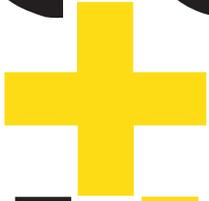


GOD



LIFE

LIFE GOD'S WAY, ACCORDING TO

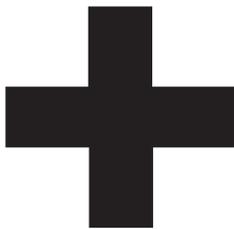
+ JAMES +

1



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I can't help it, but I get excited when there is some drama around me.
2. I watch reality TV shows.
3. Given the choice between a challenging activity and a relaxing one, I tend to choose the relaxing one.
4. I tempt myself more than the devil does.
5. God is always changing.



DIG DEEPER

● **READ James 1:1-18 (NIV)**

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. 9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

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.

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. 16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

+ 2 whenever you face trials. - The verb "face" is used of a young bird "testing" its wings, of "testing" drugs to see if they could cure diseases, of God "testing" Abraham to offer his son as sacrifice (Gen 22:1), of the Queen of Sheba "testing" the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kgs 10:1), and so on. In biblical usage the "testing" often leads to a good end. It is to cause the person being tested to emerge stronger and better, in loyalty and in faith.



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

● How would understanding God's character bring you joy in the midst of trials? Isn't the benefit of having a relationship with God that He can take the things that hurt you away?

✦ **3a the testing of your faith.** - The Greek word for testing here is different from the word discussed above in verse 2. The word here is sometimes used for "testing" the purity or genuineness of gold or silver.

✦ **3b perseverance.** - Greek the word perseverance, rendered "endurance" by KJV and "the ability to endure" by TEV, does not mean a passive submission to circumstances as the English word "endurance" tends to suggest. It is rather an active quality that enables a person to persevere steadfastly through the most difficult and trying circumstances. This is the same word used in 5:11 to describe Job's steadfastness in spite of most distressing disasters. In Rom 5:4 Paul identifies "perseverance" as the heroic quality that "produces character" (RSV).

● How has God's test of your faith produced in you perseverance?

✦ **5 God, who gives generously to all without finding fault.** - The adverb rendered generously is found only here in the New Testament. It means literally "simply" or "single-heartedly," that is, "without hesitation," "without condition," or "without reservation." "Without finding fault" can be taken in the sense of "without making them feel guilty" (Phps) or "without scolding" (NJB); or it can be understood in the sense of "ungrudgingly" (Knox, NAB, TNT, Brc, NRSV). The former goes better with "without condition" or "without question," while the latter pairs better with "generously." The TEV rendering "graciously," expressed positively, is more general than other translations. "Graciously" may also be rendered as "in a kind way," or "in a way that shows his love and care."

● How does this description of God differ from what you believed as a child?

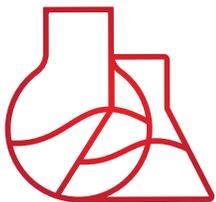
✦ **14 dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.** - The "evil desire" is characterized by two participles in Greek that rhyme, rendered by NRSV as "being lured and enticed." Both terms apparently came from the language of hunting and fishing and are used metaphorically here. The word "lure" suggests a fish enticed to a hook and drawn out from the water, while the word "entice" suggests attracting a prey to a trap by bait. The two words obviously refer to different aspects of the same action. A person's "evil desire" is like a hook with bait enticing its prey to a trap and then dragging it away.

✦ **17 Every good and perfect gift is from above.** - The God who gives good gifts is characterized as the Father of lights. This expression is unique in the Bible. The reference is to God as the Creator of the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars (compare Gen 1:14-19; Psa 136:7; Jer 31:35). Here Father is to be understood in the sense of the ultimate source, the creator, and the lights as the heavenly bodies.

● Why do you think James wanted to remind you of the sun, moon, and stars when he mentions that every good and perfect gift comes from God?

✦ **17b who does not change like shifting shadows.** - James is stressing for us the constancy, or faithfulness, of God. In calling God 'the Father of lights', he is taking us to the realm of astronomy. This is a realm of constant variation. Stars vary in brilliance. The moon waxes and wanes. The sun rises and sets. It creates all kinds of shadows and sometimes is eclipsed. But that which is so commonplace in the realm of astronomy is never true of God. With him there is never any waxing or waning or any kind of eclipse. He is always the same. And that means he is always good.

● What does it mean to you that God never changes?



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MY PRAYER...

1. How am I facing my trials right now?
2. How am I luring myself away from God and His plan for my life?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?