

Temptation, James 1:13-18 8.21.2019

Turn in your Bibles tonight to the book of James, Chapter 1 and we are going to look at verses 13-18, as we continue in our study in the book of James.

For the past three weeks we have learned that there are various tests and trials that we experience in this world and through those trials our faith is tested that brings us to a point of where are we going to put our trust. Better said is “Who” are we going to put our trust in? Ourselves, the world’s belief system, mankind? We are told, as those trials come, we can ask for Wisdom. Again, I ask, “From who?” Or is it, “From whom?”

The Bible, Scripture, which is our authority, tells us that it is Wisdom from God that we ask for, in Faith in his character, knowing he will deliver us through.

But as each test comes our way there is a temptation! Each test is a testing of our Faith in God and whether we are going to be obedient to him or not. That is where the temptation comes in. So, a couple of questions we must ask are the following:

1. Where does temptation come from?
2. If I fall to temptation and sin, “Whose fault is it?”

Let’s Read our Verses:

James 1:13-18

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James has emphatically told us that in no way, that when we are tempted, we are tempted by God. But we like to put the blame on God for a lot of decisions we make and for a lot of situations we put on ourselves. We like to put blame on many outside influences, also. What it comes down to is that we do not want to take responsibility for our own actions. We don’t want to be accountable to what we say, how we act and, in some cases, what we believe. Let me take you to a very familiar story from Genesis to make this point.

Turn to Genesis Chapter 3 and we are going to look at verses 8 to 13.

Genesis 3:8-13

⁸And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then

the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Now, God put a test in front of Adam and Eve. What was that test? Whether they were going to obey God or not! The temptation came and we know they sinned, or we would not have these verses and this encounter with God. Well here starts the blame game. Look at verses 11 and 12.

Genesis 3:11-12

¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

Who did Adam blame? Eve! Correct! But, do you see something else here. Adam blamed Eve, but he also blamed God. You gave her to me Lord! Can you give me another one and let's try this again? No, he didn't say that part. Be Adam did say, "You created her Lord!"

In verse 13 what does Eve do? Look at the verse!

Genesis 3:13

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Oh! The serpent! Who you created God! Even Satan, who used the serpent to tempt Adam and Eve, was tempted by his own pride. So much, in the fact that he wanted to be God and that caused him to be thrown out of heaven. Therefore, because of the disobedience to God there is sin and evil in this world.

We see we are not tempted by God. Turn back to James Chapter 1 and let's look at verse 13 again.

James 1:13

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

Now, I was curious as we look at the word tempted in this verse. Were they all the same? You probably say, well of course they are. They look like it. Well in the Greek, they are not! The word "tempted" where it says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," and he himself tempts no one, are all the same. The word is:

Peirazo - to try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin, to solicit to sin, to tempt, of the temptations of the devil.

Apeirastos – cannot be tempted, not liable to temptation to sin.

This is bringing us to the knowledge of God's character in that there is no evil in him. Evil is alien to him in relation to his character. Look at these following verses in how God described himself and how he is described.

Leviticus 11:44-45

⁴⁴ For I am the Lord your God, consecrate. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on ground. ⁴⁵ For I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16

¹⁵ But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy, in all your conduct, ¹⁶ Since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Remember from Isaiah Chapter 6, when Isaiah had the vision of the Lord sitting on the throne, and the seraphim were above the throne. What were they saying back and forth to each other?

“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!” What was Isaiah’s response? Woe is me! For I am lost! A man of unclean lips! That should be our response when we think of God’s holiness and ourselves in relation to God and his character. In that understanding though, in that weakness we are made strong because greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world! We are a child of God and a joint heir to Jesus Christ who is our Lord. We ought to act like!

So, we see that temptation does not come from God. He can’t tempt us because of his holiness and that would go against his character. We know that temptation comes from Satan because Scripture tells us that Satan is the tempter.

In Matthew Chapter 4, we see Satan called the tempter as Jesus was led to the wilderness after his baptism to be tested and prepared for his earthly ministry. In that testing he is then tempted by Satan. After 40 days of fasting we see in verse 3 of Chapter 4, it says, “and the “tempter” came to Jesus.”

But at what point does the test become temptation? Before we answer that question, “May I ask another question?” When we are saved does the sinful nature disappear? No! Boy, I sure wish it did! But it does not! There is a Holy War going on in each of us! In our sinfulness we are at war against God. Scripture tells us we are enemies of God in our unrepented state. Just read Romans Chapter 5 through Chapter 8. Romans 8:7 tells us that in our flesh, our sinfulness, we are hostile towards God, which means we are an enemy of God in denying God’s holiness and our need of salvation.

That Holy War does not stop if we have truly become followers of the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul describes this very well in Romans Chapter 7. Turn to Romans Chapter 7. We will read verses 18 to 20.

Romans 7:18-20

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

That is why as you turn back to James Chapter 1 verse 14 and 15, of when and how a test turns into a temptation and eventually into sin.

James 1:14-15

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

So, when does the test become temptation? When we start focusing or gravitating, going towards the sin. This shows again the condition of our heart. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that, “The heart is deceitful about all things and desperately wicked, who can understand it? Everyone is going to be tempted! Whether they are saved or not. Temptation is going to come at us. That is why we need to be put up barriers in our lives that protect us from these temptations.

