

DAY 2: Read James 1:16-18

1. In verse 16, James writes “Do not be deceived.” How are we deceived when it comes to temptation? What are some common excuses we use to shift the blame from ourselves when we give in to temptation?
2. How does verse 17 describe God? Because this is how God is, what should our response to God be?
3. What do verses 18-19 say about what God the Father does for us? See also Psalm 119:142 and John 17:17.

To Dig Deeper: The first fruits of creation.

Verse 18 refers to humankind as a kind of first fruits of creation. What do you think this means? See Ex. 23:16 and Leviticus 23:9-14 in *The Book of the Covenant*. The first bit of grain ready for harvest was called the “First Fruits”, and that portion belonged to the Lord, and was to be dedicated to Him and brought to the Tabernacle. Similarly, Christ was called *the first fruits of the resurrection* (I Corinthians 15:20). Believers are called the first fruits as they receive the Holy Spirit and are dedicated to God and belong to him (2 Thessalonians 2:13, Revelation 14:4.) The teaching about the first fruits goes throughout the Scriptures.

DAY 3: Read James 1:19-21

1. Verse 19 provides helpful instructions for our lives. What are they? How have these instructions been a challenge for you, and what have you done or are you doing to meet these goals?
2. In verse 20, what does it mean when James writes that the anger or wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God? See also Matthew 5:22 in Jesus’ *Sermon on the Mount*. What does Jesus see as the outcome of our wrath?
3. What kinds of anger are appropriate? What kinds are inappropriate? How does this teaching relate to Romans 12:19: “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*”
4. What is James’ answer to anger in verse 21?

DAY 4: Read James 1:22-25

1. One of the most important points in the book of James is his call for us to not just be hearers of the word, but doers. How can we deceive ourselves by 1) hearing the word without responding to it? Or 2) becoming aware of our areas of personal ugliness and then doing nothing about them?
2. According to verse 23, how is God's law perfect and liberating? How does living in harmony with God's law bring blessing?
3. Why should one upset her deep inner peace from meditation on God's law by getting involved in a world that is sometimes sordid and often disappointing? Is love a feeling or a verb?

To Dig Deeper: God's perfect and liberating law

James 1:25 says God's law is perfect and liberating (or gives freedom). How is this so; what does this mean? See Psalms 19:7-11; John 8:31-32; Galatians 2:4; 6:2; Romans 8:2 and 1 Peter 2:16.

DAY 5: Read James 1:26-27

1. Why do we need a rein on our tongues? (*Note that some translations use the word "bridle" instead of rein.*) What are the ways in which our loose tongues are displayed? How do we brag about our own goodness? How do we rationalize our misdeeds, and cover up our shortcomings? How do we deny our weaknesses? How do we erect walls to protect ourselves from criticism?
2. What does James say in verse 27 about religion that is pure and faultless? Think of the Old Testament's *quartet of the vulnerable: widows, orphans, aliens and the poor*. In today's terms, this might mean women without adequate means of support, children from dysfunctional families, immigrants, and the poor. If we are going to be *doers of the word*, how should we be working to improve their lot?
3. In verse 27, what does it mean to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world? (See also Romans 12:2, James 4:4, II Peter 1:4 and 2:20.) If the Biblical notion of *The World* include its institutions and customs, then to what extent should we examine the way we earn our money, fight our wars, and socialize, which may have a detrimental effect on others?

