WHEN PERCEPTIONS LIE TO US

There is an interesting phenomenon in couples, in which the same pattern of slight disagreements seems to arise. The wife will be telling a story and mention that they left a restaurant at 5:00 P.M. No, the husband will argue, it was at least 5:15; she disagrees, certain that it was 5:00. To the listeners, this detail is unimportant, but it becomes vital to those telling the story because they’re both certain that their perception of the situation was correct. When the stakes are higher—for example, when two people disagree on what the other said out of anger—the tension intensifies. If someone can’t trust their own perception of what happened, whose can they trust?

Humanity defaults to trusting self from an early age. Born with a natural inclination to selfishness and self-reliance, we can stop this trend only by Divine intervention and dependence. Despite our noble intentions for honesty, integrity, and clear vision, it’s easy for us to be confused by the false narratives shared by media, peers, and our selfish nature. It’s hard to distrust our own (learned or natural) perception of reality and trust God’s instead. The irony is that humanity’s natural perception of reality is wrong, in more ways than one. While we are learning self-distrust, it is essential to learn God-trust. Only then can we see clearly.
Write out James 1:9–18 from the translation of your choice. If you are pressed for time, write out James 1:12–16. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in James 1:9–18. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

What are some lies you’ve been tempted to believe when being tempted?

How does love for God help us endure temptation? Why is that a better focus than just “not sinning”?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/jam02-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after reading James 1:9–18? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How does seeing the difference between testing and tempting affect our view of God?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/jam02-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the themes of Hebrews?

Hebrews 13:5, 6
Luke 12:33
1 Timothy 6:6–10
1 Corinthians 10:13
1 Peter 4:12–19
John 3:16

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with James 1:9–18?

Review your memorized verse from James 1:9–18.
Meditate on James 1:9–18 again and look for where Jesus is.

What is He saying to you through the texts of the week?

How does seeing Jesus as an eternal gift affect our understanding of Him? Of salvation?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/jam02-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week's study of the passage, what are personal applications you are convicted of in your life and how you interact with others who are erring?

What are practical applications you must make in your school, family, workplace, and church?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/jam02-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How can we learn to distrust our own perceptions and trust the way God presents situations?

Why is deception required in order for us to fall into sin?

Share a situation where you were tested. What happened? How did you respond?

How is God currently teaching you to trust Him more? In what areas?

Focusing on the inSight section, how are we to respond to others as our perceptions grow in clarity?

Is it possible to be content, but still strive for more? Why or why not?

How does seeing all good things as a gift alter our everyday life?