



A Systematic Expository Study on the General Epistle of JAMES

Study 5: UNDERSTANDING TEMPTATION AND VICTORIOUS LIVING **James 1:13-18**

Our study today deals with a fundamental and important subject which we all need to understand. As the issue of temptation is common to all, so is the weakness of blaming others or even blaming God common to those who fall into temptation. Men are ignorant of the source and process of temptation and are generally too proud to accept the workings of lust and evil desires in themselves. Ignorance and pride push men so far to the place where they accuse God as the tempter, as the One enticing or soliciting them to do evil!

"Let no man say, I am tempted of God." God is neither the direct nor the remote cause of our temptation, sin and damnation. He who sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from sin, how can He tempt us or lead to sin that He wants to save and keep us from? Satan is the great accuser of God and man. He is ever at his wicked business of telling us that God does not love us, that God is the One tempting us, wanting us to fall, rejoicing at our fall and having delight in our death and damnation. Satan is a liar (Ezekiel 33:11; 18:23,32; 2 Peter 3:9; John 8:44). Only those who accept the lie of Satan and permit his deception to take root in their heart accuse God of being the cause of their temptation, sin and evil. Who tempts us? Why are we tempted? What gives temptation so much strength to overcome some people? How can we be victorious? What provision has God made for our victory and holiness? The Scriptures answer these and many other questions. Let us study together with the help of the Holy Spirit, trusting God to grant each of us understanding, grace and victory.

THE PERCEPTION OF THE TRUTH

James 1:13; Proverbs 19:3; Genesis 3:9-13; Isaiah 63:17; Psalm 5:4; Habakkuk 1:13; Leviticus 19:2; 20:26; Psalm 99:5,9; Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16; Genesis 20:6

God is a holy God; He never entices us to do evil. His whole plan of redemption was designed to destroy sin. How can He encourage or entice any of His creatures to sin? That would be a violation of the purpose for which He gave His only Son. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God (James 1: 13). Let no one accuse God of being responsible for his sin, fall or backsliding. God is holy, pure and perfect. He is not an agency of temptation. Evil of any type has no place in Him. He has no delight in making anyone to do evil. Evil or sin can never be an 'act of God.'

As Adam and Eve shifted blame for their sin, so many today blame God for their temptation and sin. What a terrible thing for human nature and depravity to blame God or their circumstances instead of accepting blame for sin and seeking God's mercy, forgiveness and salvation. "For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). As God cannot be tempted with evil Himself, so neither can He be a tempter of others. He cannot be a promoter of what is opposed to His nature. It is very bad to sin; but it is much worse, when any one has sinned, to accuse God of causing him to do evil.

THE PROCESS OF TEMPTATION

James 1:14-16; 4:1,2; Joshua 7:20,21; I Kings 21:2-4; Isaiah 44:20; Mark 7:21-23; Job 15:35; Psalm 7:14; Isaiah 59:4; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:21,23; Galatians 6:7,8

Satan brings temptation but God provides the strength, grace and power to overcome. Satan, demons, men and circumstances may conspire together to tempt man, yet what causes him to yield and fall is within him. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). "Drawn away" - lured into a trap - is a hunting term. A bait that appeals to his lust and fleshly desires is used to catch him. "Enticed" is a fishing term. The destructive hook is hidden or covered by the desired bait. An appeal is made to the passion and consuming desire which is peculiar to the individual. "His own lust" actually pulls him into the trap.

There is a process: Desire, Deception, Decision, Disobedience. First, the emotion, then the mind, after that the will and finally the wrong behaviour. It begins with a desire to be satisfied with a forbidden thing, which affects the emotion. Then comes the deception in the mind, trying to rationalize and justify the steps to be taken. After that a decision is taken with the will making plans to yield and sin. At last, there is an act of disobedience which manifests as wrong behaviour. How do we deal with temptation to sin? At the point of wrong behaviour? No, at the very beginning, at the point of emotion. If sin is allowed to be brought forth, then there is death - spiritual death, separation of the soul from God; physical death, separation of the soul from the body; eternal death, separation of the soul and the body from God throughout eternity.

THE PROVISION FOR OUR TRIUMPH

James 1: 17,18; Psalm 84:11; Matthew 7:11; 1 John 1:5; Numbers 23:19; John 1:12,13; John 3:3- 7; 1 Peter 1:3,23; Leviticus 23:9-11,17,20; Jeremiah 2:3; Romans 11:16; Revelation 14:4

Evil cannot be associated or traced to God; only good, unending, unbounded, unlimited good comes from God. He is the inexhaustible Fountain of every good gift and every perfect gift. Instead of taking the devil's bait which will result in our death and doom, we should receive grace and good things from God, which will give us temporal and eternal satisfaction. From Him proceeds every good and perfect gift, both pertaining to this life and that which is to come, God is always good and gracious; He does not change. He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). What He was millions of ages before the worlds were made, He is now; what He is now, He will be countless millions of ages hence.

As every good gift is from God, so particularly our regeneration or new birth and all the happy consequences of it are from Him. We owe the beginning, the strength and the consummation of our spiritual life to God. He accomplishes the new birth and all our spiritual victory by the instrumentality of "the word of truth". Being born again, we become "a kind of first fruits of His creatures". In the Old Testament, all first fruits were sacred to God. They were offered in grateful sacrifice to God because they belonged to Him. So, when we are born again, we become the property of God, even as the first fruits of the harvest.

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*