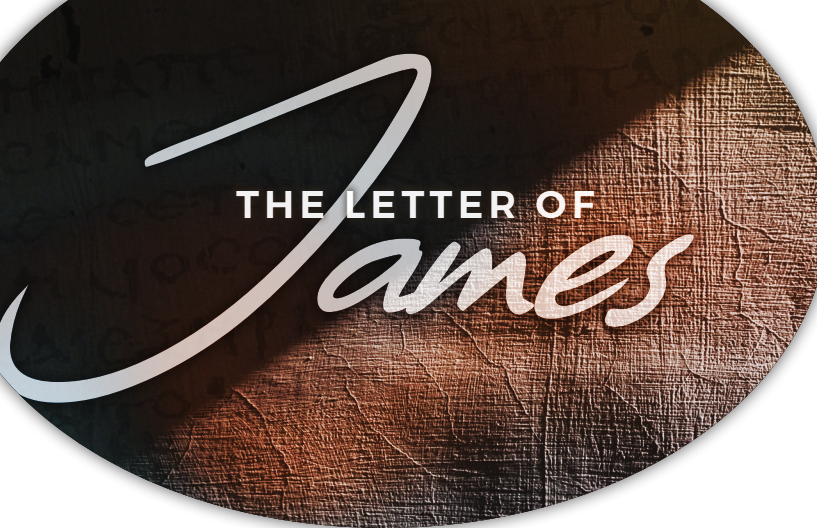




THE LETTER OF *James*

AUGUST 9, 2026

The Goodness of God

JAMES 1:16-18

Life has a way of causing us to question the goodness of God. Trials bring pain. Temptations bring confusion. Suffering can cloud our vision until we begin to wonder, “If God is good, why is this happening?”

James writes to believers who were enduring intense hardship. They had been scattered because of persecution, faced poverty and daily pressures. Yet James reminds them that while circumstances change, God never does. Notice the progression in the passage: 1) trials and temptations are common to all people (1:2-15), 2) We are warned not to be deceived by the evil one (1:16). Satan’s oldest lie is to make us doubt God’s character. In the Garden of Eden, he suggested that God was withholding something good from Adam and Eve. He still whispers the same lie today.

James answers that deception with one of Scripture’s clearest declarations about God’s character: **God is always good.** His goodness never changes with our circumstances. Therefore, when trials and temptations come, we must anchor ourselves in His unchanging goodness. God’s goodness is constant and serves as a source of strength when facing trials and temptations.

Key thought:

You can be certain that God’s goodness never changes. When facing trials and temptations, lean into God’s goodness as your source of strength.

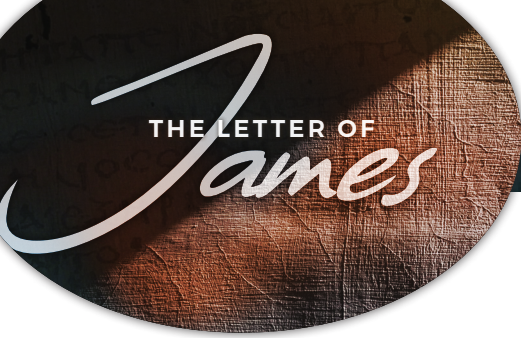
The constant goodness of God can be seen through:

I. The Glory of God (v. 17a)

“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

The phrase “Father of lights” reminds us that God is the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars. Every sunrise declares His faithfulness. Every star in the night sky testifies to His majesty. The lights of heaven illuminate the earth, but they also reveal the glory of the One who made them. James begins by pointing us upward. Every good gift has its source in God. God is good. God alone is absolutely good. God is the source of all that is good.

(Matthew 7:9-11; John 1:9, John 8:12; Mark 10:17-22)



II. The Grace of God (v. 17b)

"...with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

James now contrasts the changing heavenly lights with the unchanging Creator. The sun casts different shadows throughout the day. Seasons change. Eclipses occur. But God experiences no change whatsoever.

His love never diminishes.

His mercy never expires.

His faithfulness never weakens.

His grace never runs dry.

Because God does not change, His promises remain trustworthy.

When trials come, we may feel abandoned.

When temptation comes, we may wonder if God has forgotten us.

James reminds us that appearances can deceive us—but God's character never does.

Hebrews 13:8 (NASB95) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Malachi 3:6 (NASB95) For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

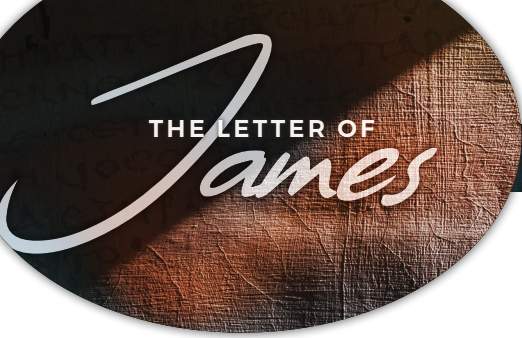
III. The Greatest Gift from God (v. 18)

"In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

James reaches the pinnacle of God's goodness. The greatest evidence of God's goodness is not found in material blessings but in spiritual rebirth. God "brought us forth"—He gave us new life through the gospel. In 1:18, birth by the Word is a deliberate contrast to the awful birth of sin in 1:15. The instrument by which spiritual birth comes is God's Word. God does not give birth to temptation, but to regeneration.

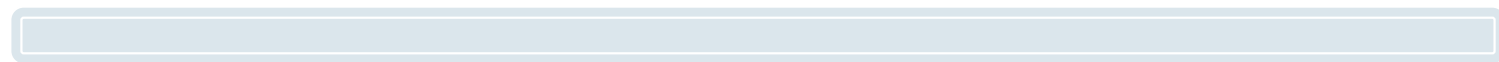
We are reminded that believers are "a kind of first fruits among His creatures." Believers are God's redeemed people, set apart for Him and serving as a foretaste of the new creation that is yet to come.

(Deuteronomy 18:4; Leviticus 23:10-14; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Romans 8:23, 16:5; Revelation 14:4)



God's greatest gift is not wealth, health, or earthly success.
God's greatest gift is new life through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:32 (NASB95) He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?



Take Away:

James calls us to **reject deception** and **embrace truth**. When trials come, remember:

- God's glory never fades.
- God's grace never changes.
- God's greatest gift is secure forever.

Therefore, when temptation whispers that God is not good, answer with the truth of Scripture.