

Proof of Life: Endurance in Temptation

(James 1:13–18)

ONE PROOF OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IS:

Godly living and perseverance when trials bring temptation.

SO, WHAT IS TRUE, AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

God is not the author of man's sin; God is the Father of all Good. When trials bring temptation, obey God by applying His Word in your life.

1.) Temptation's Fuel: Lust Within Us; We are Responsible (13–15)

- We must **never** say, "I am being tempted by God."
- Trials may bring temptation, but it is our **evil desires** that lead to sin, then to our destruction (death).
- God is perfect, holy, and without sin; He **cannot be** tempted by evil; as such, he does not tempt anyone.
- Desires can be fed or starved. Any **blame** for sin is ours.
- **Every** difficult circumstance (trial) that enters a believer's life can either strengthen us, if we obey God, or become an invitation to sin if we choose instead to disobey God's Word.

2.) Temptation's Deceit: Failure to see the goodness of God (16–17)

- Do not be **deceived**: God is the unchanging source of everything good. He is at all times good. If He could be "better" (humanly speaking) to us in some way during trials, He wouldn't be God.
- There's no such thing as general fate; God is the **sovereign** Creator of all heaven and earth ("Father of lights"); God made and controls the heavenly bodies (the pagan symbols of fate).
- How can Christians keep from falling into temptation?

Answer: Develop a close relationship with God and apply His Word daily in all circumstances. This pattern will lead us to see clearly that every good and perfect gift is from above. If we turn to self, we begin the terribly destructive cycle of sin and death. If we turn to God, we are choosing His providential care.

3.) Temptation's Overcomer: New Birth by the Word of Truth (18)

God gives us the best and most perfect gift of all: spiritual life (new birth) by His Word (note: God's Word is never separated from His Spirit). And His Word (Scripture/the Bible) tells us that we have been given, at minimum, the following six resources to have victory over sin during trials/temptations (*Ref. Barton*):¹

- His **presence**: "He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Dt. 31:6; Hb. 13:5; Acts. 17:27).
- His **Model—Jesus**: "For this reason, He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hb. 2:17–18).
- His **guidance**: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Ps. 119:105).
- His **mission** for our life: It keeps us directed. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hb. 12:1).
- His **people** with whom we share encouragement: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hb. 10:24–25). We laugh together; we cry together as one body.
- His **forgiveness** when we fall and fail: "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9).

APPLICATION:

- ✓ Humans will encounter difficulties in life. "Success" is not defined by human culture. It is defined by obedience to God. Trials are opportunities for character growth and spiritual maturity and should be endured joyfully. Do not give in to temptation and blame others, especially not God. We bear the responsibility for acting on our evil desires. Cultivate spiritual maturity and discernment, so you do not fall prey to the lures of your flesh.

¹ Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. *James. Life Application Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992.