

JAMES: PRACTICING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

II. Handling Temptation

(James 1:13-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Though the Epistle of James offers little formal structure and is less concerned about theological concepts than other New Testament works, it is intensely practical, explaining how to be "doers" of God's Word, James 1:22.
- B. James 1:13-18 explains the godly way to resist temptation in the Christian life, and we view it for our insight:

II. Handling Temptation, James 1:13-18.

- A. James asserted that God is not the Author of sin in the believer, that such sin originates in the believer's own yielding to temptation from the sin nature that is within that believer, James 1:13-15:
 1. The Greek word for "tempted" here in James 1:13 KJV is *peirazo*, and it is used in James 1:2, 12 for "trials . . . designed to prove the quality of one's character," but here it means "a solicitation to evil," Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 646; *Ryrie Study Bible, KJV*, 1978, ftn. to James 1:13.
 2. James thus admonished that no believer should say when he is solicited to do evil that he is being solicited by God to do evil, for God cannot be solicited to do evil nor does He solicit anyone to do evil, James 1:13.
 3. Actually, every man is solicited to do evil when he is "dragged away, taken in tow" (*exelko*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 273) by his own lusts and thereupon "enticed" (*deleazo*, Ibid., p. 173), James 1:14.
 4. Then when lust has "conceived" (*sullambano*, Ibid., p. 784) it "gives birth" (*tikto*, Ibid., p. 824) to sin, and when sin "has run its course" (*apoteleo*, Ibid., p. 100) it "brings forth" (*apokueo*, Ibid., p. 93) death, v. 15.
- B. Rather, God is the Source of all that is righteous and good, especially as it relates to believers, James 1:16-18:
 1. Having established the fact that God cannot be justly blamed for soliciting any believer to do evil, James called his readers not to "be mistaken" (*planao*, Ibid., p. 671) about God's character, James 1:16.
 2. Indeed, only every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from God in heaven, coming down from the Father of lights with Whom there is no "change, variation" (*parallage*, Ibid., p. 625) nor "shadow cast by the variation in position of heavenly bodies" (*tropes aposkiasma*, Ibid., p. 97), v. 17. This description signifies how unchanging or immutable God is, how consistently He gives only good and perfect gifts without ever soliciting the believer to commit an act of sin!
 3. Indeed, of the Father's will did He perform the wonderful good of "bringing forth, bringing into being" (*apokueo* again, Ibid., p. 93) us by the Word of truth that we might be a firstfruits of His creatures, v. 18.
 4. In other words, "(t)he solution for temptation is to be found in a close relationship with the Father and a constant response to His Word. One must rest in the unchangeable Lord of light and rely on His life-giving 'Word of truth' (cf. Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15). There is no reason why one of God's chosen firstfruits, or regenerated believers, has to yield to temptation." (*Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 822)

Lesson: Sin in the believer can never be blamed on God, for He is not solicited to do evil nor does He solicit anyone to do evil. Rather, a believer is solicited to do evil when he is dragged away by the lusts of his own sin nature and enticed, and, upon yielding to that enticement, he gives birth to sin that in the end produces death. We must not err by blaming God's character as causing us to sin, for every good and perfect gift is from God above Who is immutably unchanging in His goodness and righteousness. He demonstrated this goodness and perfection in willing to regenerate us when we believed in the Gospel of Christ that we might be a firstfruits of His creation, formed to live righteously as we rely on our fellowship with Him to overcome temptations to sin.

Application: (1) May we never blame God or anybody else for our committing an act of sin, for each of us believers sins only if we are dragged away by the lusts of our own sinful nature and enticed, and upon yielding to that enticement, we give birth to sin that if it runs its full course will produce death. (2) May we recall that God is always immutably good and perfect, and He gives only good and perfect gifts as the unchanging God of light and righteousness, and that He graciously caused us to be born again by faith in His Word that we might be a firstfruits, chosen and select to live righteous lives and not wicked ones. (3) May we then boycott the lusts of our sinful natures to rely on the Lord, fellowshipping with Him that we might bear the fruit of righteousness in living. (4) If we realize we are going down the path of enticement to sin by our lusts, may we immediately see the danger of our pathway and confess our need to God for His help and deliverance, Galatians 5:16. (5) If we have committed an act of sin, may we confess it for God's forgiveness based on 1 John 1:9 to escape the sin that eventually leads to death where God must punish us by causing us prematurely physically to die, cf. 1 John 5:16.