

1) Let's jump back into where we were last time...

James 1:9–11 (NASB 2020)

⁹ Now the brother *or sister* of humble *circumstances* is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ but the rich person *is to glory* in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so also the rich person, in the midst of his pursuits, will die out.

2) One obvious point to make here is that this is going to be a typical motif in this letter.

a) Here we see a very abrupt and complete change of subject from

i) praying for wisdom and praying with and without faith

ii) to how poor and rich Christians are to view themselves.

b) – rather like proverbs.

3) Key to this passage is really understanding, in context, what the two words which are most often translated ***humble*** and ***high position*** or ***exalted*** really mean.

a) The word for ***humble*** means “***insignificant in the world’s eyes, lowly, relatively poor and powerless, lacking in material possessions.***”

b) “***High position***” for the “humble” Christian in context would mean the ***position they maintain in the eye of their Savior and God.***

i) They are worthy, exalted, and God’s children; what higher position can one have than that?

4) James immediately turns to the rich person – the one on the opposite end of the socioeconomic scale – they must glory in their humiliation.

a) Looking to a definition of humiliation from the Greek again, we find “***experience of a reversal in fortunes.***”

i) One way to look at this is a leveling of the playing field so to speak.

ii) Before becoming a Christian, the rich person gloried in their riches – that was what they were about.

iii) On becoming a Christian, the attitude must change.

(1) Their riches must not mean that much to them anymore.

(2) The most important thing they have is no longer their wealth.

(a) It is the exact same thing the person of humble circumstance has – their worth in the eyes of their Savior and God.

5) No further explanation would need to be given to the poor person – it would be self evident.

6) However, verse 11 adds a comment for the rich person who might not quite get the message.

a) James says: “its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so also the rich person, in the midst of his pursuits, will die out.”

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

- b) In this there is the aspect of the rich person not continuing in their pursuit of riches because that is not as important as it once was.
 - c) Beyond that, there is the idea of, “you can’t take it with you” so, if you think otherwise, you might consider how everything else fades away.
- 7) I think the New Living Translation does a good job of capturing the essence of all this...

James 1:9–10 (NLT)

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.

- 8) The true intended result here is to get these brothers and sisters to see themselves in the proper light and to see each other as family – as children of God.
- 9) Regardless of their monetary status or place in the social order, God sees them all the same.
 - a) AND – it is vital that they see and treat each other in that same way – rich not looking down on poor or less fortunate – poor not raising the rich to a higher place.
 - b) James will return to this thought in the first verses of chapter 2.
- 10) So, the obvious question for us might be...

Is it a big issue for congregations today?

How important is this to us as a congregation? Why?

How are we doing?

- 1) Next James has some important words to say regarding how we should be dealing with temptations...

James 1:12–15 (NASB 2020)

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under **trial**; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.
¹³ No one is to say when he is **tempted**, “I am being **tempted** by God”; for God cannot be **tempted** by evil, and He Himself does not **tempt** anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it has run its course, brings forth death.

Okay, I am getting ready to step out on a limb here (that means I may be wrong but would like to share an idea anyway)

... In verse 12, does anyone have anything other than “trial” in this verse?

- 2) The word used here is *peirasmos* (pA ras mos) and carries several meanings, test, trial, temptation, enticement, testing.
- 3) In this passage, *peirasmos*, (pA ras mos) the word translated “trial” in vs. 12 is used 5 more times.

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

- 4) In most translations I looked at it was translated “tempt or tempted” in those other 5 locations.
- 5) I spent a considerable amount of time studying this passage and despite most all modern translations using the word trials in verse 12 I have concluded that it would be better to translate the word as “temptation.”

6) I feel there are several reasons why this is the case:

- a) **First**, though James has spoken of trials prior to this passage, the immediately preceding passage is not dealing with trials at all.

- i) If the word trial is used vs. 12 isolated.

- (1) Now that is not really all that bad given the proverbial nature of this letter as we discussed a bit ago.

- ii) However, if this verse is translated with trial as the object of perseverance, it would fit almost perfectly after verse 1:4.

² Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

- b) **Second**, it follows that, if the word is translated as temptation then this group of verses, 12 through 15 fit together coherently.

- c) **Third**, the very next verse (13) begins speaking of the source of temptation and definitely not trials (association with evil).

- d) **Finally** if we consider the next passage we find a clear reference back to this group of verses saying that one should not be deceived about where good things which ties into where temptations do NOT come from.

7) As I see it, part of the problem with the trial verses temptation translation may be with the word translated *perseveres*.

8) If we go to BDAG again we find a meaning...

... to maintain a belief or course of action *in the face of opposition*, to stand one's ground.

9) So, if we translate vs. 12 as ...

Blessed is the man who *endures* [*in the face of*] *temptation*, because when approved he will receive the crown of life which the {Lord} promised to those who love Him.

10) As I said a moment ago, translated as temptation in this manner this group of verses, 12 through 15 fit together coherently.

11) Though I think you can see my feeling clearly on verse 12, there are some other things to consider that are absolutely not subject to ambiguity.

- a) In verse 13, he makes it crystal clear that God has no part whatsoever in tempting us.

- i) God may place us in trying situations but He does not tempt us to sin.

- b) Then, in verse 14, James makes it equally crystal clear what the source of temptation is.

“each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”

- c) This takes away the “devil made me do it” idea.
- 12) As we have said many, many, times here – it is “self” that appears to always be the root of the problem.
- 13) Finally, we talked about the fact that in verse 2 through 4 of this first chapter, James shows us a positive progression
 - a) **Encounter** trials → **Testing** of faith → **Produces** (builds) endurance → **Completes** in perfection and lacking in nothing.
- 14) Here, we have a very much negative progression...
 - b) We are **tempted, enticed** by our own lust → Lust then **conceives** → **Gives birth** to sin → Sin **runs its course** → **Brings forth** (literally gives birth to) death.
- 15) Now, here is the absolute last reason why I feel temptation might be better in the translation of verse 12.
- 16) “Endurance [in the face of] temptation” is the place where this downward progression is broken.
- 17) If we stand up in the face of the temptations that come from within our own self then, lust will NOT conceive and the chain is destroyed before it gets started!