

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Truth, Not Deception

APPLY // JAMES 1:12-15

Main Idea: Remain steadfast when temptation comes by remembering the severity of sin and by looking to the greater reward.

1. Read James 1:1-15.
2. James connect external trials to internal temptations. Why is it important to realize trials often prompt temptations? How does this help us remain steadfast in the midst of trials and temptations?
3. What's the danger in equating temptation to sin? What's the danger in minimizing where temptation can take us?
4. James says our sin arises from our own desires/hearts. What are some ways we seek to blame our sin on God, others, or our circumstances? How does the gospel enable and compel us to be honest about our sin?
5. James motivates us with the rewards of heaven. How can we use the hope of heaven to help us remain steadfast in the mist of trials and temptations?

OBSERVE & INTERPRET // JAMES 1:16-18

Main Idea: God provides all that we need to love him and remain steadfast.

1. Read James 1:16-18.
2. Discuss how these verses flow from and connect to verses 1-15.
 - a. Note: I found this insight by Alec Motyer helpful:
 - i. "James' argument runs like this: A steady persistence is necessary if we are to make headway to maturity and life. Among other ways in which we are to show ourselves durable, there is the maintenance of a heart of love to God (v. 12). But this very heart is itself a central foe of righteousness, because of its contagious sinfulness (vv. 13-15). About this we must see to it that we are in no doubt (v. 16). But there is a solution to our dilemma: from heaven we may expect absolutely every needed good thing, coming to us by divine gift (v. 17). And in particular there is one thing God has freely chosen to do for us: he has brought us to birth by his word with the intention we should be specially his, and notably holy (v. 18)." (*The Message of James*, 46)
3. Remember the context: remaining steadfast in trials and temptations. Where does James direct the attention of his readers in verse 17? Why does he bring up the goodness of God? What's the significance of James saying "every good and perfect gift" comes from God? What does "every" tell us about God's giving? What does "perfect" tell us about God's giving?
4. Discuss the various descriptions James provides, and how these help the Christian remain steadfast.
 - a. Father
 - b. Father of lights
 - c. With whom there is not variation or shadow due to change
5. In verse 15, James discusses what sin gives birth to: death. In verse 18, he brings up another kind of birth: salvation. How does verse 18 solve the problem of verse 15?
 - a. What is the origin of this salvation?
 - b. What is the means of this salvation?
 - c. What is the purpose of this salvation?
6. What does it mean that Christians "should be a kind of first fruits"?

7. How do the descriptions of God in verse 17 and action of God in verse 18 help us remain steadfast? How do these things reassure us when we fail in our temptations?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: What temptations are you battling? How does the promised reward help you remain steadfast?