

INTRODUCTION

The perfectly chosen lure of a savvy fisherman will attract the attention of a lazy or preoccupied fish. It will draw him out of his hiding and entice him with its color, shape and/or movement and ultimately cause him to take a bite – resulting in his been caught. The fish is catchable because he is tempt able.

How often do we as Christians think that we and the Lord are doing just fine, when WHAM! Seemingly out of nowhere a temptation hits us right where we are weak. And we find yourself asking, “where did THAT come from?”

Chapter 1 of James speaks to us about CONFIDENCE IN TURMOIL. We have already studied CONFIDENCE IN TRIALS and last week, CONFIDENCE IN STATUS. Today we look at the turmoil of TEMPTATION. James, in his NT book of wisdom wants us to be SPIRITUALLY MATURE when it comes to the temptations that will surely come our way. And he teaches us to have CONFIDENCE in TEMPTATION if we will heed his Godly wisdom.

JAMES 1:13-18

- 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one.
- 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.
- 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
- 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
- 17 Every good thing bestowed, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
- 18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.

TRUTHS ABOUT TEMPTATION (8)

#1 Temptation has no effect on God (v. 13a)

He cannot and will not ever succumb. Therefore, to tempt God is foolish and useless.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

In Matthew 4 Jesus is tempted by Satan and yet is victorious in every temptation. Why? His being fully God was not temptable. Jesus quotes Deut. 6:16 “it is written, you shall not tempt the Lord, your God” James affirms this truth – you cannot and shall not.

We learn in Deut. 6 what “tempting” God is. It is “putting Him to the test” – not believing that He is active in our life, protecting and providing for us.

#2 Temptation never comes from God (v. 13b)

He cannot and will not ever tempt us. Never say “I am being tempted by God” Matt. 6:12 “lead us not into temptation” is not saying “don’t tempt me” but rather, “don’t allow the temptation that will come to result in evil – deliver me” God promises in 1 Cor, 10:13 that He will screen the temptations that come to be only what we can bear “and God is faithful, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able”

#3 Temptation comes because of our sin nature (v.14)

- a. It takes us by surprise and is out of our control (we are “carried away”)
- b. We are always “temptable” (“enticed”) (unlike God, who cannot be tempted because of his sinlessness – v. 13)
- c. Our lustful nature “lures” temptation. We bring it on ourselves. (“enticed” by lust)
- d. Satan will hit us our weakest. He “prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8)

#4 Temptation is the invitation to sin, not sin itself (v. 15)

Temptation (definition): the allurements, enticement, or invitation to do evil
God will “make a way of escape that we might be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13)

#5 Temptation + our lust taking the bait = sin (v. 15a)

Sin comes when we act on and accept the invitation of the temptation.
 (“lust has conceived”) Gen. 3:6 – Eve “took” (temptation) and “ate” (sin)

#6 Temptation ultimately seeks to debilitate us spiritually (v. 15b)

(“sin accomplished brings forth death”) Even one sin separates us from God.
 Sin that becomes a habit brings total spiritual debilitation (“death”)

Romans 8:6 “For the mind set on the flesh is death . . .”

This “death” is less speaking of physical death or spiritual death of the unbeliever, but the debilitating death of a severed relationship with God

#7 Temptation is from the “evil one” = Satan (implication of v. 17)

Good is only from the “Good One” = God

- a. Good is a gift (“bestowed”)
- b. Good is perfect
- c. Good is from above (i.e. foreign to our world apart from God’s heavenly “import”)
- d. Good is from our Father – i.e. a provision of a loving benefactor

Satan tempted Adam and Eve as a serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3)

Satan tempted Israel to number its people (1 Chr. 21:1)

Satan tempted Job to curse God and die (Job)

Satan tempted Jesus in every way for 40 days (Matt. 4, Luke 4)

Satan tempted Judas to betray Jesus (John 13:2)

Satan is called “the father of lies” in John 8:44

#8 Temptation can be resisted because God has empowered us (implication of v. 18)

God CHOSE (‘exercise of His will’) to SAVE US (“brought us forth”) be HIS TRUTH (“the word of truth”) from the lie of temptation. Why? – because He wants us to be the first of many to be victorious (“first fruits among his creatures”).

1 Peter 5:9 says to “resist” the devil when he comes as a roaring lion. James will say later in his letter to “resist the devil and he will flee from you”

JAMES 1: 13-18 (My paraphrase) Confidence in Temptation

13-16. I don’t ever want to hear you saying, “I am being tempted by God.” One, evil can never tempt a perfect God. And two, a perfect God could never lower Himself to tempt any one. Rather, it’s really you that brings on temptation by your own luring lustfulness. Sin comes when you give in to temptation by acting on your lust. And when that sin gets full sway in your life it kills your relationship with God. My dear, believing friends whom I love - don’t be sucked in by temptation!

17. Everything that is good is a perfect gift, especially given to you from God. “Good” is never by accident. The Giver is always our Heavenly Father, and like a bright light he never wavers or compromises in His delivery of good.

18. God exercised His Divine prerogative when He chose to pull us into truth by the power of His Word. This was so that we Jewish believers could be considered as the first ones to receive His special blessing of spiritual victory.

Previous: JAMES 1: 1-12 (My paraphrase)

1. To my Jewish brothers of all twelve tribes, wherever you might be after having been forced out of your homeland – this letter is from James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, by calling and by choice. Dear brothers:

Confidence in Trials

2-4. Take a different perspective at the many trials you face, seeing the positive in them, rather than the negative. One, your faith is being proven and strengthened. And two, you are developing endurance for the long haul of life. Don't balk at being tested, but hang in there, letting the tests accomplish their Godly purpose: your maturity, that you may be spiritually "buff" without flabbiness or weakness of character.

5. Remember, if you need wisdom (and who doesn't?), just ask God, who gives it abundantly and without making you feel bad for asking. Just ask, and Godly wisdom will indeed be given to you.

6-8. But you have to ask really believing the answer will come. No doubting allowed! Because if you doubt, you are acting just like the waves of the sea blown around by the wind – up one minute with your belief and down the next with your doubts. This kind of supposed "faith" won't get you anything from God. He doesn't accept on-again, off-again faith, which by the way, indicates instability in other areas of life.

Confidence in Status

9-10. Hey, believing brother - how about this for God's "upside down" perspective on wisdom? If your earthly status is on the "humble" side, be proud that you are standing rich and tall in God's spiritual kingdom. And if your earthly status is on the "well off" side, be proud that in God's kingdom you are just a spiritual beggar. After all, your earthly status is about as secure as flowering grass in the heat of the sun.

11. See the picture? Just like the sun rises, so does your status. Then comes the "Santa Annas" of life – and just like the grass withers and the flower falls, so does your status wither and fall. What once appeared beautiful is no more. Our status, and the futile pursuits of achieving it, will soon fade away.

12. So what's worth achieving? - persevering through the trials of life and proving your Godly character through it all. This is how you will receive the true "crown of life" – God's heavenly reward – which He promises to each one of His lovers.