

**ECCLESIA
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
Pastor Luther H. Holmes, Jr.
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Bible Enrichment Series**

**NINE TESTS EVERY BELIEVER MUST FACE
LESSON 3 – THE MOTIVATION TEST**

KEY CHAPTER: James 1:1-12 (Message Bible)

1 I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello!

Faith Under Pressure

2-4 Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So, don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work, so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

5-8 If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

9-11 When down-and-outers get a break, cheer! And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer! Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't ever count on it. You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the "prosperous life." At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing.

¹² Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

Introduction

We are living in a time that most of us never would have expected or predicted. Now more than ever we recognize that we do not know what tomorrow holds.

In times like these the question must be asked, how should we, as followers of Jesus, respond during these unusual and uncertain times?

Tonight, we turn to the book of James where we have this reminder: that while trials are certain and come in all shapes and sizes, joy is possible as we recognize God's purpose and provision in the midst of our trials.

Context

James was the half-brother of Jesus, and he was a pastor in the church in Jerusalem in the years following Jesus's return to Heaven. ***James is writing to real people, in a real situation.*** These are people who are facing real trials. As individuals and as a church we must strive to have a view toward joy in the midst of unexpected situations. We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we can trust that God will use our trials to accomplish His purposes. As we navigate uncertain times, we must trust His plan, submit to His work in us and go to Him in faith asking for wisdom.

The first phrase of verse 2 provides a call that frames the entire section that follows. James is calling on believers who are facing trials to consider their trials with joy. On its own this may seem like a call to unsubstantiated happiness, but the verses that follow reveal the reason saints can truly, *count it all joy*.

We can experience joy in our trials by knowing that our trials have a purpose (1:2-4) As we face trials, we can have this hope: That God is using our trials to make us perfect and complete. The call for joy or rejoicing in the knowledge that God uses trials to bring us to maturity is a theme throughout the New Testament (≡; Romans 5:1-5)

How can we endure with joy?) Jesus endured the cross with joy as his motivation (Hebrews 12:2) While Jesus endured the cross with joy, He still experienced pain, grief and sorrow (Matthew 26:37-39). Enduring with joy does not mean we don't experience pain, but it does mean that we have hope and purpose in the process. We can experience joy in our trials by knowing that God provides wisdom for the journey. In times of difficulty, we become acutely aware of our need for wisdom. It is easy to feel lost or unprepared. God does not leave us alone to find our way through our trials, He generously and graciously gives wisdom to those who ask in faith.

God is ready and willing to give wisdom, but there is a qualifier, we must ask believing that He will give it. We must trust that He will hear and answer our request. The person who doubts is described as double-minded and will not receive wisdom from God.

In this series, we will examine "Nine Tests Every Believer Must Face" knowing that they're all working together for our good. The nine tests for our learning are:

- (1) The Wilderness Test. (alone in storms)
- (2) The Test of Time (just waiting and waiting)
- (3) The Motivation Test (Doing the right things for the wrong reasons?)
- (4) The Failure Test (We all fail if we try to do something)
- (5) The Self Will Test (Are you stubborn in your ways?)
- (6) The Discouragement Test
- (7) The Misunderstanding Test
- (8) The Frustration Test
- (9) The Servant Test

Tonight, we begin with Lesson 3

**THE MOTIVATION TEST
(Doing the Right Things for The Wrong Reasons?)**

***John 3:25** John's followers got into an argument with a Jewish man about a ceremony of washing.*

***John 3:26** They went to John and said, "Rabbi, you spoke about a man when you were with him east of the Jordan. He is now baptizing people, and everyone is going to him. "*

***John 3:27** John replied: No one can do anything unless God in heaven allows it.*

***John 3:28** You surely remember how I told you that I am not the Messiah. I am only the one sent ahead of him.*

***John 3:29** At a wedding the groom is the one who gets married. The best man is glad just to be there and to hear the groom's voice. That's why I am so glad.*

***John 3:30** Jesus must become more important, while I become less important.*

Why do we fast, pray and sacrifice?

