

“OVERCOMING TEMPTATION”

James 1:12-18

Everyone will have to deal with trials in this life (1:2). Here’s another fact you’ve got to face.

Everyone is tempted by something (1 Corinthians 10:13). Nobody is immune from temptation. Today’s sermon is entitled, *“Overcoming Temptation.”*

Giving into temptation has brought heartache to many people, including some of our biblical heroes:

- **Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan (Gen. 3)**
- **David’s lust for Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)**
- **Peter denied the Lord three times (John 18)**
- **Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15)**

We all know people who have fallen for Satan’s deceptive lies . . .

- **The person who cheated on their spouse**

- **The person who has an addiction problem**
- **The greed that resulted in fraudulent activities**
- **The young person who has embraced wokeness**

Who's to blame for all of this madness? The excuses for running through the red light of temptation and into the freeway of sin are numerous . . .

- **The angry man— "That's just the way I am."**
- **The abuser— "This is the way I was raised."**
- **The young lady who aborts her baby— "I'm not ready for this."**
- **The person whose church attendance is spotty— "I need the rest."**

James wrote this letter to Jewish Christians who had been scattered because of persecution. They faced many trials and temptations. Unfortunately, many of them had become experts in shifting the blame for their failure. James dealt with it head on. Open your Bible to James 1. Here's the truth I want to drive home to your heart today . . .

YOU CAN WIN OVER SIN!

Open your mind and heart so you can receive the truth about temptation. First, I want you to see . . .

1. THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

James 1:13... Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

“Tempted”— This is the same Greek word (in verb form) that was translated as the noun *trials* in verse 2. Context determines its meaning. Where does temptation come from? *God. Satan. Ourselves.*

“God cannot be tempted by evil”— There is nothing in God’s character that is open to the temptation to do evil!

2 Corinthians 5:21... He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 4:15... For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

“He Himself does not tempt anyone” — God tests us with trials to bring out the good. Satan tempts us with sin to bring out the bad. So, we can safely say that God will never tempt us to sin!

James 1:14... But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Adam and Eve were the first two sinners. When the Creator God confronted them, ***Adam blamed Eve and God for his sin. Eve blamed the devil for her sin.***

Genesis 3:12–13... The man said, “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

The internal source of temptation is our own selfish lusts or desires. Listen to Jesus . . .

Mark 7:20–23... And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. **21** “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, **22** deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. **23** “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

“Enticed”— This means to be baited or deceived. The bait Satan uses keeps us from seeing the consequences of sin. Imagine a big catfish swimming along the bottom of a lake. Suddenly he sees a big, juicy worm drop into his vicinity. His desire for a sumptuous meal rises up within him. He breaks for the worm and swallows it. Then he feels a tremendous tug along with the piercing pain of a sharp hook. An internal source met an external force and he was caught, cleaned, cooked, and consumed!

The temptation to sin is a serious and tricky business. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed, but you need to understand this . . .

YOU CAN WIN OVER SIN!

To win, you've got to get a firm grasp on the source of temptation. Next, we need to get clarity on . . .

2. THE SEQUENCE OF TEMPTATION

James 1:15... **Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

"Lust"— This word refers to *a strong urge, a craving of the soul, a strong desire*.

1 Peter 2:11... Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

"Conceived"—This means *to bring together*. When you begin to desire something beyond the framework of God's will and you take the bait Satan puts on the hook, sin is conceived in your heart. Eventually you will make a sinful decision that runs

counter to God's will for your life. You must exercise your will (not your feelings) to say no to temptation!

"Gives birth to sin"— This phrase pictures a baby in the womb of the mother. Left unattended the desire for something outside of God's will will result in sin (missing the mark). Do you see the sequence in this verse (LSD)? First, there is lust. Then there is sin. Finally, there is death.

"It brings forth death"— Death means separation (Romans 6:23). In physical death, the spirit is separated from the body. In spiritual death, the person is separated from God for eternity. O.S. Hawkins observed . . .

