

# **A GUIDE TO PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING**

*Stepping Stones To Godly Living*

**31-DAY DEVOTIONAL**

The book of James is one of the most practical epistles in the New Testament. James begins by telling us the way to God's wisdom. He takes our hand and leads the way to God's will in the areas of our finances, faith, temptation, conversation, hospitality, relationships, and struggle against sin.

If you sincerely desire to know how to live the Christian life, then a recurring study in the book of James should be an ongoing mission for your life. Are you struggling with sin today? Turn to the book of James for advice. Are you wanting to know God's will about a relationship? Let God teach you His truths from the book of James.

In Christ, there is freedom. In Christ, there is hope. In Christ, there are answers to every problem you face. Here are some questions to ponder with each Scripture passage you read:

*Is there a command to obey?*

*Is there a promise to claim?*

*Is there a sin to avoid?*

*Is there a lesson to learn?*

*Is there a new truth to carry with me?*

*Is there a blessing to enjoy?*

## DAY 1

*Temptations, testings and trials rightly used  
are but the prelude to a great big blessing.*

**SCRIPTURE TO READ:** James 1:1-3

Have you ever wondered why God allows you to be tried and tested? For His glory and your good. Here are four specific “goods” you can receive from your trials.

The first is *enjoyment*. *I’m suppose to enjoy this?* Yes! James tells you to “count it all joy.” I have heard people say, “What can’t be cured must be endured.” But God says, “What can’t be cured can be enjoyed.”

The second good you receive is *endurance*. The word *patience* in James 1:3 means “the ability to bear up under the testing.” Have you ever felt like you don’t pray or witness like you should? God is going to send trials your way to keep you on track.

*Enlargement* is a third benefit you receive from trials. James tells us patience will have it’s perfect work. Now, that doesn’t mean God is going to make you sinless—only One is sinless whose name is Jesus. God sends tests to mature your faith.

The final good you can anticipate from your trial is *enrichment*. Not only will you mature, but also you will “want nothing.” You see, God is not working against you. He wants to bless you. Trials will not rob you. They will give you a life with no inadequacies.

Are you a grumbler or rejoicer today? Pray this prayer: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* (Psalm 139:23-24).

## DAY 2

*We must be ready to meet what the enemy could hurl against us at any moment.*

**SCRIPTURE TO READ:** James 1:4

How should you face difficulties and temptations? The simple word “but” in James 1:4 and in 1 Corinthians 10:13 holds the answer. It is as if James anticipated that we would give three arguments.

First we argue: *Nobody else faced what I faced.* And God answers, “but such as is common to man.” You are not unique and your temptation is no different from what others have experienced. Read Hebrews 4:15.

Then, we give another argument: *The temptation was too strong.* And the teacher says, “God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” God controls the temptation. Read Philippians 4:13.

And we have one more argument: *There was no other route to take.* And God answers our rebuttal: He will “make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” There is always a way of escape. Read Psalm 23:3.

God plans for you to face temptations, testings and trials—not to make excuses, but to lean into His power and wisdom—for He is faithful and will give you what you need.

What ways of escape has He given you lately that you have not taken? Talk to God right now. Ask His Spirit to show you where you have chosen your own way and succumbed to temptation. Ask for His forgiveness and strength to face the next temptation bringing glory to His name.

## DAY 3

*Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view.*

**SCRIPTURE TO READ:** James 1:5-8

James teaches us three things about how to pray for wisdom. First, we are to recognize the *freedom to pray*. James extends a gracious invitation to us in verse five. And better yet, God will not scold us for asking! Someone has said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, prayer is laying hold of God's willingness."

Second, we also are given the *faith to pray*. James 1:6 tells us that we are to ask in faith. Why is this so important? Hebrews 11:6 gives us the answer: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Along with this, James teaches us to have a *firmness to pray*. Once again let's look at James 1:6 which tells us to ask without wavering. We must put our faith in the unchanging God and be resolute when we pray.

Did you know that the reason many of us do not get our prayers answered is because we are not single-minded? Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

Is it any wonder that the Lord will not commit Himself to us, because we will not commit ourselves to Him? Will you ask God today to make you single in your devotion, single in your determination, and single in your desire?

## DAY 4

*It is a divine impossibility that God is to blame  
for your falling to temptation.*

**SCRIPTURE TO READ:** James 1:13-18

**Man by nature wants to blame his sin on God. You didn't know that did you? But when we make excuses for our sin, what we are really doing is blaming our sin on God.**

**Do you remember Adam's alibi in the Garden of Eden? "...The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12). Now, that sounded pretty good, but underneath that excuse were the words, "You are the One who placed me in this situation."**

**Someone said that God blamed Adam, Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on. Well, Adam was the one who didn't have a leg to stand on.**

**We are still doing this today. We say, "The neighborhood I was raised in made me steal." Or, "The parents who raised me caused me to abuse others." That's the psychology today—man is not evil, he's just ill. It's not really his fault. It's something that just happened to him.**

**Well, God is not buying those excuses. There is one thing that God will never accept for sin and that is an alibi.**

**Everybody can give a reason why they sin, rather than accept personal responsibility. Is this true of you? Ask God to give you His power to be a person of integrity—accepting personal responsibility, then asking for His forgiveness and His strength to stop passing the buck.**