

The Epistle of  
**James**  
New Testament Letters Series



**Lesson 2-Enduring Temptation and Living Righteously**

**Focus: Ch. 1 v.9-27**

1. **Extended Introductory thoughts:** *The book of James is also considered somewhat of the “Proverbs” of the New Testament. What is meant by that is that the book of James packs in and holds many statements of wisdom and of practical Christian guidance. However, similarly to the book of Proverbs you will notice that the topics tend to jump around a bit as James gives his instructions. As we study through our lessons in James you’ll be sure to notice some of this.*
2. **Be glad and glory in the character-molding experiences opposite to your situation (v.9-11)**
  - a. *Often times in this life we need something to balance us out. If we’re in the poorer and more of a humble situation, then we can be thankful to experience a more uplifted and blessed experience from time to time. If we’re wealthy then it would be good for our character to experience some more humbling experiences and to rejoice in those.*
  - b. *All good things in this life seem to have their “day in the sun.” They tend to last for a season, but later their brilliance fades away. Not everything has to be that way. Love does not have to be that way! However, riches of the world and other such things often are. James reminds us not to put too much credit into those things that just tend to go away, such as “uncertain riches” (See 1 Timothy 6:17-19 for Paul’s counsel on this point).*
3. **Temptations verses Trials or Tests—What is God’s part? (v.12-17)**
  - a. *(v.12, 13) Does God tempt men into sin? Does He hold out a carrot of sin before their noses and see if he can coax them into sin or not? The answer is a most certain and emphatic “NO!!” **God does NOT tempt men to do evil.** Temptation to do sin or evil comes to us from other sources such as our own personal lusts or the evil influences of other sinful creatures around us like wicked human beings or Satan and his devils (fallen angels). God does **not** “tempt anyone.” Jesus taught men to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13). The Bible refers to Satan as “the tempter” (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5). **It was Satan who “tempted” Eve in the Garden of Eden at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was also Satan who came to tempt Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:3).** God does not ever do such things.*
  - b. ***Does God “test” human beings? Yes. It should be clearly understood that these two things are different.** The English Bible, the original languages, and the illustrative context of these two ideas (testing vs. temptation) in the Bible clearly portray them as different things. **For example,** in the Garden of Eden, God did establish a test.—It was a very simple test! God placed a tree in the garden and told man that one tree was forbidden, but all others were permitted as food. This was not difficult. It simply showed man that they had the freedom to choose love in any situation. They were always given choice. Love requires the freedom to choose. That was a test of faithfulness. **Satan on the other hand** came into the Garden **as a tempter.** Satan went into that forbidden tree and by lies, smooth speech, and highlighting some supposed advantage to eating the*

fruit or disobeying God, he attempted to persuade and seduce men into disobedience to God. **Temptation is to allure or bait someone. Testing is to draw a clear line and to see which side people will freely choose.** The Holy Spirit of God only encourages us to do right (John 16:8; Revelation 22:17). God is the one who helps us and strengthens us to do right. In addition to the test of the tree, you can see how God “tested” the obedience and faithfulness of his own people’s hearts by their willingness to observe the Sabbath faithfully or not (See Exodus 16:4,5, 27,28; Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

- c. **(v.14, 15) Temptation is also a process of man tempting himself by his own lusts.** In such a case, man does not hardly even need a temptation from Satan to be allured. Actually, a person tempts themselves. **God teaches that we must follow the Holy Spirit, and not the “flesh” or its lusts.** (Romans 8:5-14).
  - d. (v.16,17) Every good and perfect gift comes from God. He does not give out anything that is of an evil nature, such as a temptation. That does not come from God. Help comes from God, not temptation.
- 4. When we are “born of the Spirit” or “brought forth” as new Creatures in Christ is to be an example to the world of God’s plan for the lives of all men (v.18-20).**
- a. *Jesus said we must be born again to see eternal life—born of the Holy Spirit! (John 3:5). This work completely transforms our lives and begins a work of renewal that should daily take place in our lives (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). The fruit of this experience in God is a beautiful thing (Galatians 5:22-26). God calls us to live holy lives in Him (1 Peter 1:16) and He also empowers us to do so (John 15:4,5). We should there be cautious in our life efforts to live righteously before God and to do those things that are pleasing to Him—watching carefully both our language and attitudes, always looking to Jesus as our model and deliverer.*
- 5. The pure religion of the word and the purifying power of the word (v.21-27)**
- a. (v.21-25) *The law of God works like a mirror pointing out to us what sin truly is (1 John 3:4). We must look into this perfect law of God and allow the power of it—as God’s holy word—to have its purifying work within us (See Psalms 19:7; 119:9-11; John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11). We must receive God’s words and be doers of it. This word brings life and will bring faith and Salvation in God (Matthew 7:24-27; 2 Timothy 3:15).*
  - b. (v.26, 27) *The tongue should be controlled if we’d have a true and sincere religion. We’ll look at this point much more in upcoming lessons and we’ll see many of the things the Bible has to say about the Christian’s speech. Verse 27 points out that true religion before God is a religion that is sensitive to the needs and wants of others, and which also abstains from the evil actions of this world. There is both a work for Christians to do (i.e. Isaiah 58:6-8), and there is a mountain of evil and sin for us to avoid (1 John 2:15,16).*

### **Questions for the Heart:**

**Will it be your prayer today to escape from the clutches of sin in your life through the power of Jesus Christ and to live righteously for Him? \_\_\_\_\_**