The only effective way to deal with temptation is at its root. Let God pull out our sinful desires. He must change our desires and give us a new nature. The spiritually victorious life is an exchanged life, not merely a changed life. We give God our old life, and He will give us a brand-new life. [The James Code, p. 53]

This is one of the keys that leads to the truth we're driving home today . . .

YOU CAN WIN OVER SIN!

To win, you've got to get a firm grasp on the source of temptation and the sequence of temptation. Finally, we need to get clarity on . . .

3. THE SOLUTION TO TEMPTATION

The admonition of James is spot on. He wrote . . .

James 1:16... Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

"Deceived"— This word pictures a ship that strays from its designated route or a sheep that wanders off from the shepherd and becomes lost. This command forbids something that is already in progress. Literally, James says, "Stop being deceived." This is an important key to winning over sin. Listen, God the Father wants you to win over sin. His solution to temptation and sin includes . . .

A.) The Goodness of God

James 1:17... Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

This verse highlights three attributes of God that will build your faith . . .

GOD IS GOOD.

“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above”— God is the source of all that is good. The word “every” is emphatic. The goodness of God is seen in . . .

The Way He Gives—When verse 17 speaks of “every good gift,” it focuses on the act of giving.

Matthew 7:11... “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

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The Gifts He Gives—The gifts of God are both *good* and *perfect*. God gives them to build us up, never to knock us down.

Romans 8:28... And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

God is a good, good Father. He is the author of everything that is good.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN.

“Coming down”—is a present participle that describes a continual, never-ending flow of God’s goodness.

“The Father of lights”—God reigns over these heavenly bodies with sovereign authority.

GOD IS IMMUTABLE.

“There is no variation or shifting shadow”—
THE GOODNESS OF GOD NEVER CHANGES.

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Variations of different kinds are constantly taking place in the heavens. Not so with God. Nothing that does change can eclipse the goodness of God.

Life may be hard. The culture may be unraveling at the seams. But God is still good. The difficulties of life do not cancel out the goodness of God.

Lloyd C. Douglas, author of *The Robe* and other novels, lived in a boarding house during college. A retired music teacher lived on the first floor, with whom he had a daily ritual. Douglas would ask, “*What’s the good news today?*” The old man would take his tuning fork and strike the side of his wheelchair and said, “That is Middle C. It was Middle C yesterday, and it will be Middle C a thousand years from now. The soprano upstairs sings off-key, and the piano across the hall is out of tune. But this is Middle C.”

God’s solution to temptation involves the goodness of God and . . .

B.) The Grace of God

James wanted these scattered and persecuted Jewish Christians to know that they were recipients of God's grace. Of all the gifts that God had poured out on them, none was greater than the new life He granted them through the new birth. Here's how he described it . . .

James 1:18... In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

"In the exercise of His will"— God is the author of salvation.

"He brought us forth"— This is the sovereign and gracious act by which God gives new life to those who are dead in sins. Sin brings forth death. But God brings forth new life once and for all. This statement emphasizes three wonderful facts about the new birth.

"By the word of truth"— This affirms the priority of the Word of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus

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Christ in the life and work of the church. A local congregation is a true church only to the degree it is shaped by the word of God.

“So that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures”— When the harvest would come, the people of the God were to give the first fruits. As a first fruit, believers are the finest of all God’s creation. *This reference to the first fruits emphasizes the fact that salvation is for us but is not about us. God saves us for his glory.*

CONCLUSION

YOU CAN WIN OVER SIN!

To win, you’ve got to get a firm grasp on the source of temptation and the sequence of temptation and the solution to temptation.

God has made available to you. . .

HIS DIVINE PROVISION

1 Corinthians 10:13... No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

HIS DIVINE PROMISE

2 Peter 2:9... *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

Are you battling a temptation this morning? The Lord wants you to win over sin. Ask the Lord for the victory He has promised and will provide for you!

Is Satan deceiving you into believing there are multiple ways to be saved? He's lying to you. DO NOT BE DECEIVED! Come to Christ today.