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***Developing Spiritual Traction***

 ***for Life’s Journey***

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**James 1:12-18 (NLT)**

12 God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

16 So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

**We have a call to three faith goals that give us spiritual traction.**

**We will develop spiritual traction when we…**

1. **Broaden our understanding of blessing.**

**James1:2-4**

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

**James 1:12** “God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.”

**What the Bible tells us about blessing:**

1. **Good times are not a sign of God’s approval. (e.g. rain on just and unjust Mt 5:45)**
2. **Trouble and difficulty are not a sign of God’s disapproval. (Beatitude; James 1; John 16:31)**
3. **Trials and adversity are a blessing (Matt 5:10-11)**
4. **Prosperity can be a curse as well as a blessing. (Dt 6:10-12)**

**Romans 8:28**

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

**John 16:33**

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

**Eph 1:3**

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.”

1. **Learn to Resist Sinful temptations in faith.**

**James 1:13-15**

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

**These verses give us two important insights on temptations:**

1. **Where temptations come from.**

**Matthew 15:19 (NLT)**

19 For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.

1. **What temptations lead to.**

**James 1:15**

These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

**The Bible gives us at least four strategies for coping with temptations. God wants us to:**

* + - 1. **learn to avoid (Lord’s prayer - lead us not into temptation)**
			2. **flee (Paul to Timothy flee youthful lusts 2Tim 2:22)**
			3. **resist (James Resist the devil and he will flee from you 4:7)**
			4. **replace (Be transformed by the renewing of your mind Rom 12:1)**
1. **Grow in our understanding of how much God loves us.**

**James 1:16-18**

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Which reminds me of a recent Facebook post (**picture – “How interesting you should ask” - Wm DeBurgh)**

**Proverbs 19:3 (NLT)**

“People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the Lord.”

**James 1:18**

He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

(Conclusion)

**John 15:13 (NIV)**

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.