

James 1:13-18 – Temptation – Part 4

Introduction

The source of temptation lies within us. Last time we looked at the progression of sin in our lives. The first step is desire. **Desire** in itself was neutral. It becomes sin when the object or purpose of what we desire is outside of God's will. The second stage is **deception**. This is where the mind begins to rationalize the desire. The third stage is **design**. This is where one begins to make plans on how to fulfill the desire. The final stage is **disobedience**. James makes it clear that God is not responsible for our sin.

James 1:13-18

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. ¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

The Nature of God

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

James declares that God is not responsible for our temptations to sin.

God's nature is incompatible with the nature of sin. Because God is wholly righteous and just, He can have no part in sin, in any way or to any degree.

What comes from God is not sin! However, every good and every perfect gift comes from Him. **God's works reflect His character**. Negatively, James is saying that, from temptation to execution, God has absolutely no responsibility for sin. Positively, he is saying that God has complete responsibility for every good thing, and that every perfect gift that exists has come down from above.

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The trials that God allows into are lives are meant for good. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph responds to his brothers in regard to how they treated him. He responded, “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

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We often do not have the proper perspective when it comes to viewing life’s situations. Since life is filled with struggles, one might ask, “**Why not just give up?**”

Imagine yourself in a kayak in raging white water. If you give up, you will be swept away by the currents and die! However, as you struggle against those currents they make you stronger and develop your skills.

The same can be said of the struggles of life. To surrender is to be carried away to destruction. But as you face those struggles in the strength and wisdom of God, you develop your skills and are transformed into the image of Christ.

The Nature of God - Desire

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Last time we saw how temptation to sin was a process. Let us now look at the process of obedience.

Desire

God created mankind's desires, and He created them perfect and good. It is when we take those desires outside God's boundaries that they become sin. We should rejoice and give thanks to God for our ability to enjoy the world that He created. However, we must make sure that we exercise our desires to His honor and glory.

The Nature of God - Dedication

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We must make sure that we place down boundaries upon our desires before they take control of us. We must study God's word and hide it away in our hearts so that we will not sin against our Creator. We must determine how we will respond to temptation. Many Christians want to know where the boundaries of sin lie. They want to set camp at that boundary line. Many want to know how far they can go and not be in sin. The world pulls upon us to be more like them. The question of "How far can I go" is an improper question for a Christian. We should be asking, "How pure can I be?". We are to dedicate our minds and bodies to God (Romans 12:1-2).

The Nature of God - Determination

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This third stage involves the will. We must determine to draw the battle lines of sin on solid ground. We must set a watch over our minds in order to keep them pure.

Part of that battle involves what we **allow into our minds**. We must fill our minds with things that are good. **Proverbs 4:23** states, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

The Nature of God - Determination

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Philippians 4:6-8 records:

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

The Nature of God - Determination

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The key here is to fill our heart and mind with that which is proper.

Our homes should be filled with the things of God instead of the questionable things of this fallen world. Remember it is not how far can one can go, but how pure can one can be.

We must flee sinful lusts. Daniel purposed “in his heart” that he would not defile himself regardless the cost (Daniel 1:8). Just as a person can “design” situations in order to fulfill their sinful lust, a genuine believer who seeks to please God should determine how he will handle temptation before it arises.

The Nature of God – Delightful Obedience

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Obedience is not a sentence to unhappiness or disappointment. God delights to give His children the desires of their heart (Psalm 37:4).

The restrictions that God places upon us are to protect us. The wise man understands the importance of God’s boundaries and will defend them at all cost.

The Nature of the Father

James 1:17

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“The Father of lights”, was an ancient Jewish title for God, referring to Him as Creator, as the great Giver of light, in the form of the sun, moon, and stars (cf. **Gen. 1:14-19**). The created sources of light will eventually fade, but God's character, power, wisdom, and love have no variation or shifting shadow. Through Malachi the Lord declares, “For I am the LORD, I change not” (**Mal. 3:6**). The writer of Hebrews we are assured that “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” (**Heb. 13:8**). God, however, is changeless.

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Jesus promises:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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 good things to those who ask Him! (**Matthew 7:7-11**)

More than those things, Jesus promises that our heavenly Father will give us His own Holy Spirit (**Luke 11:13**).

So What ...

The implication of this passage is this: When we are so abundantly and continually showered with the most gracious, valuable, and satisfying blessings our heavenly Father can bestow, why should anything evil have the slightest attraction to us?

How is your walk with Christ today? Are you having victory over sin? Are you being transformed day by day ever more into the image of our Savior? Is the sin that you hold onto more valuable than that which the Father wishes to give?

Will you yield to Jesus today?