are there differences?
8. James and Paul call us to persevere with faith in the face of trials and suffering. Suggest some reasons why we can be confident that our faith in God is not misplaced or in vain?

Read Hebrews 4: 14-16 and 11:39 to 12:3

9. What encouragement do you find in these passages to help you to 'have faith' especially in difficult times?

Prayers:

Pray that you may be those who respond to trials with faith.

Praise God that he will use difficult times in life to strengthen our faith and help us to grow and mature.

Thank God for his promise of a 'crown of life' to all who are faithful.