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January 2, 2011

“An Eternal Perspective”  
James 1:9-17

James has spoken about unwavering faith and now turns his attention to the contrasting trials of poverty and riches. Both require wisdom (verse 5) and an *eternal perspective*. The phrase of “low degree” means of humble circumstances, low rank, dependence or poverty. This brother must remember that in Christ he is an heir of all the riches of God (Eph. 1:3-14). The rich man likewise must remember not to trust in the uncertain riches (1Tim. 6:17) of this world. All that he possesses, including his own self, like the flower of the field, will not last (Isa. 40:6-8; 1Pet. 1:23-25). Those who endure trials are blessed (1Pet. 1:6-7) as they await a heavenly crown.

The same Greek word translated trials in the preceding verses is translated tempted in verse 13. God is not the author of temptation, nor can He be tempted (Matt. 4:7), as He is perfect and holy. God *tests* us to strengthen our faith and dependence on Him (John 6:6). Satan *tempts* us to destroy us by falling into sin (Gen. 3:1-7; Matt. 6:13; Rom. 6:23; 1Cor. 7:5). Christians also wrestle with our own lusts (strong desires, not necessarily sinful; Luke 22:15) that the Bible calls the flesh (Rom. 1:24, 6:11-18, 23, 7:5, 23-25; Gal. 5:16-17; 1Tim. 6:9).

The apostle John identifies three enemies of believers in the letter of 1John. Two are from the outside, the devil (1John 3:8-10, 5:19) and the world (1John 2:15-16, 5:19). The other is the inner lust of the flesh that James and Paul and Peter identify. There is the lust of the flesh and the eyes and the pride of life (1John 2:16). These are not of God the Father, but of the world. Since these are not of God we are to flee from them (2Tim. 2:22) and abstain from them because they war against the soul (1Pet. 2:11). John writes that the world and its’ lusts pass away but he that does the will of God lives forever (1John 2:17)! This is the *eternal perspective* that comes when the *eternal* Spirit of God indwells His children (1Cor. 2:16, 6:19-20).

James concludes by warning not to fall into error and deception (Matt. 22:29). Every good and perfect gift comes from the good and perfect God (verse 17). That is the *eternal perspective* by which we are to live our life!

