

# James 1:13-18

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Date: 09 November 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are going to continue our James study together. We'll study chapter 1. We're in James chapter 1. So if you have your Bibles or your device or whatever,! James chapter 1 is where we're at.

And let me pray before we get started. Heavenly Father, I pray that you would give us insight into what James has written in this letter. Lord, I pray that you would teach us through these words and through these verses.

Lord, may my preparation and study and the things that you showed me translate. I pray that I can explain that in a careful way that honors you.

In Jesus' name, amen. So the heading here in the ESV is testing of your faith, starting with verse 2. My section is starting with verse 13.

And so let's start reading there. But we will reference this whole section of Scripture because it really all works together. So let's start with verse 13.

[ 1 : 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. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it's fully grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

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.

Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. I want to start with a, something that happened to me this, about a week ago, a little over a week ago.

And, well, I guess it was last, maybe like Wednesday, something like that. Anyway, and I went to Lowe's and what I needed, so I had bought a week ago Wednesday, I bought a garage door opener.

[ 2 : 36 ] And I thought that maybe we, as a group of men, knowledgeable, very astute men, that we would put this in at the, at our house.

We moved recently and, and I thought they were going to help me do this. We took a look at it and Judah sort of poured, poured it out, Judah Powers did, onto the ground and we looked at all the pieces and we said, no, I don't think we're going to do this.

And, so, I went to Lowe's and they, the guy, I talked to the guy, he says, yes, we can do this for you. We can install it for you.

But what we have to do, this is in the back of the store. He said, what we have to do is we have to refund you your money from this unit and then you have to buy it again and then we can sign up for the installation.

So, I said, well, that's kind of weird but let's do this. let's go for it. So, we, he takes a picture of the UPC symbol of the unit that I bought and we go to the front of the store and go and, to the counter where you get help there where you do returns and there was standing, I, I, Patsy, Patsy, head cashier is what it said.

[ 3 : 57 ] That may or may not be her name just for protection. Patsy was, so, she, so he gave her the information of what we needed to do which was return this, charge me again for a new one and then sign up the deal.

Well, Patsy said, okay, put your, she entered the information, she said, put your card into the slot that you used. So, I put it in, she said, nope, you didn't use that card.

Well, I know I used that card. Absolutely. And she said, do you have another card? And I said, well, yeah, I have another card but I'm pretty sure I used that card. So, I put in the other card and she said, nope, you didn't use that card either and I'm like, I don't have any other cards.

Let's see, it was one of those two and I'm pretty sure it was that first one. And she said, nope, nope, that wasn't it. So, how about, I said, well, can you look it up on my phone number? I've seen other things from my phone number.

So, she says, okay. So, she puts in my phone number and I'm sure it's going to show up, you know, that my purchase will show up so we can refund it. She says, nope, it's not here. And I said, I've seen this list because I was in doing a return just like a few days earlier.

[ 5 : 08 ] I've seen this and I said, I was here. I was here last, no, you weren't. She says, I think maybe you need to contact your bank. I said, contact my bank. I was here.

I know I was like, you're telling me something that I know I did, you know. Well, finally, it, of course, got straightened out and they found my receipt and those kind of things.

But, I want to use this simple trial and I'm going to refer back to it but there is a simple format here that I want to use as we discuss trials and faith.

Basically, what happens is there is an issue. The issue is whatever befalls us, it could be a diagnosis, it could be a death in the family, it could be parenting, it could be talking to Patsy at accounting.

Whatever the issue is, that's how this begins. That's how a trial starts. Then, the second thing is our response. What do we do? How do we deal with that trial?

[ 6 : 14 ] How do we think about it? What is our answer to the issue? Sometimes, it's a very quick answer and we come right back with whatever it is that we decide to do when the issue befalls us.

Sometimes, our answer actually goes over years of time depending on what the trial is. The third thing, so there's the issue, our response, and then an outcome.

How does it end? What's the result? What happens as a result of this trial that has befallen us?

Now, the issue, we really don't have much control over that, do we?

In life, things happen. It comes at us in every different way. Our response, do we have control over our response? We do. We have control from the very depths of our heart what kind of response we will present.

The third thing, the outcome. Who has control of the outcome? The Lord does. The Lord's the one that has control over that. If we seek Him and honor Him, aren't there many promises that He'll take care of us?

[ 7 : 33 ] That in whatever trial it is, He will walk with us in vain. So the outcome is up to the Lord.

The first thing I want to talk about is James' encouragement.

