

The Truth about Temptations

James 1:13-18

I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

1. If you knew the truth about temptations they really would not be so tempting.
2. Brothers, I know she is fine from head to toe but if you knew the issues she had it really would not be that tempting.
3. Sisters, I know that his voice melts your will but if you knew that Tommy did not have a job it really would not be that tempting.

B. Background of the Text

1. The words *trial* and *temptation* are the same in the Greek (peirazo) but have different meanings.
2. God sends or allows a trial to strengthen our faith. When we endure trials it produces spiritual maturity.
3. Satan uses temptation to cause us to sin.
4. In the first 12 verses James is talking about the **external trials** that we all must face in life.
5. But in verse 13 he transitions and begins talking about **inward temptations**. The greatest threat is not the wrong being done **to me** but the wrong that may be **done by me**.

II. Source of Temptations (v 13-14)

A. Divine Nature

1. It is human nature to blame others when we fall into temptation.
2. In the garden Adam blamed Eve for his sin which means he was indirectly blaming God.
3. God can not be tempted because of His divine nature or character. God is completely holy and can never sin.
4. God does not tempt others to sin because His will is for our very best. God's actions are consistent with His character.

B. Natural Desires

1. We are tempted by our own desires. It is what on the inside that causes temptations.
2. Desires in and of themselves are not evil. God created us to have desires but they can become corrupted as a result of lust.

Illustration: In 1982, ABC Evening News reported on an unusual work of modern art – a chair affixed to a loaded shotgun. It was to be viewed by sitting in the chair and looking directly into the gun barrel. The gun was loaded and a set timer to fire at an undetermined moment within the next 100 years. The amazing thing was that people waited in line to sit in that chair.

III. Struggle with Temptations (v 14)

A. The Struggle is Universal

1. The text states "*but each one is tempted*", this means that we all must face temptations.
2. Look at who is writing this passage – it is James the half brother of Jesus, leader of the church and mature Christian. We are tempted despite our –
 - a. Pedigree – family heritage
 - b. Position – church leader
 - c. Power – spiritually mature
3. Temptation is not a sin but can lead to sin. Jesus was tempted but He did not sin.

B. The Struggle is Personal

1. We are tempted by our own corrupted desires.
2. This makes the struggle so difficult because temptations are tailored made by our personal desires.
3. What tempts one person may not tempt another.
4. Lust is a private sin and someone may be sinning here in the church.

IV. Severe Consequences of Temptations (vv 15-16)

A. Births Sin

1. Temptations have severe consequences when we give in to them.
2. James employs the images of conception, pregnancy and birth to show the results of yielding to temptation.
3. Lust has its own reproduction cycle that if not terminated will birth sin in our lives.

B. Brings Forth Death

1. Sin always leads to death. Sin kills relationships, finances, happiness and good health every time.
2. Sin brings about physical death, spiritual death and/or even eternal death.
3. The greatest proof that sin brings forth death is Jesus. He became sin for us and died on Calvary for our sins.

C. Beware of Deception

1. There is a deception that we can be blessed by yielding to our temptation.
2. Spiritual law says that whatever a man sows that is what he will reap.

Illustration: Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. First, he coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and

another until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. Next, he fixes the knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it tasting the frozen blood. He begins licking faster and more vigorously lapping the blade until the sharp edge is bare. So great becomes the wolf craving for blood that he does not notice the razor sharp sting on his own tongue, nor does he recognize he is drinking his own blood. His appetite craves more until the dawn finds him dead in the snow. It is a fearful thing that we can be consumed by our lust.

V. **Conclusion – Steadfast Goodness (vv 17-18)**

A. **Origin of Good Gifts**

1. All good and perfect gifts (blessings) come from God.
2. It is not a blessing if it brings with it sorrow. Yielding to temptation always brings with it sorrow, hurt and pain.
3. Since true blessings come down from God we should stop looking around here on earth for blessings and look up to “the Father of lights”.
4. God blesses us because of His grace. Everything we have is from God (time, talent and treasure). So we don't have anything to brag about.

B. **Occasion of Good Gifts**

God has three specific purposes for His blessing us:

- **Redemption** – That we may know Him through His saving grace.
- **Transformation** – We may be changed into the image of His Son Jesus the Christ.
- **Exaltation** – That we may give Him the glory and honor due Him for being a good God.