

James 1:12-18

English Standard Version (ESV)

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

6 ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives
7 generously to all without reproach, and it will be given
8 him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the
9 one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and
10 tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that
11 he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-
12 minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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

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

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

Read the passage through completely before looking at these questions.

Observation (What does it say?):

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

- What similarities do you see with the beginning of James’s letter?
- What new topics does James introduce in vv. 12-18? How do these relate (or do they)?
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- How would you outline or diagram the process described in vv. 14-15?
- What is wrong with desire (v. 14)?
- Why a warning about being deceived (v. 16)? What might they be deceived about?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What desires in you are the most likely to become temptations?

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Observation – *What does it say?* **Interpretation** – *What does it mean?* **Application** – *What does it mean for me?*

For additional thought and discussion:

The word for “desire” in James 1:14-15 (ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia*) can have a negative or positive connotation depending on the context.

Mark 4:19 *but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the **desires** for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [cf. John 8:44, Romans 1:24]*

Luke 22:15 *And he said to them, “I have earnestly **desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [cf. Philippians 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:17]*

See <https://www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/epithumia>

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.