

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 24, 2011

Passage: James 1:13-18

Memory Passage: James 1:13-15 (or just v. 13 if all three verses are too long for you)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:13-18.** Read this passage several times before you begin today. What connections do you see with the preceding verses? Do you see similarities in words or themes? What connections do you see between vs. 13-16 & vs. 17-18?

(b) What two reasons does James give to support his command that no one should say, “I am being tempted by God?” What does it mean to be tempted? Why can’t God be tempted? Why is it important to know that God does not tempt His children?

(c) Have you ever blamed God for a time when you sin when you were tempted by your own desires? What were you thinking about God that allowed you to blame Him? What were you thinking about yourself that allowed you to blame Him? Do you still think that God tempted you to sin in that situation? In other situations since then? Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you through the study of this passage this week how to properly understand sin, its origin, and God’s provision for remaining steadfast under trials.

(d) *Family:* Begin your lesson by showing your family a fishing lure (or a hook baited with a worm, or have a treat for the family cat/dog that “lures” and “entices” them). Ask questions of your family that lead to a discussion of why the fish/cat/dog is drawn to the bait, whether or not the bait itself is evil or has any power to tempt on its own, what desires the animal has that causes it to be tempted, what would happen if the bait/treat was poison (the fish/pet would die), etc. Then **Read James 1:13-15** and explain how our own desires lead us into being tempted to sin just like the animal is tempted by their own desire to eat, and sin will lead to our death (Rom 6:23) just like poison bait will lead to fish’s/pet’s death. Then, recap the main points of 1:2-4, 12 by drawing this graphic on your whiteboard: Trials—Endurance—Maturity—Life, and compare this progression to vs. 13-15 by writing underneath it Desire—Lured & Enticed—Temptation—Sin—Death.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:13-15.** What is the cause of our temptations? Is temptation the same as sin? How do our desires “lure and entice” us? Are all desires bad, and if not, are the desires of which James speaks all bad? On what basis do you answer?

(b) Suppose you were in a discussion with someone and they said, “I think people are basically good. If they sin, it is the fault of their environment.” Summarize and explain James’ teaching in a way that speaks to this person’s worldview.

(c) **Read Gen. 3:6-22.** Trace Eve’s actions and identify the different stages of sin found in James 1:13-15. How could Eve have ensured that her trial did not become a temptation that led to sin & death?

(d) What desires do you have that cause/can cause/will cause you to be tempted and not persevere through the trial in which God has placed you? Be honest with yourself here and don’t cut corners in your answer. Recognizing these desires and the way you succumb to temptation because of them is essential to applying the rest of this lesson! Be honest, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal blind spots in your life or desires that you pretend are “ok” with God when they are in reality traps for you.

(e) *Family:* **Read Gen. 3:6-22.** Before reading, ask your family to remind you of the steps that lead to death in vs. 13-15. Write down the steps on the left side of your white board (desire—lured & enticed—temptation—sin—death). Then **Read Gen. 3:6-22** and ask your family to raise their hand as they see the steps become present in Eve’s trial. As they give you the answer, write down on the right side of your white board the events in Eve’s story that illustrate James’ progression of sin.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:13-18.** About what does James warn his readers to not be deceived?

(b) Of what gifts does James speak, and why does he say that they “come from above?” To what aspect of God’s character & work is James referring when he calls God “the Father of lights?” What is James saying about God in the last part of v. 17, and what does this have to do with God being “the Father of lights?”

(c) **Read Ps. 11:7-10.** Write down what you learn about the faithfulness of God from these verses. How should these truths affect you as you endeavor to remain steadfast and not allow God’s trials to become temptations for you?

(d) *Family:* **Read Gen. 22:1.** Draw everyone’s attention to the fact that God was about to “test” Abraham. Remind them of what you have learned in James 1 so far, including the benefits of enduring trials with joy, remaining steadfast in trials, and how some trials turn into temptations that lead to sin & death because we let our own desires get in the way. Then **Read Gen. 22:1-18** and ask discussion-starting questions like: “Did he remain steadfast in his trust for the Lord or did he let his own desires cause him to sin?” “Which progression does Abraham resemble (trials—endurance—maturity—life or desire—lured & enticed—temptation—sin—death)?” “What can we learn from how Abraham walked through his trial from the Lord?”

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read James 1:18; Jer. 31:31-34; John 3:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-25; Titus 3:5.** What does the phrase “brought us forth” mean in James 1:18? To what does it refer? What was the cause, or ground, for this regeneration?

(b) What does regeneration have to do with vs. 13-16? Why is it needed as one of God’s good & perfect gifts? What affect does it have on one’s desires (See Gal. 5:16-26. No really, I mean to actually turn to this passage before you answer ☺).

(c) To what does “word of truth” refer (for help: Eph. 1:13; Col 1:5-6; 2 Tim. 2:15, and the same principle in 1 Pet. 1:25)? I know there is not much application today, but we will apply all of this in tomorrow’s lesson.

(d) *Family:* Tonight we look at another of God’s tests. **Read Ex. 15:1-2** and explain that God has just delivered the Israelites from Pharaoh’s army and the Israelites are happy! Then **Read Ex. 15:22-27** and ask, “Have the Israelites changed their tune?” (“Yes, because now they grumbled.”), and “What did God do?” (“He tested them by giving them a chance to be obedient to Him and to trust Him.”). Then **Read Ex. 16:1-5** and ask, “Did the Israelites pass their test?” (“No, they grumbled again.”) and, “What did God do next?” (“He promised manna, told them to only take a certain amount, and said that He was testing their obedience again.”). Then **Read Ex. 16:13-30** and ask, “Did the Israelites pass their test?” (“No, they disobeyed the Lord’s commands which showed they did not trust Him to provide as He promised.”) Finally, ask, “In which progression would the Israelites be found (trials—endurance—life or desire—sin—death)?” and “What can we learn from how the Israelites walked through their trial from the Lord?”

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read James 1:13-18 & 1 Cor. 10:13.** Today we will tie all of these concepts together. Return to the list you made on Day 2 (d) and for each desire write down how the regenerated believer, who now is no longer a slave to sin but a slave to God, would endure a trial in this area in a way that leads to life rather than death. What you are doing is writing down what it looks like to apply the gospel to your own life when you are tempted to let your own sinful desires overtake you. You have been learning tools to do this for the last year as we have studied Colossians, Job, and now James, so you should be able to be very specific in how you would crucify these desires before they lead giving in to temptation, which gives birth to sin, which gives birth to death.

(b) *Family:* Choose several desires that have a tendency in your family to lead to temptation & sin rather than steadfastness in trials leading to maturity & life. Help your family understand how to apply the gospel to each trial in the same manner as described in question (a).

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A Tale of 2 Births

In James 1:13-18 James uses the metaphor of birth to describe two responses to God’s trials.