

## Cultivating an Eternal Perspective on Temptation James 1:9-18

1. Beginning in verse 9, James focuses on the place of the rich and poor before God. The ESV study note says, “both poverty and riches bring enormous pressure on a person to focus on the world rather than on Christ.” Read Proverbs 30:7-9. How do these proverbs affirm the truth of the quotation above?

In which area do you struggle most? Wanting more, and therefore focusing on what you don't have? Or, having plenty and thus, forgetting the Lord? Explain.

2. How does James direct and encourage both the poor and rich, in verses 9-11? What perspective is he trying to help each cultivate in his exhortation?

How can his appeal to this perspective help *you* in your life, especially as it relates to money and material possessions?

3. In verse 12, James returns to the issues of trials, suffering, and the need to persevere. What new incentive to endure through these hardships does James now add? What does he mean?

Does the new incentive James introduced in verse 12, motivate you? Why or why not?

4. What does James say we must *not* do when we are tempted (v. 13)? Why?

James says God does not tempt us (v. 13), yet also declares that God tests us (v. 3). How would you describe the difference between the two?

What truth is James teaching us here about God's character (v. 13)? Why is that truth vital to affirm and embrace?

5. If we are not tempted by God, according to verse 13, where does temptation come from (v. 14-15)?

Read Matthew 5-7; 15:10-20. Our culture focuses a great deal on behavior, almost exclusively so. What key principle is being taught by Jesus and James about the origins of our behavior?

6. After desire "gives birth to sin," what happens (v. 15)? What does that mean?

Read Romans 6:23. Paul agrees with James about the consequence of sin. What good news does Paul offer in response to the bad news?

7. In verses 16-17, James once more reminds his readers of God's goodness. What else does he say about God that makes this news even better? (See also, Psalm 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6)

Why is this good news? How does this attribute of God differ from human tendencies?

8. In verse 18, James speaks of our spiritual salvation. How does God "bring us forth" by the "word of truth." What is the "word of truth" to which he refers? (See Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:15)

*Walking Points*

9. Why is it important to consider our desires and motivations in the pursuit of righteousness? Why is a worldview that focuses only on external behavior wrongheaded?

A litmus test for morality, for many in our culture, is whether or not a behavior hurts another person. How then would you explain to a friend the importance of, not only their outward behavior, but also their desires and motivations?

Name three things you are doing on a regular basis to cultivate godly desires in your life.

On a scale of 1-10, how are you progressing in this area of your sanctification? What can the members of your class or group do to help you?

10. Name ten good gifts you have received from the Lord. (Two spiritual, two health-related, two relational, two material/financial, and two vocational)