

05/31/26 Message

Part of Real Religion A Journey Through the Book of James
May 30, 2026

Message: The Enemy Within

Series: Real Religion

Background

This series is an exposition of the book of James, written by Jesus' brother who "found faith" after His death, burial, and resurrection. James was writing to a persecuted church, and he wanted them to understand the difference between man-made religion and true, genuine, real religion.

We see something happen in James that should be what happens to us once we grasp who Jesus really is. James became full of the Holy Spirit who lit a fire inside him that made people notice this man was changed!

—Pastor Chad

James is shouting:

- Walking with Jesus is not about RELIGION it's about RELATIONSHIP!

Origin of Temptation

James 1:13-18 (NLT)

13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else.

14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.

15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.

17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never

changes or casts a shifting shadow.

18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

I've said it before and I'll likely say it a lot during this series. Religion is a bad word because you can be religious about anything, when you're religious it just means you're committed to something, you've bought into it, you embrace it, you live it. Some folks are religious about sports. Some are religious about social media. Some are religious about eating. If it in any way controls your time, your talents, and your treasures, it's an idol in your life and you're religious about it. That makes it a religion to you. But it's not true religion, it's man-made religion and it's as bad as the man-made junk that contaminates a lot of churches. True religion on the other hand is only found in a healthy spiritual relationship with Jesus. It's that simple. It's not me, but He! All about He, not about me! That's it!

—Pastor Chad

- If you're confused, it's not God.

John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Other verses such as John 16:13 tell us when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide us to the truth.

Confusion doesn't come from God, and neither does temptation. To deal with sin, we have to stop the confusion, and we have to clearly identify the source.

Where did all this start? It started in the Garden of Eden. God asked Adam about the fruit and Adam became the first posterchild of shifting blame. You might be on that poster now, but he was the very first when he said, "It was that woman you gave me."

—Pastor Chad

Genesis 3:12 (NLT)

...It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.

Who is Adam blaming? If you look at it, on first glance you think Adam is blaming the woman, and he is. But if you look deeper, Adam is also blaming God. It's her fault! But it's Your fault too because you gave her to me! Down to dirt he's saying this...

—Pastor Chad

- It's anybody and everybody's fault but MINE
 - It's time to deal with sin and stop misidentifying the SOURCE of the sin
 - The source of your temptation is YOU

How to Win Over Temptation

- God will PROTECT you from temptation (v13)

Pretty straight forward, God is never tempted to do wrong, and He will never tempt you! Here's the take-a-way, God is never responsible when you are tempted, when you give in to temptation, or when you face the consequences of giving in to the temptation. He didn't want you to give into it and He doesn't want you to face the penalty of sin, but at the end of the day, it's not His choice to sin, it's yours!

—Pastor Chad

Typical worldly (fleshly) response:

- Make Bad Choices
 - Bad Things Happen
 - Blame Someone Else
- Anatomy of temptation (vv14-15)
 - DESIRE
 - SIN
 - DEATH

It all starts with a passionate desire, but it ends with being enticed and dragged away and it leads to death! James isn't trying to use a scare tactic; he's using it as a

warning system, almost like one of those emergency alert systems you see on TV. He's saying, I'm giving you the ending before you have to get there yourself, so hopefully you'll make different choices and never see it in real life. Every sin starts with a desire that was fed, instead of avoided or redirected.

—Pastor Chad

- Let God be your first CHOICE not your last resort (vv.16-18)

James is saying, don't be misled! If you're choosing something else instead of God, if you're choosing something else over God, then you're not choosing God! Then he paints this picture of God's consistency! God is good and perfect! God is light! God never changes! God chose you from the very beginning! God gave you life! If He didn't choose you, you wouldn't be here! You are His most prized possession! Yet, it's almost as if He has to beg to be your first choice, instead of your last resort!

—Pastor Chad

How Would Our World Be Different If God Was First

- Churches would be full
- Giving would be generous
- Needs would be met
- Our community would know Jesus

God should be our first choice and not our last resort because we're God's first choice, we've never been His last resort! We're His most prized possession!

—Pastor Chad

The enemy within is you!

- Jesus is the only one who can defeat the enemy within!
- You have to ask Him; you have to let Him; He has to be your first choice!
- And when you believe it, you live it!
- And when you live it, the enemy within is defeated!