

STRAIGHT TALK WITH BROTHER JAMES

Part 3

Their **Primary Source** of Trials

James 1:9-12

Their main **SOURCE** of trials: **SOCIO-ECONOMIC** standing vs. 9-11

The *'lowly brother'* – **POOR** and socially **INSIGNIFICANT** vs. 9

Boast about their current heavenly **DIGNITY** and future **ACCLAIM**

The *'rich'* – **WEALTH** and **SIGNIFICANT** social standing vs. 10

Boast that these are not their truest **IDENTITY**

CONCLUSIONS:

Poverty, Wealth, and socio-economic standing are all **TEMPORARY** vs. 10-11

Their most **ACCURATE** experience is '**GOD** and **ME**'

Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³ Thus says the Lord: "Let not the **wise man boast** in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,

²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and **knows me**, that I am the Lord who **practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth**. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

The final addend in the **MATHEMATICS** of Trials vs. 12

'remains steadfast' = **CHEERFULLY** standing firm

'stood the test' = **ENDURED** to the end of the trial

'will receive the crown of life' = **LITERAL** heavenly reward

'God has promised to those that love Him' = **STORING** up treasure in heaven

TRIALS + MATURITY = JOY + **A REWARD**

Life Group Discussion Questions – January 19, 2025

James 1:9-11 *Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. (ESV)*

DISCOVER

1. From a worldly perspective, describe what it means to be rich or poor. Compare and contrast the worldly standard of wealth with someone that God would see as rich in spiritual things.
2. Thinking with a spiritual mindset, who do you see as being rich? Are there times, even now, when you have felt spiritually poor? What changed or needs to change for you to see yourself as spiritually rich?
3. In what ways are those who are monetarily rich and poor alike? Describe some of the friction points between socioeconomic classes. Which of the friction points are justified, if any?
4. What goes wrong when we compare ourselves to others? Are there some good and valid areas in which we should compare ourselves to each other? Explain.

EXPLORE

1. Read James 1:9-12 and Jeremiah 9:23-24. What boasting is encouraged in this scripture? People work hard to buy and use material goods. Is it so wrong to show off a little? How should a lowly person boast? How should a person of significant status boast? Why should a lofty person not boast in his exaltation or is that not what James is saying?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10. What are the strengths and weaknesses for which Paul boasts? How does it make sense for Paul to boast of the things which show his weaknesses? In what way would you characterize Paul's boasting about others? See 2 Corinthians 7:4 and 14, 10:13 and 15, and 1 Thessalonians 2:19
3. Read Matthew 19:16-26. Based on these words of Jesus, which is more dangerous or involves greater temptation, being someone with plenty of money, or someone with little? Explain.

EXPERIENCE

1. How is your identity developed over time or is it something you are born with? Who knows you best, you or God? Why does that matter? In heaven, we will be fully absorbed with the holiness of God. What does that mean to you? What does seeking God, in scripture and truth, change about what we think of ourselves and others?
2. List five questions that God will not ask you when you get to heaven. How should your list influence your life today and your relationship with God?
3. What do you possess that will pass away when you enter heaven? What do you expect to retain and treasure in heaven?
4. Phil taught us that TRIALS + MATURITY = JOY + REWARDS Why is Rewards coupled with Joy? How do Rewards move us towards maturity in Christ?

PRAY

Father God, we have nothing to boast about but You. You spoke us into existence, ordained the number of our days, created an amazing world for us, sent Your Son to live, die and resurrect so that we might live. What do You ask for in return? That we would love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us not look down on those with less nor be jealous of those with more. Instead, may we be steadfast in our relationship with You and those entrusted to our care. In the Mighty Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.