And if we look at this whole passage, it all ties together. And at the end, I want to really sort of, I was telling Adam, it's like a trash bag when you have the two little things and you pull it tight and it all comes tight.

That's what each of these paragraphs is sort of like. It all comes together and I'll explain as we go.

But James gives encouragement in verse 2. He says, count it all joy.

Adam shared a bit of a poem two weeks ago and one of the things that hit me a bit out of that was joy because of trials are evidence of God's love.

Like trials. Trials are an evidence of God's love. Why? This testing produces steadfastness.

Hebrews 12, 11, Adam brought out.

[ 8 : 38 ] For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Steadfastness is endurance, fruitful harvest, patience, ability to bear up under difficulty. That's what we want to grow in.

Trials are going to come in all manner. And so we can count it joy because God's doing something in it and we know that.

So we can stand on that initial principle. Steadfast also in wisdom and perspective. If you look at the second paragraph there, verse 5, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God.

How do you get through trials? With wisdom. From his wisdom. Not our own. We're not going to come up with the answers. We're not going to know how to navigate the trials of life.

[ 9 : 45 ] God does. The wisdom that he gives keeps us steadfast in that. And the third thing is the perspective. Look at verse 9.

What's he talking about there? The flower, the grass will pass away for the sun rises, scorching heat and withers the grass. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. So now there's perspective. So we get these encouragements in the trial that count it joy because God's working. There is wisdom to be given. And there's a perspective. The trial, our lives are short and the trial is even shorter. It's shorter than our life. that one, that last part of that. So the rich, so the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Right in the middle of the things that he's planning. Right in the middle of all the plans, all the things that he thinks he's going to do. [10:52] Gone. It's over. It's good perspective. Verse 12. This, this whole segment, James kind of talking to us and he reminds again in verse 12, blessed of the man who remains steadfast under trial.

Under trial. The heading of this whole section in my text, ESV, is testing of your faith and I really couldn't think of a better sermon title than testing of our faith. trial. The trial does that. Well, one thing draws us away in particular from steadfast faith and that's sin.

Sin is part of our potential response to the trial. That can be part of the mix and quite often in some way, shape, or form, it is part of the mix.

Temptation is the pull to respond out of self. So, if we go back to verse 12, blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

[12:07] Let no one say when he's tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

In my example, which again, I want to refer back to, I was tempted to be snarky with Patsy, I will admit. I wanted to give her my thoughts and let her know how she was wrong.

I was tempted to get mad at her for accusing me of things that didn't make sense, right? Like literally telling me I was not there.

I was there. I know I was there. But for a second, I was like, I don't know. Maybe I know. Yes, no, I know I was there. But immediately that trial starts to bring it up and the temptations start to fly. way. And there's you ever see, I was thinking of a movie, Christmas story.

[13:20] You know how Ralphie, he goes back into his mind and like he sort of starts to space off and sees this whole thing transpire and then say, Ralphie, Ralphie, you know, and he comes back to where he was.

That's kind of what we do in a moment's notice there. We start to travel through all of the options that we can carry out.

So when the trial or the issue is presented, immediately your mind starts going through all the things that you can do and discarding the things that really wouldn't be good.

Because those come up too. All of these things. The heart, who brought it up this morning already, the heart is desperately wicked, right? And so these things are going to come up in our dealings with other people.

Well, plenty of those things came up. Let's look at the progression. 13 through 15 gives us a progression that starts with actually 14.

[14:26] But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed. So first is the lured and enticed by our own desire.

desire. It's important that we get the pieces of this correct to see the etymology of sin, where all this comes from. Desire is a person's passions or wants.

The things that we think that we need or that we must have in whatever capacity. This desire is already on board. It's in our flesh.

we were born with it. We were born with a desire to serve ourselves in some way. 1 John chapter 2 verses 15 through 17 says, Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life is not from the Father, but it's from the world.

[15:37] And the world is passing away with its desires. There's our perspective again. It's all like the grass. It gets burned up. It's passing away. But whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Great perspective again with this thought. Desire in this context of selfishness is not from the Father. We're not talking about like spiritual from the spirit sort of desires. We're talking about desire that's from us, that starts from within. And these desires are passing away. And for now, they lure and entice.

Lure is being drawn out of a right place. And in my example, being out of place is some of the things that I started thinking about.

Being out of my rightful place, I'm a customer, you know, coming up. Being out of my rightful place, I started to think of things like I want to put Patsy in her place.

