



09.26.10/James 1:9-11

### Materials Needed

A flower and a potted plant

### Activity

Ask the children what is similar and what is different about the two items (*both are plants, but one is planted in soil, and the other has no roots/soil/water/etc.*). Suppose we put both plants out on the porch, and made sure that they had water. What would they look like after a few days? (*The potted plant would probably look the same, maybe it even grew! The flower would be wilted and dying.*) Ask the children why that would happen? (*The flower didn't have any roots, so it was unable to grow and get the nutrients it needed. The potted plant relied on its root system to get the water and nutrients needed from the soil.*) Tell the children that this is an example of what we are going to talk about tonight.

### Read James 1:9-11

"Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits."

### Question 1

The lowly brother was someone who was poor, probably in a very low position in society. This person didn't have very many possessions, so how could they boast about being in a high position? *James wanted the poor people of the church to stop focusing on what they didn't have, and to realize that they had everything in Christ! He wanted them to stop looking at their standing in the world, but at their standing with God. These believers had an exalted place in the Kingdom as a child of God because they followed Jesus. God provided all their spiritual needs as their loving Father. These early Christians may have been poor in material things, but were overflowing with spiritual riches!*

### Question 2

James said that the rich person should boast in their humiliation – their humble, low position. But rich people are often elevated to the highest positions in society – what did James mean by that? How could they boast about a low position? *James wanted the rich people to understand that all of those material possessions didn't matter to God. It didn't matter how much they had earned or what they had accomplished, or how much power they had acquired – none of that stuff had any influence in God's kingdom! Instead of focusing on all of their "things", they needed to focus on the fact that they, like everyone else, are broken and sinful, in desperate need of a Savior, because when they could see that, then they could trust Christ instead of trusting their wealth. Without Christ, we are eternally empty, but when we trust Christ to save us, we are truly rich because we have a relationship with God!*

### Discussion

Both the flower and the plant were beautiful, but the beauty of the flower didn't last, because the flower had no roots. A rich person might have lots and lots of beautiful things here on earth, but those things won't last – you can't take them with you when you die! If we put our trust in those beautiful things, those things will end up letting us down, leaving us feeling empty. James gave the example of the plant being scorched by the sun – that's what life looks like when we rely on the things of this world to fulfill us and make us happy! We may or may not be considered "rich," but we can all fall into the trap of putting our faith in the things that we own. What are some temporary things in your life that you are tempted to put your trust in instead of putting it in God? (*Let everyone share, answers may vary*)

### Question 3



How could being rich with material possessions be a barrier between you and God? *Answers may include: It might be easy to look down on others, believing that you are better than them because you have more. It might be tempting to think that you earned all of your possessions with your own hard work, rather than having them simply because God gave them to you. You might start relying on all of your material things to make you happy rather than being content as God's child.*

### **Wrap Up**

Whether we are rich or poor, have a high place in society or a low place, God knows where we are and loves to use our circumstances to bring us close to Him. He loves us so much that he sent his Son to die for our sins, so that we could become children of God! That is reason enough to feel both special and humbled at the same time! If you've decided to believe in Jesus, take a minute to think about all that you have BECAUSE of Him – hope, love, relationship with God, eternal life with God, and more. Pray that we would not get bogged down in accumulating more and more “stuff,” but would see our possessions as temporary things so that we would give generously to those in need. Help us to keep our focus on what is lasting - building God's kingdom and storing up spiritual riches! Finally, if you've not yet decided to trust and follow Jesus and you have questions about this, make sure to let your parents know.