

The Letter of James 1:12 – 18

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 ²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various
2 kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces
3 steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that
4 you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives
6 generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

7 ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who
8 doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by
9 the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will
10 receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man,
11 unstable in all his ways.

12 ⁹Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰and the rich in
13 his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass
14 away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers
15 the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will
16 the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

17 ¹²Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for
18 when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,
19 which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³Let no one
20 say when he is **tempted** "I am being **tempted** by God," for
21 God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no
22 one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and
23 enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has
24 conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown
25 brings forth death.

26 ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every good gift
27 and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the
28 Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow
29 due to change. ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the
30 word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his
31 creatures.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Draw lines to show any connections you see between the earlier passage (v. 2-11) with this passage (v. 12-18).
- **Circle** repeated words or ideas.
- Underline any words or phrases that are unusual or that get your attention.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- If the first three paragraphs can be summarized as "Trials, Wisdom, and Wealth" (last week's discussion), how would you summarize these two paragraphs?

v. 12-15 _____

v. 16-18 _____

- How might these two paragraphs be continuing in the themes of "Trials, Wisdom, and Wealth"? Or do they?
- Why do you think James used the singular "desire" instead of "desires" in v. 14-15?
- How would you outline the "life cycle of sin" in v. 14-15?
- What other questions come to mind as you read the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- How do you experience temptation? Do the categories "lured, enticed, conceived, gives birth" help you understand your temptations? What difference will that understanding make?
- What desire most often "lures and entices" you?

Additional suggestions for thought and discussion:

- "...lured and enticed by his own desire..." 'The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." There is always something they insist on keeping even at the price of misery. There is always something they prefer to joy— that is, to reality.'
C. S. Lewis, The Great Divorce (p. 71).
- "Satan's masterpiece is not the prostitute or the skid-row bum. It is the self-sufficient person who has made life comfortable, who is adjusting well to the world and truly likes living here, a person who dreams of no better place to live, who longs only to be a little better - and a little better off - than he already is."
Larry Crabb, Shattered Dreams, (p. 120).

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.