ARE WE SEEKING THE GLORY OF MEN HERE, ARE WE FASTING TO BE SEEN? ARE WE LIKEN UNTO THE PHARISEE?

- The Motivation Test occurs when God exposes the Believer to inner and outer forces that INFLUENCE our decision-making process.
- The Motivation Test will reveal the inner intentions, thoughts, values, and priorities that cause the type of DECISIONS we make.
- In the Motivation Test we discover whether we do something for OUR GOOD or for the GLORY OF GOD.
- The Motivation Test exposes the UNRIGHTEOUS drives that are hidden deep within our heart.

Lucifer fell because he wanted the throne of God and to be WORSHIPPED.

Korah wanted to be LEADER of the people of Israel.

Balaam wanted the RICHES of Balak

Demas loved the THINGS of this world.

Pharisees loved the praises of MEN more than the praises of God.

WE CAN DO THE RIGHT THING FOR THE WRONG REASONS.

- Paul said there were those who preached the gospel out of ENVY and RIVALRY. He goes on to say they are preaching out of selfish AMBITION. Their aim was to stir up trouble for the Apostle Paul.
- Can you imagine out of ENVY and RIVALRY they are preaching a message of peace and love?
- Why do WRONG MOTIVES occur?

A person put their own needs first...rather than the purposes of **GOD**.
A person put their own needs first...rather than the needs of other **PEOPLE**.

- They desire to be the center of ATTENTION—even at the expense of those around them.
- They have SELF-AMBITION of acquiring influence, power, or wealth.
- They have dreams becoming known or seen and admired by many.

Problems with IMPROPER MOTIVATIONS

- We MANIPULATE PEOPLE for our own advantages
 - We MISTREAT PEOPLE for our own advantages
 - We STEAL glory that belongs to GOD
 - c. We STEAL glory that belongs to OTHERS.
 - d. We ARE SELFISH in our heart and SELF-PROMOTING in our spirit
 - We LIMIT our willingness to SERVE or SACRIFICE to those areas wherein it will provide us AN ADVANTAGE.
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- PEOPLE are willing to give as long as God repays THEM for their giving.
 - PEOPLE are willing to serve as long as people NOTICE and give ample praise.
 - PEOPLE are willing to sacrifice as long as they find an ADVANTAGE in the sacrifice.

- PEOPLE are willing to worship as long as they find FULFILLMENT and BLESSING in the act.
 - Improper motives cause us to COMPROMISE values that were meant to guide us.
 - Improper motives cause us to be SEPARATED from God's presence.
 - Improper motives cause us to be separated from God's FAVOR.
 - Improper motives cause us to be LESS than what we could have been with God's favor.
 - Improper motives cause us to be doomed to TEMPORARY successes that will not be seen in eternity.
 - Improper motives can cause us to be DOOMED eternally after judgment.

The advantages of a proper motivation.

- God is glorified by our ACTIONS.
- God's PURPOSES are fulfilled in the earth
- People are blessed by our ACTIONS
- Our heart and spirit are PURE and UNTAINTED.
- Our blessed FUTURE in God is assured.

Acceptable motives

- I am motivated by the DESIRE TO BE PURE IN HEART
- I am motivated by the DESIRE TO BE OBEDIENT
- I am motivated by the DUTY OF BEING A SERVANT
- I am motivated by the DESIRE TO GLORIFY GOD

John was glad just to hear the VOICE of the Bridegroom.

John spent his life pointing others to CHRIST

John was willing to LOSE so that Christ may gain.

John died ALONE under the mistreatment of jealousy.

John is called the greatest PROPHET by Christ

God gives us the Motivation Test to:

- Reveal our hearts and expose improper motives

In order to receive the promises, we must pass the Time Test.

Notes: _____

