

**Word notes Sunday 5/7/09 – James Williams**  
**The Crown of Life**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Texts: James 1:12-18

In his letter, James 1:12-18, writes about both the difficulties of life and God's gifts, especially that of Life - the Crown or prize awarded for running the race Jesus has called us to. The Jews to whom James was writing were being persecuted by their fellow Jews for following Jesus and also under persecution of the Roman occupation. They had a cultural mindset of superstition that the stars or the gods were to blame for the difficulties of life and the temptations they experienced. James sets out a Christian perspective of the human condition (difficulties, opposition, temptation to sin), the nature of God (unchanging, giver of gifts, bringer of Life) and combines these to give an insight into the character of God.

In v 12 we hear of God's promise to those who follow Him even through trials – the Crown of Life. Contrast this with man's own efforts – what guarantee is there that anything will bear fruit, least of all eternal life?

In vv13-16 James addresses the excuses man has for falling prey to temptation and the end result.

In vv17, 18 the Character of God is revealed – that all good things come from Him, He is utterly constant and reliable and has made possible our re-birth into a life full of His gifts. This is in fact God's solution to the human condition- rebirth. (see John 3:1-17)

Practical help for now:

- 1, In Heb 12:1-3 we are urged to consider Jesus (see last week's talk from Roy Wheeler on this passage) and gain hope from the complete work Jesus has done for us – that's why he was able to sit down.
- 2, God's gift of the Holy Spirit – the close presence of God in our lives – sustains and equips us.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

In Jesus' language what might be counted as falling short or messing up? (Suggestion: anything not in Mark 12:30,31)

What things is it acceptable to blame for our failings in society to today? What about us, what are our 'favourite' excuses?

What does James say is the real reason we give in to temptation?

The Crown of Life awaits us – but what of now, do we wait to receive it or run to embrace it? What does that mean to each person?

Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God, James talks about God giving us birth through the word of truth. What is this re-birth and how would you explain it to someone without any knowledge of the Bible?

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Set some goals in witness – make sure they are realistic. Ask individuals if they have personal goals they want to set eg witness to one or more people, specific individuals, how – meet needs, share testimony. Also as a Cell, what goals can you set – eg social events, help non-Christians in need, Prayer Walk/Leaflet Studlands.