[16:48] Maybe even deeper, I want to make Patsy realize that she is wrong. I want this, you know, that's inside. And maybe even a little Patsy should apologize and be a good employee.

Head cashier is what her card said. How is this, you know. But these things roll through my mind. And I discard them. I must discard these desires, right?

Because I think about the easy outcomes of some of that, and it's no good. It's no good. Walking in the Spirit, we walk in a right place, and we're not lured out of where we should be.

When we walk with the Spirit, we're with Him, and the luring is getting away from that right place of where we should be in the Spirit.

Desire will lure us out of that place. Entice is the second one. Lured and enticed. And these are very similar words. Even when you dig into them, they're very similar.

[18:01] But entice is a little different. It's being baited. There's a bait there. And desire sees something that it wants or that it wants to deal with.

And it's easy. This is why I use this example. God was gracious to give me this example with Betsy. But in my example, the way that she accused me.

Have you ever been accused of something that you didn't do? And you know you didn't do it? That's sort of a button, isn't it? When someone pushes on that button, it sort of gets you dander going. And it did me. Looking over her glasses at me, you know, like I had no awareness of my comings and goings.

You know, like these are things that it was bait to me. Maybe you guys are a lot better than me, but it was bait. I wanted to get angry with this.

[19:03] Well, in all two common scenarios, the bait looks different. We even use a term, clickbait, right? What is that?

It's something, I think I'm going to get something that I want, something that my heart is desiring for some reason. And so I click on it to go there.

Pictures, stories, they all call to that desire in our heart that cannot, cannot, must not be answered in that way.

Well, these desires, they are in me. Outside influences, temptations, engaging with these evil desires that are already there.

To stop this progression, I have to recognize my desires. I have to confess them. Now, here's where we have to be particular with words because temptation and the desires themselves, the things that flash in front of my mind are not necessarily sin.

[20:15] Temptation in and of itself is outside of me. It's not sin. And so, nonetheless, when I realize, standing there, that I want to get angry, I need to confess that right away.

Lord, I don't want to get angry. I don't want this to happen. I'm sorry for wanting to go down that track in the first place and confess that, even just how I'm feeling in that moment.

Maybe haven't even got to that place yet. But, before it actually gets conceived, I want to deal with it. It looks like just a prayer of thankfulness.

Lord, I'm sorry for wanting to click on that picture, but thank you for your grace and your strength to resist the devil in this moment. Stand on faith that has been tested and has produced steadfastness in Christ.

In those moments, that's what we do. We've already walked that walk, and we've seen steadfastness grow. Stand in that faith. Second in the progression, look at verse 15.

[21:27] So, we're lured and enticed by our own desire, then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. Unchecked desire, combined with opportunity, conceives sin.

So, I wrestled with this so that we have a picture here. We have an illustration of conception, birth, growth, and death. So, it's sort of a life cycle, isn't it?

And so, I thought, well, I camped here for a while on the conception part. Well, generally, we have two things that work together to conceive.

Well, what are we talking about here? And we have the desire on board, and when that desire meets an opportunity, then sin is conceived.

Then we have unchecked, unrebuked desire makes a way for opportunity. And we find it, and we see it, and it presents, and it's part of the bait.

[ 22 : 34 ] And these things come together, and then that's when we sin. Unrebuked desire. When we don't arrest it, when we don't confess it, when we don't turn to God, when it shows up, then it is unrebuked, and then it runs rampant, and then it does what it wants to do.

And the more it grows, the more we say within, how can I find a way to exercise this desire? How can I make an opportunity?

I need the opportunity with that desire for sin to conceive. Proverbs 110 says, My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

And a little later on, verse 16, he says, for their feet run to evil. They plan, they find, they make that opportunity to carry out what they want to do, and that can be our structure as well.

They're quick to find and run to evil, the mind that is left to itself, the debased mind, that I look around this room and I know your testimonies and I've heard of your testimonies, and we're believers, confess that we believe and trust in Christ, but there are people, Romans 1 talks about, that God gives them over to this debased mind, this mind that only pursues its desires and nothing else.

[ 24 : 10 ] And we know from the next part of verse 15, where does it lead? To death. It leads to death. Eternal death. death. So we must put to death both sides of this equation that conceives sin.

Deal swiftly with desire and say it out loud. Tell somebody else. Share it on the box line. Talk to another believer.

Avoid opportunity and sacrifice the wicked plans. Let me give you an example. On lots of occasions in life, we find that maybe we need to be more careful with the budget.

