



James

How to Live the Christian Life!

Living with Temptation

James 1:12-18

Message #2 of 12 – S659

Sermon given on October 18, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living with Temptation

James 1:12-18

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 1**
- Today, we continue our series through the letter from James **How to Live the Christian Life**
- Last time we had a message that taught us about living with trials
- Said there were three types of trials
- Cause and effect – these are trials we bring upon ourselves by our own sins – though they could also come because of the sins of others
- Spiritual Trials – come because of our faith – Because we choose to obey God, the world may throw a trial at us like persecution
- Third type is Spiritually Mysterious – a trial like Job experienced – it makes no sense to us
- And I said they all have the same goal – to purify our faith
- That is why James was able to say, ‘Count it all joy’ when those trials come into our lives
- Not saying we have to enjoy the trials , but that we should rejoice that God is going to use it for a good goal, to make us like Jesus
- Trials will come into the lives of all believers
- And today we are going to look at another thing that is common in the lives of all people, Christians, and non-Christians
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today’s text as a sign of reverence for the Word of God
- Read **James 1:12-18**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living with Temptation**
- James the half-brother of Jesus is writing to Jewish Christians outside of Palestine
- Many of them had to flee persecution from the Jews in Palestine
- They were experiencing hard times

- But out there in the non-Jewish world they were experiencing other things too
- **James 1:12**
- Commentators are divided about where verse twelve belongs
- Some say it belongs with verses 2 to 11 in the conversation about trials
- The other half say it belongs with verses 13 to 18 in the section about temptation
- The reason for the division is because the Greek word that is translated ‘temptation’ in verse 12 is the same as the one translated ‘trial’ in verse 2
- Personally, I believe it applies equally well to both
- Blessed is the man who endures
- You will be happier if you endure – to face and withstand with courage – then if you give in
- ‘approved’ = confirmed good, authentic
- Every trial or temptation tests our faith – only by enduring can we prove that our faith is real
- And if we do, there is a reward – crown of life
- ‘promised to those who love Him’ – How do we love God? **John 14:15**

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

- We prove we love God by obeying Him
- The inverse is true also, if you do not obey, it is because you don’t love God enough
- One of the reasons for the question on where verse 12 goes is in how this Greek word (pee-ras-mos) is used
- When it is translated as **trial** – the meaning = **to test for authenticity**
- Trials test to verify that our faith is real, authentic
- When it is translated as **temptation** = **to entice to evil or sin**
- A temptation is attempting to lead us to sin
- People, almost without exception, are practicing blame-shifters
- There is a saying, “To err is human, to blame it on someone else is even more human.”

- We will even try to blame God
 - **James 1:13**
 - The very first person to blame God for their own sin was the very first person – Adam **Genesis 3:12**
- Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”**
- God if you hadn’t given me that sinner to be my wife, I would never have sinned. God, it is Your fault.
 - No one should ever say that
 - His justification for this statement is simple, God cannot be tempted to evil
 - He is unsusceptible to evil – moral impossibility
 - People will delude themselves to believe that their sin is God’s fault
 - **3 It’s God’s Fault Delusions**
 - First – **Ordained**
 - God is sovereign – He is in control of everything – therefore He made me sin as a part of His plan
 - It is true that God controls everything, except one thing – your free will – your ability to choose evil or good
 - Second delusion – **Circumstances**
 - God put me in this place where I am tempted to sin – he knew I wasn’t strong enough – He let me do it anyway
 - God may have put you in that place, but He also gave you the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gift of self-control – use it
 - Third delusion – **Disposition**
 - God made me this way, so it’s not my fault that I sin
 - Yes He made you and then promised in Philippians – I can do all things through Christ Jesus – which, by the way, includes resisting temptation to sin
 - James cuts right to the heart of the matter and identifies the source of sin – not God
 - **James 1:14**
 - The problem is not God – the problem is your desires
 - Now some of you are going to have a hard time with this, but this is what it says

