



A Systematic Expository Study on the General Epistle of JAMES

Study 6: OVERCOMING THE TEMPTER AND HIS TEMPTATIONS

James 1:13-16

In our last study we considered James 1:13-18 under the title: Understanding temptation and victorious living. Today we are taking a practical approach in our study of verses thirteen to sixteen. No place, no company, no age, no person is temptation-free, so we need to learn God's Word and be possessed with the grace and mind of Christ so as to live an overcoming life.

Temptation is a fearful word. It is Satan's bait to entice or draw man away into sin and disobedience against God. One temptation can be the beginning of a possible series of infinite evils. It is the ringing of an alarm bell whose melancholy sounds may reverberate through eternity. Better shun the bait at the beginning than struggle in the snare later (Proverbs 22:3; 6:2,4,5).

To pray against temptations, and yet to rush into tempting situations, is to thrust your fingers into the fire, and then pray they might not be burnt. He who has no mind to trade with the devil, should be so wise as to keep away from his shop. No one can ask honestly or hope fully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.

Temptation often comes not at our strongest, but our weakest moments. When we are at the limit of our perseverance, self-control, prayerfulness, love, we are tempted to be unchristian.

Beware!

THE CRISIS OF TEMPTATION

James 1:13,14; Genesis 13:8-13; 25:29-32; 2 Chronicles 24:2,15, 17-19; Jonah 1:1-3; Matthew 4:1-3; 26:58,69-75

"Every man is tempted" (James 1:14). Even Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). If the devil tempted Jesus repeatedly when he could not succeed, how much more will he tempt the ordinary man or christian when he knows he might succeed. "Every man is tempted". Saint or sinner, young or old, every man is tempted, but christians with the life and grace of Christ in them don't have to yield and sin.

What a crisis temptation is! It is a crisis (indeed, a series of crises) we must all pass through victoriously before we can cross over into the heavenly city. Though you become truly sanctified and made holy by Christ's mighty grace, expect that this dog of hell will continue to bark at you until you finally get to heaven where there are no temptations. Do not suppose that it is only the worldly-minded who have temptations, even spiritually-minded persons in the holiest state may suffer the darkest temptation.

We must put on the whole armour of God every moment because the devil may come in a crisis of temptation at any time. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10: 12).

THE CAUSES OF TEMPTATION

James 1:14,15; Luke 22:31; Acts 5:3,4; Genesis 30:1; Judges 14:3; Numbers 11:4-6; 1 Samuel 8:5,19,20; Job 2:9; Jeremiah 20:7-9; 1 Timothy 6:9,10

A vacant mind invites dangerous inmates, as a deserted house tempts wandering outcasts to enter and take up their abode in its desolate apartments. Although temptations come to all at different times, idle people have more temptations than industrious people. It is said that 'some temptations come to the industrious but all temptations attack the idle'. Another saying goes thus: 'He that labours is tempted by one devil; he that is idle, by a thousand'.

Apart from idleness, there are other causes or conditions that give the devil chance to tempt us. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of **his own lust**, and enticed" (James 1:14). Some inordinate affection or exaggerated desire for a perceived, personal need may

be used of the devil to bring some temptation. Uncontrolled desire to have children by all means or the search for healing, no matter where, can become a source of irresistible temptation. Also "**they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare**" (1 Timothy 6:9). The love of money and the mad rush to acquire property are poisonous baits of temptation that destroy many. Others are sorely tempted because of the lust of the flesh or a terrible impatience to have a life partner. Unchecked tendency to please men and be like the world, pressure and unreasonable influence of intimate relatives and friends, discouragement and hypocrisy may spread the net of temptation before us and ensnare us (Job 18:7,8). As much as lies in our power, we must remove anything the devil may use to bring temptation in our way.

CONQUERING THE TEMPTER

James 1:16; Matthew 26:41; 2 Timothy 2:22; Daniel 1:8; Psalm 119:37; Proverbs 23:17; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Matthew 4:8-11; James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 5:7-9

We need God's grace to overcome and we can have all the grace we need from our mighty and merciful Father. To overcome temptation and conquer the tempter, be much more in prayer and spend longer time in holy adoration; read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly; watch your life more carefully and live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Destroy the little foxes lest they destroy you and make a shipwreck of your faith. In contending with certain temptations, the only way of victory is to flee. He who will always overcome temptations must run away from them. A covenant must be made with our eyes not even to look upon the cause of temptation. No ties of friendship, no thoughts of material gain must turn you from the wise resolve to flee from sin.

Augustine had lived with a prostitute before his conversion. After his conversion, one day he was going on the road and she called on him but he did not answer; he kept on walking away. Then the woman ran after him and shouted, "Augustine, it is I, do you not know me any more?" to which he replied, "Yes I know but it is no longer I" and he became free from the sin permanently.

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You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*