



May 25, 2025  
*Real Wisdom for a Messy World*  
**BREAK THE SIN CYCLE**  
James 1:12-18



**1. Opening Discussion:** (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. What is the best (unique, original, ridiculous) excuse you've ever heard a child make for something they did wrong or failed to do? How does it compare to the excuses you've made?
- b. We often hear about how famous people have responded to difficult times in "grace and humility". Can you recall such a story? How about someone you have known personally?
- c. We are often reminded that we learn from failure (Edison's light bulbs). What is the most memorable lesson you have learned from a failure or a challenging experience?

**2. Prayer:**

- a. Adoration – Pray Psalm 95 or another passage of Scripture that enables you to focus on praising God for who He is in all His majesty and glory, the only One worthy of praise.
- b. Confession – Spend time in silence, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any sins you need to confess. Keep a paper and pencil handy in case He reminds you of one that requires you to ask forgiveness of someone. Close by reading 1 John 1:9
- c. Thanksgiving – In the spirit of Ephesians 5:20, thank God for answered prayers, His blessings and gifts, and the opportunities He provides to serve. Make a point to thank Him for at least one thing that you've never given thanks for before.
- d. Supplications
  - i. Pray for the activities of His Church
    1. *Locally*: LRBC, its ministries and outreach activities; for our pastors, staff, and volunteers; for the other churches in PWC that faithfully share the Gospel.
    2. *Around the world*: for missionaries and pastors serving in other cultures; for the persecuted Church in countries that are actively hostile to the Gospel; for unreached people groups which have little or no access to the Gospel; that God will raise up workers to go and serve Him, perhaps even young people from LRBC.
  - ii. Pray for the spiritual and physical needs of
    1. At least one person who needs to accept Christ as Savior.
    2. Friends, family, and yourself
    3. Some items on LRBC's weekly *Praises & Prayer Requests* list.
    4. Our national, state, and local leaders – especially for the salvation of those who have not accepted Christ as Savior.

**3. Sermon Key Points for James 1:12-18**

- a. Sin Follows a Predictable Cycle in Everyone's Life
  - i. Trials offer many temptations to sin

- ii. Only one person is responsible for your sins
  - iii. The sin cycle: desire leads to sin leads to death
- b. Break the Sin Cycle In Your Life
  - i. Fight sin at the start of the cycle
  - ii. Embrace grace, not guilt, later in the cycle
- c. Anticipate the Reward for Breaking the Sin Cycle
  - i. Breaking the sin cycle through wisdom and godliness amidst trials brings eternal reward
  - ii. Meditate on this as you fight to break your own sin cycle

#### 4. Bible Study:

- a. ***Sunday Afternoon*** – As soon as possible after the sermon, make time to consider:
  - i. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
  - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
  - iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
  - iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
  - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. ***Monday:***
  - i. This week's sermon text is James 1:12-18, which concludes a section titled "Testing of Your Faith" in the ESV ("Trials and Temptations" in the NIV), which starts with verse 2. Read the entire section, James 1:2-18.
    - 1. How do you see this week's focal passage fitting into the theme of the overall section?
    - 2. What significant change do you see between the focal passage and the earlier verses?
  - ii. Chapters, verses, and section titles are helpful as we read and study the Bible, but we must remember that they did not exist in James's original letter. What obvious contrast would have jumped out to the early readers as they went from the last phrase of verse 11 to the first of verse 12?
    - 1. What does the word "Blessed" mean to you? What other scripture passage does "Blessed" bring to mind?
    - 2. Read Matthew 5:3-12. Which of Jesus' Beatitudes most closely aligns with what James is saying in verse 12?
    - 3. How does the use of "blessed" in these passages differ from what the world would tell us?
- c. ***Tuesday:***
  - i. Meditate on James 1:12.
    - 1. What truth do you see in this verse that should particularly apply in your life?

