

Discussion Questions for “The Evil Within”
James 1:12-18, Pastor Trey Sonnenberg, Weekend of March 8, 2026

Outline:

Three Truths about God:

1. God gives good gifts to those who love Him (vs. 12, 17).
2. God is unchanging, so His promises are sure (vs. 12, 17).
3. God tempts no one (vs. 13, 16).

Three Truths about Us:

1. We live with evil desires (v. 14).
2. When we give in to these desires, we sin (v. 15a).
3. We deserve death because of our sin (v. 15b).

God has granted us eternal life through Christ, by the “Word of Truth” (v. 18).

Questions:

1. What words, images, or ideas in James 1:12–18 stand out to you the most when you read the passage? Why do you think they stand out?
2. Verse 12 is a perfect segway from verses 2-11 and 13-18. Why is this? How is the reward motivating in the “fight?”
3. Why do you think James links endurance in hardship with love for God rather than simply discipline, strength, or willpower?
4. Why do you think James spends so much time clarifying God’s character in this passage before talking about human sin?
5. How does James’ explanation challenge the common tendency to blame outside circumstances or other people for our sin?
6. What does this passage suggest about the importance of dealing with desires early in the process rather than after temptations have already taken root?
7. How does this idea of new birth from God (v. 18) contrast with the earlier description of sin giving birth to death (v.15)? What does this reveal about the difference between human effort and God’s grace?
8. What is one area of temptation or recurring struggle where you need to stop blaming circumstances and instead honestly confront the desires in your own heart before God this week?