

DISCUSS

- James seems to be addressing the origin of evil in talking about where temptation comes from. The existence of evil has long been a conundrum for theologians in light of God creating everything, and God being good (theodicy). What are your thoughts how evil can exist? How does James seem to be responding to the question?
- Why do you think it is important not to blame God?
- Does “evil desire” always bring forth “death”? How does this happen? What examples could you give?
- About being tempted, James says “Don’t be deceived.” What are some of the ways in life we can be deceived into doing something God says is wrong?
- Read Genesis 3:1-7 and discuss how Eve and Adam fell to temptation in the Garden. How were they tempted?

APPLY

- In the text, James suddenly changes topics, from evil desires to talking about God being the “Father of lights” - what is the connection?
- How can focusing on God and His good gifts become a strategy for fighting temptation when it comes?
- How can we apply God’s “word of truth” to not being received and rejecting temptation’s lure?

GROUP PRAYER FOCUS

- As a group, spend time giving God praise for who He is and for the good things He does / gives us - have each person name at least one.
- Ask God for wisdom and fresh desire for the truth of His Word. Use the words of Psalm 119 to shape your prayers together and your prayer life this week.

Making FAITH + WORK

Book of James

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Week 2: Don't Take the Bait

Key Text: James 1:13-18

OPEN

In this next section of James’ words, he gives wisdom regarding the nature of temptation. His first word of wisdom to us in week 1 was the importance of recognizing that God uses trials to grow us. But when facing temptation, James says, don’t blame God. He writes, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’” God may test, but he never tempts. Only the enemy tempts us to sin. In talking about how we can become lured or enticed to do something wrong, like a fish being baited with a hook, James says don’t be deceived into taking sin’s bait. In contrast, James reminds us that only things that are good or perfect come from God. We can always count on good things coming from God because He never changes.

REFLECT

- In talking about temptation, why do you think James begins by telling us not to blame God?
- What does James reveal about God’s character and nature in the second half of verse 13? Why do you think he makes this particular point?
- In verses 14-15, James gives a kind of ‘life cycle of desire.’ What are the stages he mentions?
 - What might James mean by the phrase ‘full-grown’?
- Discuss and explain the meaning of verse 18.