



2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy... when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow... and when your endurance is fully developed,... you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. James 1:2-4 (*paraphrased*)

- Troubles don't **produce** faith; they **expose** the faith we have.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

- The goal of tested faith is that our lives have a strong **foundation**.

9 Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. 10 And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. 11 The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements. James 1:9-11

- Trials reveal the **faulty** foundations we're standing on.

James is telling the poor:

Your lack of money can be seen as a **gift**.

9 Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. James 1:9 (NLT)

James says to the rich:

Don't put faith in your **money** that won't last.

10 And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. James 1:10

12 Blessed is the one who **perseveres** under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. 16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. James 1:13-18 (NLT)

- Beware of the deadly off-ramps of **sin**.

14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. James 1:14

"It was the woman that you gave me..." Genesis 3:12

15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:15 (NIV)

Warnings about the temptations we face in trials:

- Sin is the **evil off-ramp** offered to us in a trial.
- The off-ramp of sin will take you in a **direction** you don't want to go.
- We have to deal with **desires** before they become **expressions** of sin.

The longer sin **grows**, the harder it becomes to **kill**.

- **Satan** is in the desire cultivation business.

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. James 1:12

VISION:

**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain.
- James says trials expose our faith rather than produce it. What have recent trials revealed about your trust in God?
- What "foundation" do people most often build their lives on today besides Christ? Why is it so appealing? What does it promise them?
- James tells the poor and the rich to see themselves differently through the gospel. How does Jesus redefine our identity and security?
- How can success, comfort, or wealth become a shaky foundation without us realizing it?
- James promises a "crown of life" to those who persevere. What helps you remain faithful when life is difficult?
- James says temptation comes from our own desires. Why is it important to own our responsibility instead of blaming others or God?
- Can you think of a time when a "small compromise" became a much bigger struggle? What did God teach you through it?
- Why do you think sin always promises life but ultimately produces death?
- What desires in your heart need to be surrendered to God before they become sinful actions?
- James reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from our unchanging Father. How does remembering God's goodness help us resist temptation?
- What is one practical step you can take this week to strengthen your foundation in Christ and avoid the "off-ramps" of sin?

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Today's Talk..



Shaky Foundations and Deadly Off-ramps

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Sunday, July 19th 2026