

"True Faith and Temptation"

Part 1

James 1:13-18

Introduction: In our study of James this morning we have now come to the second test of true faith which James is going to present to his readers. This will be the test of temptation. Now the word "tempted" here in these verses has a different meaning than the word "temptation" in verses 2-12. Here in James 1:13 the word "tempted" refers to "a solicitation to do evil" or "the temptation to sin".

I need to remind you that in the original letter which James wrote to these scattered believers there were no chapter breaks nor were there any paragraph headings. It was one continuous letter with no breaks. So in your Bible you may have a break between verses 12 and 13. That has been placed there by someone but it is not inspired.

I say this because I want you to see that James rolls from the thought of trials right into the subject of temptation. The transition is very quick and that tells us the 2 thoughts are somehow connected.

But how can the trials of life be connected with the temptations of life which we face?

Listen to what I am about to say; the trials of life can very easily become times of temptation when we do not trust God and follow the steps which James just gave to us in 1:2-12.

Remember what James told us:

1. Be joyful in the trials.
2. Deepen your knowledge of God.
3. Surrender to God's work.
4. Look to God for the answers when you need wisdom.
5. Allow God to teach you.

Now when these steps are now taken in the midst of the trials then our trials can turn into temptations to sin. Let me show you what I am talking about.

John 18:15-17

¹⁵ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

¹⁷ Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? **[This was the test]** He saith, I am not.

The night which Jesus was arrested Peter's faith was tested 3 times but in each one of the trials he did not trust God and therefore the trial became a temptation and he gave into sin.

Back to James again;

James knew this could happen and he also knew the sinfulness of man. He knew that there were people who would try to justify sin in their lives because of the pressure which they felt in the midst of the trial and their failure to stand firm. They may say something like this, "Well, God allowed me to be in this situation so therefore it is God's fault that I have sinned. Really He is the One who brought me to this place of temptation. The more I think about this the more I see that it was really God who tempted me."

That kind of reasoning is dead wrong!

This is the very thing which James is about to address in this section and there is much for us to learn here.

Notice James 1:14a

I want to focus upon the phrase, "But every man is tempted".

This is the truth stated very directly. Every one of us is tempted every day of our lives and many times throughout the day. Temptation is not sin. But the question is, "Who do you blame for the temptation?"

You would be surprised how many people blame God for their temptation. They may reason by saying that it is God who made us with the desires which they have and so really it is His fault when I they are tempted and when they sin.

The bottom line is that people do not want to take responsibility for their actions. We see this everywhere today.

Remember when someone brought a lawsuit against McDonalds because they burned themselves on HOT coffee? I wonder what they expected that morning when they bought that coffee?

There have been lawsuits where the manufactures of four wheelers have been sued because someone rolled their 4 wheeler over. They were probably riding too fast but they did not want to take responsibility for their actions so they passed the blame to someone else.

Illustration: I remember years ago a man bought really expensive cigars and insured them for a crazy amount of money. He then sat down one day and smoked them. He then turned the claim into his insurance company and told them they were destroyed in a fire. He won and was awarded a great sum of money. The insurance company then counter-sued and the man was arrested and placed in jail for arson. All of this blame goes the entire way back to the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:9-13

⁹ *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

¹⁰ *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

¹¹ *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

¹² *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

¹³ *And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

Adam indirectly blamed God for giving her the woman. Basically Adam said, "I went to sleep and when I woke up she was there. I had no choice in the matter. It was all on you God."

With Eve it appeared as though she blamed the serpent but really she was indirectly blaming God for making the serpent.

The point is neither was willing to step up and take responsibility and so that very same sin nature is within everyone of us and that is why we see passing the blame today. But many people go so far as to blame God for the temptation and the sin in their lives.

I. The Command

Notice James 1:13a

James makes it very clear that we are not to blame God for the temptation which we face within our lives. The idea here is that people sometimes blame God indirectly when they are faced with temptation.

That is exactly what we see in Genesis 3 when God confronted Adam and Eve. Someone may not come right out and blame God for their sin but they will somehow reason in their minds that it was God who brought them into the situation they are facing and so they indirectly push the blame over to Him.

