

Lessons Learned About God, Life, and Man

1. From which perspective do you see yourself and your role in life? James saw himself as a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ even though he was the leader of the Jerusalem church with authority over the twelve tribes (i.e., all Jewish Christians) who were driven out of the land of Israel (1:1).
2. We're supposed to find the joy in every trial we face, not because we're masochists, but because we know that God is using those trials to make us stronger, individuals who are perfect, complete, and lack nothing, i.e., individuals who can handle anything that life throws at them, especially crises (James 1:2-4).
3. As a Christian, you hold to a set of beliefs and those beliefs will be tested by life. How you respond to life's tests will determine your instability and whether or not your faith is useless (James 1:3-8, 26).
4. If you're struggling to understand, to cling to and apply what you believe as a Christian during one of life's trials, then you need to ask God for the wisdom to see things clearly and be able to actually do what your Christian belief tells you (1:5).
5. When you're going through a difficult time and you're struggling to understand what to do, God is not a berating father who gets mad at you for asking for His help. Instead, He's always quick to help and will ALWAYS give you the wisdom you need to understand the trial you're going through (1:5).
6. If you ask God for help, do not ask with doubt in your mind. To do this is to be double-minded, i.e., you believe God can help, so you ask Him. But you also believe He can't help, which is why you ask with doubt. Not only will you get NOTHING from Him, this will leave you completely unstable (1:6-8).
7. There's a potential and tremendous blessing to being poor: if you respond properly to the poor test, the Lord will leave you perfect and complete, lacking nothing. He will give you the crown of life, i.e., your life experience will be victorious and joyful. When trouble strikes, instead of panic, indecision and doubt, you will have clarity of mind to know exactly what to do (1:2-5, 9, 12).
8. There's a potential and tremendous blessing to being rich: if you respond properly to the rich test, the Lord will leave you perfect and complete, lacking nothing, i.e., because you pursued the Lord's wisdom and guidance instead of your wealth, He will protect you from the potentially destructive forces of wealth. Instead of being consumed by your wealth, you will know that it's a blessing from God which is not to be worshipped (1:2-5, 10-12).
9. If you endure and pass the tests of life, the Lord will give you the crown of life, i.e., you'll experience a joy and clarity of mind like never before; you will know exactly what to think, say and do in any given situation (1:2-5, 12).
10. We cannot blame God for our sin because He is incapable of being tempted by evil and He Himself tempts no one (1:13).
11. Our desires are the source of our temptation to sin and when we give in to our desire, it gives birth to sin (1:13-14).

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12. If we pursue sin long enough, it will give birth to death, i.e., it will kill us (1:15).
13. While we're the father of temptation, sin, and death (1:14-15), God is the never-changing Father of good and perfect gifts (1:17).
14. If God the Father is the Father of good and perfect gifts and He gave birth to us by the Word of truth, what does that imply about us? That we should behave like children who are related to God, individuals who are quick to follow what God says regardless of the circumstances or stakes, individuals who wisely think through things before they speak, individuals who are slow to get angry, i.e., individuals who have absolute clarity in any and every situation and can see the benefit in everything they go through, especially terrible situations (1:2-5, 17-18, 19).
15. If we humbly accept and follow the Word of truth God planted in us (1:18), not only will it enable us to handle any situation, it will save our lives (1:2-5, 21).
16. Those who love to study the Bible but fail to apply it, deceive themselves (1:22).
17. To study the Bible and fail to apply it is to recognize who you are but fail to live up to your identity (1:23-24).
18. There's a silver lining to every tragedy, to every terrible thing we go through: the Lord will use these things to make us more resilient, wiser, individuals who are perfect and complete, lacking nothing, (1:2-5, 19, 25).
19. Knowing the Bible from cover to cover, going to church every Sunday without fail, praying every night,... basically, if you repeatedly do every religious activity known to the Christian faith but you never actually do what God says in His Word, then your religious faith is useless (1:6-8, 11, 13-15, 20, 22-24, 26).