

The Rich Poor and the Poor Rich

Pastor Jeff Bucknam | James 1:9–11

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help group discussion. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. Soli Deo Gloria.

ICE BREAKER: Share what you might endure for a big reward. For example, for a million dollars: Would you live in Antarctica for a year? Only eat pizza for 3 years? Live with a few hundred snakes in a room for 48 hours? Or think of another example.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:

James was writing to a dispersed audience (James 1:1). Read Acts 8:1 to help you understand what his dispersed audience looked like.

How does having a better understanding of James' audience make his statement in James 1:9 a radical command? How might the upside-down nature of James' instructions shocked the original audience?

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:

The Gospel of the Kingdom can appear upside-down.

Notice (1) the model of humility Jesus provides in Philippians 2:3-8; (2) what He provides for us through His cross in 2 Corinthians 5:21; and (3) the way Jesus calls us to live a life of following Him in Luke 9:23-24.

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:

How does remembering your identity and status in Christ inform how you see financial struggles or “lowly” circumstances? How can we guard our minds from falling into the trap of thinking wealth will fix our problems?

How might your pursuit of success be distracting you from pursuing Christ? What’s an area in your life where you can apply Christ’s teaching on wealth?

PARENTING MOMENT AND FAMILY FOCUS:

With our kids: Decide on something with your kids to give away to someone. Pray for the Lord to lead on who to give it to. Help your kids give it away during the week as the Lord leads.

With your spouse: Pray for wisdom on finances. Talk together: Is there any way that we are relying on riches rather than God?

FURTHER STUDY:

For corrective lenses to see the world and what we value in the world, leading to how we live in the world as Christians, read *The Therapeutic Gospel* by David Powlison at 9marks.org.

Meditate on Luke 6:20-26 this week.



True Religion

THE BOOK OF JAMES

QUESTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK'S SERMON: James 1:12-18

This page gets us into the text for the next sermon. The more familiarity we have with God's Word, the better we can see God and all that He has for us.

In the days leading up to next week, set aside a few minutes to read the text and reflect on these questions. A prayer to start: 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law' - Psalm 119:18

1. As we look toward next week's text and sermon, read James 1:12-18. James returns to the theme of trials (see also James 1:2-4). What kind of trial is he describing now, and what details in these verses help you understand the nature of this trial?
2. What is the result of remaining steadfast under trials in v. 12? How does that goal begin, as described in v. 18?
3. Since God doesn't "tempt" (v. 13), then how should we think about God "testing," like with Abraham in Genesis 22?
4. How does James describe God's character in v. 13 and v. 17? How does knowing these things about God help us face our trials?
5. In this text, James emphasizes our internal temptations. How does the imagery of the conceiving-birthing-growing help us understand James' point better? Where does sin start? (See v. 13-15).
6. What in this text confuses you?
7. What in this text compels you?
8. Spend some time in prayer to God, thanking Him for His Word, and asking Him to help you 'remain steadfast' in the faith even through your trials.