



JAMES 1-3 | DEVOTED

# STEADFAST

James 1.1-8, 12-15 (Proverbs 9)

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## Talk About

What do you think people in our society regard as “wisdom”? Where would people think that you’d get it from?

What characteristics does the Bible lead you to expect from someone who is “mature in Christ”? (consider Matt. 7.24-27; Gal. 5.22-26; Eph. 4.14-16., Heb 12.1-3, plus other passages you might think of)

Think of a Christian who you consider to be mature in their faith (not merely someone who has been a Christian for a long time). What does maturity look like in this person?

## Read James 1.1-8, 12-15

### Explore

On what basis can James tell us to “consider it pure joy ... whenever we face trials of many kinds”? What is God doing with these trials? (see also I Pet. 1.6-7, Heb. 12.6-11)

Are trials only the “bad” things or can “good” things be trials as well? (have a look at Proverbs 30.7-9 for some insight here)

Of what does a trial consist? Is it just the “event” or is there a deeper aspect to what is happening?

How do our “trials” test our faith?

## A Bit Extra

### Wisdom in the Bible

*To be wise in the Bible is to live a life in line with reality.*

*Finding wisdom means discovering how to follow the order that God has built into his world.*

*The foundation of wisdom is ‘the fear of the Lord’ [Proverbs 9v10].*

*That it is granted by God ‘from above’ acknowledges his character as the foundation for our experience and so as we approach trials we do so knowing his love, sovereign purpose, and his power in creation and redemption.*

*Biblical wisdom teaches that God is at work even though we may not be able to discern his purpose [Job] as well as the futility of seeking ultimate meaning in the things of this world [Ecclesiastes].*

*The Dictionary of Biblical Theology,  
“James”, by P.H.Davids*

Think of a particular trial you have faced: how has the trial prompted doubts about the person, power and purposes of God (be specific)? How did God answer those doubts?

James maps out a road with a destination. See if you can plot the course of this road?

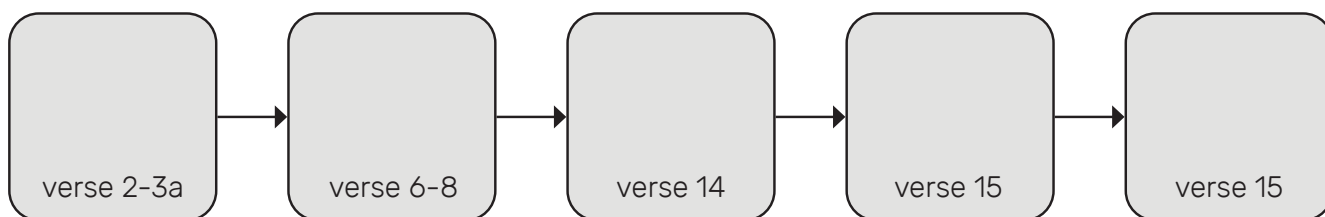


In James 1.5 what is identified as one essential element that is needed to walk this road to it's destination? Where does this come from? (See also James 3.17, Proverbs 2.6)

What does James tell us about how will God respond to a request for this "essential element"? What will he, and won't he, do? How does this encourage you?

What might we be tempted to doubt and so become “double-minded and unstable”?

James maps out another road with another destination. See if you can plot its course?



What image does the way James describes this road in v14-15 conjure? How does give us insight into how the “process of sin” operates in our hearts? (see Proverbs 9.13-18 for more insight into this image).

## ✝ Jesus in James

*Like the Old Testament wisdom books which assume that those reading them have a relationship with God through his covenant (spoken of as “fear of the Lord”), James also assumes that his readers have a relationship with God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus. This means that the gospel of grace is not prominent as it is in Paul’s letters. So we need to be more explicit about asking “how does Jesus and his gospel”?*

*The writer to the Hebrews records that the Lord Jesus, “the pioneer of ... salvation” was made “perfect through what he suffered” (Heb. 2.10). When we*

*note that the word perfect is the same word as uses in James 2.4, we see that Jesus himself went through the same process of refining through suffering as we do. One result is that he is able to be our representative, "fully human in every way", so that he might be our a "merciful and faithful high priest in service to God" who not only made atonement for our sin, but is also "able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb 2.17-28).*

*It is also worth noting that although Jesus walked perfectly in wisdom, he suffered the fate of fools, for us.*

## Action

Do you see "maturity" in Christ as a goal you desire? Why, or why not?

What is your reaction to James' teaching that God uses trials to bring us to maturity?

How might we "get wisdom"? (See Proverbs 9.1-12). What practical steps might you be able to take?

From this study, what might you say to a brother or sister in Christ who is asking “why” when facing a particular trial? (note: you will always need to do this with wisdom, love and sensitivity)

What barriers do you face to considering it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds? Of what do you need to repent?

Often our emotions entangle us unhelpfully when we face trials. Martin Lloyd-Jones writes, “Oh the havoc that is wrought, and the tragedy, the misery, and the wretchedness that are to be found in the world, simply because people do not know how to handle their own feelings”. How might we better “handle our feelings”, especially in the face of trials? What tools has God given us?

How does Jesus, our representative, high priest, and substitute provide comfort, reassurance, strength and encouragement when we face “trials of many kinds”?