Because of our own desires, lusts, and that can be sexual, that can be seeking power, seeking fame, gossiping or slandering other people so we can maybe feel better about ourselves. Or in our position we think we are better than other people. Pride in our lives can lead to all kind of sins.

In the temptation is the worse always shown? Of course not! Look at this picture.



Now, does that look good or what? Wouldn't you love a bite of that if I offer it to you? But there is something wrong with it, but I am not going to tell you what it is. It looks good, it smells good! I have it on the fork and I put it before you and I say, "Take a bite of this." Now, what if I told you that it had poison in it before I gave you the bite. Would you eat it then? Of course not! But that is the point. Satan never tells you the consequences and the hurt that comes from doing things out of God's will and design.

Temptation is used always to make things more alluring than they are. The words used here in verse 15, lured and enticed, are a reflection of what hunters and people that fish will understand. The word lure gives with it the idea of "baiting a trap" and the word entice means to "bait a hook." In September the deer hunting season begins and if you drive by several stores you will start seeing signs like this.



The hunter will take that corn and bait the deer for a while until they are accustomed to the feed and they think there is nothing wrong here and then, (Bow and Arrow) (Gun).

Think if you are using live bait to fish with. What are you doing with the bait? You are hiding the hook! I brought my own little display. What do we call this? A fishing lure! Why is it called a lure? It is used

to deceive the fish. It looks like something the fish would eat. But look at what is hanging off this thing? But the fish does not know what those things are? I have deceived them. All they see is this lure and they think, Woohoo! And then the hook is set, and they are being pulled all over the place and then they end up on someone's dinner plate.

What is the end result of the temptation or the trap? Death! Verse 15 says that when we get to the point of disobedience and we allow it to be conceived into our mind that we are willing to act upon it then ramifications of that sin are going to come, and death is always the result. Just as when a baby is conceived in the womb of a woman and if all goes well that baby will grow to the point where it is going to be birthed.

Think about it! Where does temptation usually begin? In our mind! It is a thought. And if we continuously allow that thought to roll around in our mind it can go from thought to an act of our will and we act upon it will birth sin!

It is our own lusts, our own desires that bring temptations into an act of sin. We should take responsibility for that sin. Don't blame God! Don't blame your circumstances! Don't blame other people! But like I said earlier we don't like to take responsibility for it do we. In fact, we have even created a whole new doctrine or definition of Grace within Christendom, so we don't have take ownership.

It continues to be taught God is all about love and it doesn't matter how I live because Jesus' love covers it all. I can talk however I want, watch whatever I want, listen to whatever I want, wear whatever I want, go wherever I want. You see temptation is just not leading to the specific sins we know is in the word but it also will lead us to a Christianity that leaves holiness out of the equation and I think we covered that pretty well at the beginning of why temptation does not come from God and that evil is inconceivable within the very nature of who he is.

Look at verse 16. James gives us a warning here.

James 1:16

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

This kind of divides these six verses. But it is a warning and then we are reminded of something. We are not to allow Satan to deceive us with the temptation in thinking that there is something out there better for us than what God wants for us. What we need to do is take our eyes off the temptation and remember that God's way for us in all aspects of our life is best. Also, we must remember too that God is faithful in helping us through each trial and any temptation that may come with it.

Turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 10:13

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Look around! If we needed to get out of here quick where would you go? There are signs showing you how to get out. These are the barriers I talked about earlier that we should put around us. We see where to start in verses 17 and 18 of where we should look for the signs to fight temptations.

James 1:17-18

¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

I repeat! God has what is best for us! Look at the verse again and the Every, Every. Every good gift and every perfect gift comes through the very character of God. Think about it. The sun casts a shadow, light casts a shadow and it is susceptible to outside forces. But God, The Father of Lights, in his holiness does not change. He is going to give to us what we need according to his very character every time.

Think about the good gifts we receive from God. Would you call salvation a gift from God? Yes! Ephesians 2:8 tells us so. *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is a Gift of God.”*

Verse 18 shows us that through the word of truth that brings us salvation. We know in the Gospel of John Chapter 1 verses 1 through 5 and verse 14 we see that Jesus is called the word and he is full of truth. Just look at the screens.

John 1:1-5

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:14

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, yes Jesus is the truth. He said so himself. But we also have this Word (Hold up the Bible), which God has given to us for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for teaching in righteousness. That we are a new creation because of our repentance and obedience to the word of truth which is living and sharper than any two-edged sword as described in Hebrews 4:12. We are given as a firstfruits to God. See the Jews that this is written to would understand that word. Because it is the firstfruits from their flock and from their harvest they would bring to the temple in recognition of their worship to God.

We are now to bring ourselves as a first fruit, a living sacrifice in worship to the Lord in holy living. These verses tell us tonight several things about temptations and the sins that can be committed because of them.

1. Temptations come from Satan.
2. We are to blame for our own sins.

God has provided us a way of combating temptation.

1. Understand in salvation we are to seek to live holy!
2. Focus on God's character!
3. Realizing he holds all truth!
4. We can know God's truth through his word, and we can have spiritual wisdom and strength to find those escapes we can take against the temptation.