And what is generally the first thing to go, one of the first things, there's maybe many, but one thing that goes first a lot of times is eating out. And because that just takes a lot of money, and if you're watching the budget, that's kind of the thing that needs to go.

Because it's an easy fix. So what happens, though, at 630 in the evening, when everyone's looking at each other and nothing's taken out of the freezer, and you're thinking about the chips and salsa at the Mexican place, you know, all of a sudden, now we're going to eat out.

[ 25 : 38 ] Well, was that planned? Did we maybe forget to take the such and such out of the freezer so we could have dinner tonight? Did we maybe make a little opportunity there to break our budget?

Probably, right? Because we're smart and we do these things and we're smarter than our own good, probably, truth be told, a lot of times. But that's just a simple example, but it plays out in all kinds of scenarios.

When our desire wants to draw us into sinful thoughts, sinful actions, we'll find a way a lot of times. Think about areas and scenarios like gossip, lust, anger, unforgiveness, selfishness, conceit.

These are all ways that if we want to do these things, we'll find a way. We'll find a way. We'll get upset with somebody. We'll be too sensitive over something or other.

And we'll find a way. When desire rules, opportunities are found and sin follows. So the third thing in the progression is sin grows.

[ 26 : 58 ] So it's conceived, it's born, and then it grows. And when it becomes fully grown, it leads to death. But sin begins by being, quote, born in this illustration.

And so in other words, it's young. It's fresh, if you will. And at that time, it's easy to see against the backdrop of a righteous life.

So if you're just moving through life and then all of a sudden desires or temptation and you give in, when that doesn't normally exist, it's easy to see.

If I put a giant purple spot on this, is this grayish? On this grayish wall, it's easy to see because it stands out. If I've got 50 purple spots, all of a sudden that first one doesn't stand out so much anymore.

when it's young, don't let it go any further. Confess, repent. That's when it should be put to death, right then, because we know the outcome.

[ 28 : 12 ] God tells us the outcome is death. Otherwise, sin as it grows gets more invasive and it's evil. Allowing it to grow, there's a few things that if we're going to allow the sin to grow, which is a bad thing.

We don't want to do that, but when we do, the first thing that we do is we protect it. So the desire and opportunity says, this is what I want.

I'm not going to change my mind. I'm going to keep seeking this particular sin. So the first thing I do is I protect it. And I don't let anybody else in. I don't let anyone tell me it's wrong.

I don't let the very words of God tell me it's wrong. I'm going to protect that sin and just keep putting layers over it as time goes to where it just tends to get deeper and deeper and more a part of who I am.

The second thing, if you're going to, if this sin grows, you have to feed it. And the feeding is continuing to go back.

[ 29 : 29 ] Like you think about long-term unforgiveness maybe. When you have trouble forgiving somebody. Every time they do something that you don't like or the way they say something, it just feeds that unforgiveness and allows that sin to exist and go further and further.

the third thing for believers is a self-deception. A self-deception that somehow is okay and somehow I'm right.

And there's a deception that can take scripture and distort it into saying this is right. I stand in a right place.

That person's wrong. I'm right and I technically deceive myself into thinking this. Like a tree, it sets in roots and grows.

And if it's not confessed and repented, it will just continue to get bigger and the roots deeper. Sin earns death.

[ 30 : 42 ] Romans 6 23, the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Death, eternal destruction is at the end of a life of sin.

Well, desire tells us a few lies. There's a few lies that that desire that's within us tells us. Number one, it tells us that what I want is good.

that desire inside says what I want is good. And from my standpoint, it says this would be beneficial to me.

Whatever that might be. In my example, standing there with Patsy, I said in some of these scenarios, right, I said something in my mind like I don't want to feel disregarded and disrespected. Well, now, that's a common thing, right? But that should not drive a desire to be mean to Patsy or not compassionate to Patsy.

[ 32 : 02 ] It's a lie. Second thing, I should have what I want. What I want is good, and I should have what I want.

And my flesh thinks it should get what it wants. And that's the point at which maybe you steamroll people or you make decisions you shouldn't make because I should have what I want.

And you hear the selfishness in that. You hear the selfishness in that sort of desire lie. In my example, Patsy should not act this way.

I'm important. I should get what I want. And Patsy should comply with my reality. She's trying to tell me something, but she should go with me. She should comply with me.

That's what I want. A third lie is it is right that I get what I want. It is right. I have justified my desire.

[ 33 : 04 ] Somehow, in those times, I twist truth into accommodating my own sense of justice. In other words, I take God's spot and I say, I'm going to decide what's right here.

