

GROWTH GUIDE

READ & REVIEW

Today's focus is going to be on looking at the biblical text and understanding what the writer was communicating to his original audience.

Begin by reading James 1:1-18 in its entirety.

Read James 1:1

Notice James addresses "the twelve tribes dispersed abroad". They are likely Messianic Jews or Jewish Christians who have been displaced from Israel.

What are some problems that might come up for this group because of their circumstances?

Read James 1:2-4

Notice the words "testing" and "endurance". The first term denotes the process of refining silver and gold. The second term means to "remain under" and evokes the picture of a person able to carry a heavy load over a long distance.

How do these two images help understand the process God was using to "mature and complete" the believers' faith?

Read James 1:5-8

Notice that James says that God would give wisdom to those who ask, but they were to ask in faith and without doubting.

What do you think these believers were going through that would have led them to doubt God?

Read James 1:9-12

Notice that James associates humble circumstance with exaltation and wealth with humiliation. He then points his readers to God's future promise.

What do you think these believers were thinking or doing that would cause James to focus his readers on what is to come rather than the present moment?

Read James 1:13-18

Notice that James makes a connection between undergoing a trial and being tempted. Also note the phrase "drawn away and enticed" (v. 14). This phrase is a fishing metaphor that evokes the image of a fish taking bait.

How is this image helpful to James' readers in understanding the nature of temptation?