



MESSAGE/SERIES:

Series: FAITH at WORK

Message: "Investments & Returns"

DATE: January 23, 2022

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)

James 1:9-15, Psalm 18:27, 34:18, 102:17, 138:6, Luke 1:52, 1 Peter 5:5, Matthew 11:29, Jeremiah 9:23-24, James 2:5, Philippians 3:20-21, Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the rich man), Matthew 23:12, Isaiah 40:6-8, Psalm 103:15-16, Psalm 49:16-17, Matthew 5:18, Philippians 4:4, 1 Corinthians 9:25, Revelations 2:10, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 2:17, Hebrews 2:18, **Matthew 7:24-27**

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

[James 1:9-15]

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

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

“Every situation is an opportunity for Spiritual Growth...”

-Christiane Northrup, M.D.

TERMS & BACKGROUND:

[GOD’S TESTING] God clearly “tested” people in the Bible and later Jewish literature (Gen 22:1; Deut 8:2; 13:3; Judg 2:22), but he never tested them in the sense that is implied here: seeking for them to fail instead of persevere. Jewish texts distinguished between God’s motives in testing people (in love, seeking their good) and Satan’s motives in testing them (to make them fall). In most Jewish texts, Satan (also called Belial and Mastema) fills the role of tempter. Although James does not deny Satan’s indirect role (4:7), he emphasizes here the human element in succumbing to temptation. He personifies “desire” (NIV, NRSV, TEV) or “lust” (KJV, NASB) as enticing a person, then illegitimately conceiving the child “sin,” which in turn brings forth “death”; Jewish teachers occasionally applied the rhetorical technique of personification to the “evil impulse” all people had.

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Jas 1:13–16.

OUTLINE

I. (v9-11) ATTITUDE: Present Glory

A. (v9-10a) “Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation,¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation...”

1. “Lowly brother”- This term often comes with the idea of an orphan or widow or poor meaning without many worldly possessions

a) *Brother= Christian/believer or follower of Christ*

(1) *These Christian people would have had to abandon most of their worldly possessions because of persecution and following Christ*

2. Lowly brother “Boast in his exaltation”-

a) *being blessed by God*

b) *The Lord lifts us up and gives us Spiritual blessings as we depend upon Him alone*

3. (v10a) "The rich in his humiliation"- (*Dealing with Materialism*)

a) *To be made to be in a Low estate*

b) *Is he speaking of a Christian Rich man who realizes that the material things are nothing (low estate= realization)*

c) *Is he speaking in an antithetical way where riches are evil and the poor are humbled before God?*

B. (v10b-11) "the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For **the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass**; its flower falls, and its **beauty perishes**. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits."

1. The rich man is like a "Flower"- (Fragile)

a) *God can take away all of our possessions if He wills in a moment and He is just in doing so*

b) *The riches of man is fleeting (temporary)*

c) *The riches of man are like the man himself (a vapor)*

d) *Riches cannot be taken with us when we go (no eternal value)*

2. The "Sun" rises and scorches *the flower* of the grass first-

a) *The flower of the grass and not the grass itself that withers first (the glory of earthly riches)*

b) *Most likely represents trials that come against the rich man (possibly from new association with Christ)*

(1) Loss of friendships and business connections

(2) Many of these people who had fled Jerusalem lost everything and would forever be associated as a follower of Christ

3. Its (the grass/the rich man's) "beauty perishes"-

a) *He is no longer looked at the same through the eyes of the world*

4. "So also the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits"

- a) *The rich man fades away= As a fire or flame fades away... his vitality was in things and therefore his life is of no value to himself*
- b) *Depression in full view here*

II. (v12) BLESSED: Future Reward

- A. (v12) *“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which **God has promised to those who love him.**”*
1. *There were questions the pilgrims (Jewish Christians were asking as they adjust to new life in Christ)*
 - a) *Is the life lived for Christ worth it?*
 - b) *Is the victory worth the investments and the loss we must incur now in this life?*
 2. **“Blessed”-**
 - a) *=Happy is (Matthew 5)*
 - b) *= Rewarded by God*
 3. *(Timing of rewards) Rewarded in the end when this race is over (rewards are withheld until the end)- no instant gratification*
 4. **“Steadfast under trial”-**
 - a) *Steadfast gives the idea of holding firm and not giving ground (not returning to earthly pursuits)*
 - b) *Steadfast even though the pressure is to denounce Christ and identify again with the world*
 - (1) **1 John 2:19** *(Apostate)*
 5. *Those who weather the trial and stands firm in their faith will receive the “**Crown of Life**”*
 - a) *Better translated “The crown which is life”-*
 - (1) *Eternal life (future tense)*
 - (2) *Spiritual life and vitality*
 - b) *This crown is the acknowledgment by God of works or deeds done in the body while under persecution*
 - (1) *God sees and rewards our struggles for His namesake*
 - (2) *What a day when Jesus says well done to those who followed his path of suffering because of a growing love and a maturing faith in Jesus alone*

*“When the **desire of man**, goes out to meet
and embrace **the forbidden thing** and
an unholy marriage takes place between these two
and sin is born”*

-Clayton K. Harrop

III. (v13-15) **ACKNOWLEDGE**: Current Temptation & Desire

- A. (v13) *“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God.” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.”*
1. God is Sovereign and in control
 2. God is not the agent of Temptation
 3. It is not possible for God to Tempt us to sin as He cannot be tempted by evil as He is pure (Absent of evil and evil desire)
 4. It is not possible for Him to tempt for the same reason (He has no evil desire within Him)
- B. (v14) *“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”*
1. The source of your temptation comes from a desire within us
 - a) *We have an evil wicked heart and desire what is evil to have it for our own (Jeremiah 17:9-10)*
 2. We are enticed to sin because we desire to sin (Adam & Eve in the Garden)
 3. The temptation and the Sin are from within me (my heart)
 - a) Romans 3:23- (All men have this problem)
- C. (v15) *“Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.”*
1. The cycle of life is used to show life is given to the sin which will bring death
 - a) *The desire that was there already “Conceived”- The temptation gives an opportunity for the conception of a sin baby*

(1) Resist the temptation and the Sin baby will not come into reality

b) *“Sin” when it grows up-*

(1) Sin not dealt with at conception has the potential to devour the person and the sin baby gets its new teeth to bit you and then take your life from you

c) *“Death”-*

(1) eternal separation from God (Spiritual death)
(2) Also Represents tragic consequences

Application:

- Our attitudes during persecution must be one of the eternal focus and not the current worldly things
- God will reward your perseverance for His namesake so we look for a reward at the finish line and not in the present
- If the desire to sin comes from within me I must wage war against my desires daily.
- If I know that uncontrolled desire will eventually meet a moment of weakness and bring about the action of Sin I must be cautious of my environment.
- If I can see the dangers James is sharing here I can be prepared to resist temptation with godly fear.

“Only when desire ‘conceives’—is allowed to produce offspring—does sin come into being...”

- Douglas J. Moo
