James 1:9-18

**9**Let the believer[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A9-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-30258a)] who is lowly boast in being raised up, **10**and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. **11**For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

**12**Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A9-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-30261b)] has promised to those who love him. **13**No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. **14**But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; **15**then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. **16**Do not be deceived, my beloved.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A9-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-30265c)]

**17**Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A9-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-30266d)] **18**In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Last week we read the first part of James’ letter to the Christians. This was about the challenge of faith- about the joys of trials.

So How was your week? Were you able to see those joys in your trials? I really hope you were- and I know it is not easy at all. But it is definitely worth it when we can do that.

This week we are moving on in our scripture with James sticking with the first chapter. James takes this time to speak to his brothers and sisters in Christ of the snares or traps put before us- … so the traps that James speaks of in these verses today include- temptation and wealth- with us understanding that one can lead right into the other.

Wealth is usually a pretty sticky subject when it comes to church- and James isn’t saying at all not to have wealth, what he is talking about is an arrogant wealth- a wealth that does not serve the Lord and may lead straight into the temptation and evil he continues to speak of in his letter. Having wealth isn’t a bad thing- but how do you use that wealth? Do you parade it out for everyone to see… new cars, new cabinets, new clothes? And fail to give? That would be arrogant wealth and that is the wealth James saw and was trying to warn against. James wants us to learn to trust God and his word rather than the snares- the trappings of the world.

James speaks of this wealth and prosperity; this arrogant wealth much like a wild flower- so lets take that as our visual this week- A beautiful field of wildflowers – bright and blooming and oh so beautiful- and the sun comes out… to help encourage and grow and continues to take the beauty of these wildflowers and scorch the leaves, burn the roots… leave them at the end of the day looking more like weeds than the wildflowers they set out to be that morning- that is arrogant wealth.

“In the midst of a busy life, they will whither away.” They- or maybe it is we- that have that arrogant wealth.

James echoes the voice of Isaiah,

# Isaiah 40:6-8

**6**A voice says, “Cry out!”
    And I said, “What shall I cry?”
All people are grass,
    their constancy is like the flower of the field.
**7**The grass withers, the flower fades,
    when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
    surely the people are grass.
**8**The grass withers, the flower fades;
    but the word of our God will stand forever.

Both Isaiah and James are saying- there is no flower that stands without the word of God.

James then goes on to say, “Blessed is anyone who endures temptation.” Finally a line that is easy to understand- Except… that isn’t all James wants Christians to know- it isn’t just “go you- you weren’t tempted or you resisted temptation.” He also wants you to understand something deeper- He wants you to understand that temptation is everywhere, but guess what- God didn’t put it there.

Sometimes we believe that God tests us- he temps us- he wants us to prove we can get through the test and make it through the temptation- but that’s not our God- that’s not the God that loves us… as James told us in verse 5 … who gives to us generously and ungrudgingly…” Why would he give to us generously and test us? Well the answer is he wouldn’t-

Let me read these verses to you from the Message

**13-15**Don’t let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, “God is trying to trip me up.” God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one’s way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

**16-18**So, my very dear friends, don’t get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures.”

This is all about accountability folks- God loves us so much he is not going to try to trip us up- he wants us to succeed. That first line **15**Don’t let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, “God is trying to trip me up.” So when this person- when you under pressure to be tempted its easier for you t blame God for that temptation than it is for us for being tempted. He is not thinking of ways to make life harder- Oh lets see what I can do to mess with Shannon today… No way- He is saying… let me see how many ways I can shoe Shannon I love her… and if I chose the temptation before me- that’s on me. That’s me not listening (again) not trusting… being that wave we spoke about last week and letting the wind push and pull on me… it isn’t God … a god of love or generosity putting an obstacle in my way- God doesn’t work that way. God is impervious to evil- we are not.

But it is easy for those outside of Christianity to believe He is the one putting the obstacles up.

But our scripture tells us- Every desirable and beneficial thing comes from Heaven- and who is giving us these gifts- well God- the Father of Light, the Father of Love- he isn’t tricking us… And James wants you to hear those words- to listen to what is being said…

Accountability is a tough one- I see there are really two types of people- those that take no accountability for their actions- and those that take accountability for everyone’s actions… I myself have to be reminded that I am not responsible for the choices those people in my life make- they have to bear their part… they have to be accountable in order to grow and learn. And we as Gods children do as well.

As Christians we do as well. God gave us his word- and James reminds us of that in order for us to know what we are supposed to be doing- to understand he is the God of love and generosity and although there are temptations- there is arrogant wealth- we have a choice… and we need to be accountable whether we step in that snare or not- because God didn’t set the snares.

These snares… the arrogant wealth the temptations are like the wildflowers both James and Isaiah speak of… and like the wildflowers they are here today and gone tomorrow. Since all of that is temporary- what is permanent? What should we hold tight to as we continue to face the challenges of faith and snares before us? God. His word. When God speaks things happen to us and in us … His words are set as to change us… change the world around us help us see differently- maybe the next time a temptation is put in front of us…. And this change is what we need to strive for- because if we are looking only looking out at those wildflowers and although they are beautiful and we don’t continue to grow and change… that’s all we will see… the new cars, cabinets, clothing…

Friends we need to heed James letter avoid the snares, hold tight to the permanence of Gods Word and look at things from the inside out.. We need to

see things as God sees them.