- When you sin, it is because there is something inside of you that wants something so bad that you are willing to sin to get it
- The problem is not with the desires – they are not sin – many of them come from God directly
- But the desires that God gives us, are to be fulfilled by God
- A temptation is an attempt to get us to fulfill God-given desires apart from God – that is sin
- It is interesting, the terms ‘drawn away’ and ‘enticed’ are words that apply to hunters and fishermen
- I love to fish, don’t do it as often as I would like
- My last trip was for tuna
- My goal was to entice a tuna with a bait to be lured away from the safety of the school
- That type of fishing is called fly-lining – take a live anchovy or sardine and put a hook through its back
- There are no sinkers – just hook, line, and bait
- Your goal is that your bait will swim around like normal
- And hope that a tuna will be enticed and lured toward it
- God doesn’t do that to us, but there is someone who does **1 Peter 5:8**
Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
- Satan has been hunting for human souls for thousands of years
- He knows what kind of bait to use to draw you out of the safety of God’s people and the truth, God’s goodness
- And he does it by dulling our mind to God and to the truth of God
- He mixes lies in with truth
- When I fish, I use anchovies and sardines – these are what tuna eat
- The lie I mix in with the bait is a hook
- The problem – usually the tuna doesn’t notice the hook until after he has swallowed it
- Satan told Eve **Genesis 3:1, 4-5**
And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”...Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- He will tell you’ ‘Did God really say you shouldn’t enjoy being with that man or woman you aren’t married to?’
- ‘Did God say you shouldn’t look at that website?’
- Did God really say you shouldn’t take that drink?’
- He is a liar, and he baits his hooks with very tantalizing things that hide a deadly hook
- It is never safe to trifle with sin
- **James 1:15**
- ‘when desire has conceived’ – this speaks to intent
- Remember desire is not sin – it is when we intend to fulfill that desire apart from God that it becomes sin
- There is an almost inevitable chain of events that happens once we cross the line of intent
- ‘it gives birth to sin’ – speaks of action – steps are now taken to fulfill the desire apart from God
- Sin left to grow to maturity always leads to spiritual death
- It also carries temporal consequences – it costs something
- When that tuna sees my bait, it has to make a choice
- It has a natural desire to go after that bait, but it has choose to leave the safety of the school to get it
- Once it turns toward that bait, the desire is conceived
- It will chase that bait until it catches it
- Only then does it discover its error – it is hooked
- It begins to fight – in the hopes that it can break free
- And if it can’t, it is drug up onto the deck with a gaff in its side and then a deck hand takes a knife and cuts out its gills so that it quickly bleeds to death
- The only way for us to escape when we get hooked by Satan in sin is to humble ourselves before God and repent
- Only He can break the power of sin once it has its hooks in us
- Temptations to sin do not come from God
- And one of the ways we resist temptation is to keep our focus on God
- **James 1:16-17**

- If you are tempted to sin, it is because you are being deceived by the hater of your soul, Satan
 - Don't buy his lies, instead remember who God is
 - Temptation, evil, and sin do not come down from God
 - Only good comes from God— no evil comes from God ever
 - The gifts of God are perfect, because God is perfect
 - 'Father of lights' speaks of God's creative ability
 - He gave you desires, and He is infinitely creative in how He fulfills those desires
 - 'lights' = heavenly lights – if God can create stars, trillions times trillions of them He can fulfill your desires
 - 'no variation or shadow of turning' both refer to the immutability of God
 - That means God never changes – He is good, can't be less good
 - Then points to a personal act of God's goodness
 - **James 1:18**
 - Because He wanted to, He created you, and then He saved you
 - 'by the Word of truth' – the best defense we have against the temptations of Satan is the truth
 - Temptations will always be there – Satan will always be looking for new ways to bait you away from God's truth, and the safety of His goodness
 - The Bible says we don't sit passively by **James 4:7-8a**
- Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.**
- We never have to yield to temptation
 - Through Christ, we have the power to resist
 - None of us are perfect, and there may be times when the bait is just too attractive and we take the hook – then what **1 John 2:1**
- My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**
- When you get hooked, don't try to fight – run to Jesus
 - Don't blame God –confess to God that you tried to satisfy your desires apart from Him

- Fall down before Him and ask Him to free you from you sin, and he will **1 John 1:9**

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- And when He sets us free, we will be free indeed
- The Christian life is about glorifying God, blessing others, and growing in our faith
- One of the ways we do that is by learning to resist the temptations of Satan, by learning to focus on the goodness of God, and trusting Him to fulfill our desires, in His goodness, in His good timing - Amen

- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever.

Amen.Hebrews 13:20-21