Illustration:

Consider a man who lost his job and he has applied for many positions. Then all at once someone calls and he is offered a new position and so he concludes that God has opened a door and provided job so that he can work to provide for his family. At that new position he meets a lady who is attracted to him and he begins to let his guard down. One thing leads to another and what should have been stopped in the beginning has now brought him face to face with a major temptation. Him and his wife have not been getting along lately and so in his mind he begins to reason that God is the one who opened the door. Then he decides that God is the one who has placed her on his path. He commits the sin and indirectly he has blamed God for the temptation and the sin.

Let me just say that God provided the job but God did not tempt him with the woman!

Notice James 1:13b

Here is the reason. God cannot be tempted nor does He ever tempt anyone with sin.

Illustration:

One night a lady came to our house and she was an emotional wreck. Here and her husband had been fighting for some time now. Things at home were not what anyone would desire. Money was tight and he lost his job. She came to me to ask my advice on something. She had just landed a good job and she would now make enough to support herself and her kids.

She ask me if I thought God had opened the door for her to leave her husband and start all over again? You see she was convinced her new job was God's sign it was ok to leave. I explained that God would never lead you into sin and that is what it was to leave her husband.

That is the sinful side of man and in man's sinful distorted mind he can twist almost any situation around in an attempt to justify sin. Even to the point of indirectly blaming God.

Back to James again: It is impossible for God to tempt anyone with sin because God is righteous and He is holy.

Psalm 145:17

¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Therefore we cannot blame God for our temptation and our sin.

Then who is to blame?

II. The Guilty

Notice James 1:14

There are several points which I want you to see from this verse.

1. The blame is on each individual person.

Notice that the verse says that every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his OWN lust.

That means that you and I are tempted with sin because there is within each of us a sin nature that desires those things which are sinful.

Romans 7:18-20

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

The sin nature was the very thing which Paul was battling with in his own life. So the blame of sin and temptation rests on each one of us.

2. The steps to sin.

Notice James 1:14

a. Every man is tempted when he is DRAWN AWAY.

This is a term that was used for hunting and it has the idea of baiting a trap with something that was appealing to the prey.

b. Every man is tempted when he is ENTICED.

Notice James 1:14

Here we have the 2nd step to sin. It is to be "enticed" and the word has the meaning of baiting a hook. It is a word that would have been used by fisherman.

Application:

This is how we are tempted with sin. Either Satan or somebody places bait before us that is appealing to our sin nature. With each person the bait can be something different but it is bait that will appeal to the one who is the prey.

Now let me explain what happens.

You see something or you think of something in your mind which is forbidden by God. But you DESIRE to have it so bad and so in your mind you begin to justify why you should have it. You convince yourself that if you were able to get that which appeals to you it would satisfy this longing that is now within you.

Let me just say in this very process right here you need to do something.

2 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Now when we refuse to cast down the thought or we refuse to bring the thought into captivity then something else happens.

c. Sin is conceived.

Notice James 1:15a

If you allow the temptation to get this far you are now caught in the trap or you have swallowed the hook and you will carry out the sin.

In this verse James now gives the analogy of pregnancy.

Notice the verse again.

When lust hath conceived it brings forth (or gives birth to) sin. Now listen to what I am going to say, when a baby is conceived within the woman it is inevitable that it is coming out. Eventually that woman will deliver that baby.

That is the very idea which James has here with sin. When lust reaches the point of conception then there is no stopping the sin.

So let me help you with something here for a moment.

Sin must be dealt with not at the point of the act being carried out but sin must be dealt with back when the desire starts.

Conclusion:

Notice James 1:15

I want to focus upon the end of this verse in closing.

Sin is so deceitful. It promises a deep satisfaction but it will only leave you with guilt and remorse. This verse tells us that sin when it has been carried out brings forth death. The bottom line is that sin destroys it does not satisfy.

Let me get back to the original thought. All the sin in our lives is on us. It is our fault and God can never be blamed.

We are all guilty of sin and God had nothing to do with it but He did provide a way for us to be forgiven through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.