2. According to James, who is blessed? What characteristic does a Christian need to fit into this category (see Romans 5:3-4, 1 Timothy 4:16, and Hebrews 10:36)?
3. How does Paul present the same truth in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27?
- ii. What is the blessing James tells us we will receive when we “remain steadfast under trial”?
  1. What do these verses tell us about the crown: 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; and Revelation 2:10 & 3:11?
  2. How do Jesus’ words in John 14:23-24 explain the importance of the last phrase of verse 12?
  3. Read Galatians 2:15-16 and Ephesians 2:8-9. How does Paul’s teaching show that we must be careful not to interpret James to say we earn our “crown of life”?
- d. **Wednesday:**
  - i. Read and meditate on James 1:13-15.
  - ii. In verse 13, James seems to be shifting from trials to discussing temptations. Although James uses the same Greek words for trial/test (verses 2-12) and for tempt/tempted (verses 13-15), what makes it obvious that he sees them as two very different situations?
    1. Read Genesis 22:1, Exodus 16:4, Psalm 66:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5, Hebrews 11:17, 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 4:12-13. What can we say about the nature and sources of trials? How would you complete this sentence: “Trials are for our \_\_\_\_.”?
    2. Read Matthew 4:1 & 6:13, Mark 1:13, 1 Corinthians 7:5b, 1 Timothy 6:8-10, 1 Peter 5:8-9, and James 1:13. What can we say about the nature and source of temptation? How would you complete this sentence: “Temptations are for \_\_\_\_.”?
  - iii. Perhaps the best way to see how trials/tests that God is using for our good can become temptations enticing us to sin (evil) is to consider several examples from the Old Testament. First, read Deuteronomy 8:15-16, then these passages:
    1. Exodus 16:4-5, 16-20 and 26-28 (or read 16:4-30). What were the tests God was giving to Israel? What caused the trial to become a temptation that led to sin in verses 20 and 27?
    2. Numbers 20:1-13. What were the trials God was allowing Israel to experience? What changed it to a temptation and then to sin? What was the test God gave Moses? What changed it to a temptation that resulted in sin?
    3. In both examples, who was responsible for the trial/test becoming a temptation? How does James answer in James 1:14?
- e. **Thursday:**
  - i. Temptation has been described as “an opportunity to accomplish a good thing in a bad way that is not in the will of God.” Read the accounts of David’s temptation in 2 Samuel 11:2-4, Achan’s description of his temptation in Joshua 7:20-21, and Jesus’ first temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1-3.
    1. Do these seem to fit the description of temptation?
    2. What do the temptations have in common? In what undeniable way are they different? How does James 1:14 provide an explanation for the different

outcomes (you may want to read verse 14 from the NIV or CSB as the ESV leaves the nature of desire implicit)?

3. What causes a desire to be either good or evil? What are examples of good desires? Evil desires? How do Jeremiah 17:9, Ecclesiastes 9:3, and Mark 7:21-22 answer this question?
4. How do Ezekiel 18:31, 36:26, Jeremiah 24:7, Luke 6:45, 8:15, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 10:6, 2 Corinthians 1:22, and Galatians 4:6 explain what must happen if our good desires are not to become evil?

- ii. Jesus faced far greater temptations than David and Achan, but He did not sin. What two facts do Matthew 4:1 & 4 provide that show us why He was able to avoid the temptation? How do Romans 8:14-16 and Psalm 119:10-11 show that we have the same resources when facing temptation?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read and meditate on James 1:16-18.
- ii. What does James want us to stop being deceived about?
  1. Why would believing (accusing) God of being the source of our evil desires and temptations constitute the worst possible sin? Instead of being the source of anything bad, what does James say about God?
  2. How do Paul's instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 help us tie the Goodness of God James describes in verse 17 with the trials he introduces in verse 2?
  3. What accounts for the fact that so many Christians who intellectually know that God is Good still blame Him when life gets difficult (see John 8:44)? What more is needed than just belief (see James 2:17-19)?
- iii. Verse 18 describes the greatest "good and perfect gift" we are given.
  1. Read John 3:3-8, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 1:5, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:3 & 23, and 1 John 3:9. What can you say about the birth James points to?
  2. Read Ephesians 1:13, Colossians 1:5, 2 Timothy 2:15-16. What is the "word of truth"? Because of this, why is it so important that we aggressively apply the teaching of Psalm 119:11 in our lives?
  3. Read Romans 8:19-23, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13. What does/should it mean to us that we are the "firstfruits"?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. End the week by carefully reading James 1:2-18 as you did Monday, again considering how this sermon's focus on verses 12-18 ties the entire section together.
- ii. What is your main takeaway from this entire passage? From today's focal passage?
- iii. How will what James has written help you live as "firstfruits"?

5. **Application:** Make a list of ways James 1:2-18 applies to your life and identify areas you need the Holy Spirit to help you grow as a Christian. Especially consider if there are desires that are leading you to temptation and sin, and commit them to the Lord, claiming the promises of 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 John 1:9