



Life Group Questions

Tests, Trials, Temptation, Desire, and God

James 1:13-18

January 15, 2017

The thing that makes men and rivers crooked is following the line of least resistance. - Henry David Thoreau.

ICEBREAKER

Food. What is your favorite dish or dessert? Why? Of all foods, which is most difficult for you to resist? Why? Is that desire evil? When if ever does it become so? Do you think God will ever take that desire away or change your taste? How do you manage that desire? What helps you to resist it?

REVIEW—"Count it all Joy"

- In James 1:1-12, please describe how it is possible that we can "Count it all Joy."
- What does "Count it all Joy" mean?
- How are we counting joy?
- Can you recall the process that God takes us through that leads to completion and joy?
- How does the world tell us to interpret the nature of God when difficult things come our way?
- How does Biblical wisdom tell us to interpret the nature of God when difficult things come our way (James 1:17)?
- How do I get more wisdom? What is the purpose of wisdom in this context (James 1)?

DESIRE

- Where do our desires come from?
- Are they all the same or are some good and some bad?
- How would I know the difference?
- Should we seek to eliminate them or enhance them?
- What subtle desires that dwell in me may inadvertently lead to distancing one's self from God?
- How should I deal with them?

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TESTS, TRIALS, TEMPTATION

- Is there a difference between Tests, Trials, and Temptation?
- If so, what is it?
- What's the source of each?
- Does my response change depending on whether it is a Test, Trial, or Temptation?
- If so, how?

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Temptation

- What makes temptation effective?
- Please compare and contrast Joseph (Gen 39:1-23) and David (2 Samuel 11:1-27).
- How did each treat their temptation? Which way worked? Why?
- What were the key moments for each one?
- How did Jesus respond to temptation? (Matthew 4; Mark 1)

Tests

- How did Abraham handle the test that God sent his way? (Genesis 22)
- From start to finish, how did Jesus handle his testing in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46)?
 - *Let no man think himself to be holy because he is not tempted, for the holiest and highest in life have the most temptations. How much higher the hill is, so much is the wind there greater; so, how much higher the life is, so much the stronger is the temptation of the enemy.* - John Wycliffe¹

APPLICATIONS

- How can we help one another pass the test?
- How can we help one another fight temptation?
- How can we help one another endure trials? (Hebrews 2:18)
- Who do you know that in your view most successfully resists temptation in his/her life?
- How do they do it?
- Have you ever considered asking them?

PRAYER

Please take some time to pray that God will give you wisdom to successfully pass the test, endure the trial, and overcome evil with God (i.e., not yield to temptation).

- James 1:5-6 (ESV) - ⁵*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*
⁶*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*

FOOTNOTE:

¹Galaxie Software, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations (Biblical Studies Press, 2002).