I'm going to disregard what God says, how I should react to Patsy, and I'm going to say Patsy should pay for what she's done here.

Somehow, right? Maybe I talked to her manager. I don't know. Patsy should pay. It sounds crazy, but come on. This is how we think, isn't it?

My own sense of justice. It's right that I get what I want. Fourth lie is God is being good to me when I get what I want.

Now, that's really twisted because it leads into all kinds of troubles, like a phrase like, I'm blessed when I get what my desire says it needs.

[ 34 : 07 ] That is so twisted and distorted. In my desire, my example, desire may say, I should not have been spoken to by Patsy that way, and if I set her right, maybe she'll be a better employee down the line.

Isn't that righteous of me? Isn't that good? I'm bringing about God's plan. No, I'm not. In that example, I would have just twisted God's word for my own use.

And then I've defined good, and it's not God's definition of good because it came from me. And I am not the giver of gifts.

I am not the good, gracious giver of gifts. Look at verse 16. Look at the first words. He says, do not be deceived. Do not be deceived.

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.

[ 35 : 17 ] Do not be deceived about what? About the fact that God gives good gifts. That the fact that I'm standing there with Patsy, sorting this in my mind, this trial, this issue is actually a good gift from God.

And I, at this moment, get to exercise faith as I deal with this individual. And I get to exercise God's truth in compassion and love and mercy for this woman who doesn't understand her software.

her. Right? She's struggling with it. I can give her space there. And that's a good gift. That's a good gift that God gave me in that small trial, in that moment.

James reminds his dispersion readers that good and perfect gifts are from our Father. And remember, he doesn't tempt us and cannot be tempted by evil.

So, he doesn't give any bad gifts. How do you tell when you're leaning on your own idea of a good gift?

[ 36 : 37 ] Well, is your idea of a good gift, is it scriptural? Do others agree that it's scriptural? Does the spirit agree?

this is the wicket you have to run that through. Trials give us these opportunities.

And I think that's one of the things that as you escalate the trial, it's harder to believe that. It's harder because as the trial escalates, as the difficulty in life escalates, it's the same, God's saying, the same thing to us here.

That there is an issue, that there is a response, and there is an outcome. Will we trust him in it? Will we find joy in it? Will we trust that even the difficult ones, the most difficult ones you can think of, can be a gift from God that he uses in our life?

Count it all joy when you meet trials? Because God gives those good gifts. Well, this is not just a moment like standing there with Patsy.

[ 38 : 06 ] It's not just a moment in a string of bad things. sometimes we kind of look at one issue after another and think, man, it's just like a bad day or a bad week or things are doing just giving me all kinds of trouble.

But this is really a heavenly father giving loving tests of sorts. And without these type of things, how do we grow?

Without these trials, without the things that press us into having to make decisions to honor the Lord, how do we grow? As partners, we intentionally bring about these moments in a way.

We speak to one another. Open hearts, open home, open schedule, right? Well, when we do that, we're automatically opening ourselves up to the potential of what might be a trial because of what somebody says.

But we do that on purpose because we know that good gifts come from that and growth comes from that. Count it all joy in these trials of all kinds.

[ 39 : 23 ] We get into each other's lives, ask the questions, talk about the areas of sin and where desire is trying to get a foothold into our life. And before we give it opportunity, we end it right there.

So do not be deceived. God does not change or vary in his word. He loves us and provides good and perfect gifts to us. And he wants us to exist and bring glory to himself.

That last part there of 18. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth. It was his will. He loves us. He loves us.

He made us a new creation to open our eyes through faith in Christ. Well, let me now cinch this kitchen trash bag together.

Right? And pull these, look at these paragraphs. And just quick bullet points, but think of it in a big idea here that James is saying. He says to this group, trials are upon you.

[ 40 : 29 ] Trials are now upon you, but take joy because God works in them and produces steadfastness. And by the way, we don't navigate these trials alone.

We don't do it alone. Wisdom is required and God's going to give freely to you when you ask in faith. And remember, guys, life is short, but these trials are shorter. they don't go on forever. And the Lord's going to take care of you. And blessed are you who remain steadfast in these trials. You'll be blessed.

And the way to remain steadfast is to put the desires of the flesh to death. Don't be deceived. Don't exchange truth for a lie in the desires.

Don't get twisted on that. Don't exchange this something bad for God's good gift. Because he gives you these good gifts, and the trial itself is a good gift for you.

[ 41 : 37 ] Let's pray.