

## Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it difficult to be thankful when things are not going well?
2. What do you generally value more: earthly belongings or spiritual blessings? How is that evident in your life?
3. When finances are tight, what's your attitude like? What does that reveal about your value system?
4. If given the choice: no trials and no spiritual reward, or trials and a spiritual reward, what would you choose?
5. How does your thinking need to change with regard to earthly belongings, spiritual blessings and heavenly rewards?

## Life's Production Plant

James 1:9-12

As James wraps up his discussion about trials, he answers the question, "What do trials produce?" As we've already seen trials aren't random events or bad luck, they are divinely orchestrated opportunities for us to grow spiritually. They are the factories which produce in us what God intends.

Trials produce gratitude for spiritual blessings. (9a)

Even the believer with no physical possessions or social status has reason to rejoice. God has made them part of His family, and they have all of the spiritual blessings which come to those who are in Christ. A life devoid of earthly abundance can be lived joyfully because of the exaltation which Christ has wrought.

Trials produce perspective on earthly belongings. (9b-11)

God has blessed some believers financially, and they must be careful not to put their trust in what they've been given. No matter how much money you have, it can be gone in an instant. Like a flower wilting in the summer heat, you're bank account can wilt as well. Therefore, don't pursue "stuff"; pursue Christ.

Trials produce approval and eternal rewards. (12)

James has been beating this drum repeatedly—trials have an ultimate purpose. In verses 3-4, he told us that trials produce endurance and endurance produces maturity. In verse 12, we are given an even wider look at the purpose of trials. Trials produce endurance, and endurance is God's means of approving us for eternal reward. There is a heavenly crown waiting for those who joyfully endure trials for the glory of God.