

Sunday Morning Message

October 31, 2021

Putting Your Faith to Work – Study of The General Epistle of James

Applying Your Faith to the Temptation

Text – James 1:13 - 16

Congregational Reading – James 1:13 - 16

Introduction

Read vs. 1 - 12

We finished our study last time discussing how the believer is going to be able to endure various kinds of trials and testing. James calls these tests of our faith “temptations” (vs. 2, 12). These are the difficulties and problems that we all go through in life, which God uses to grow us and to glorify Him. These trials are all allowed by Him, but are not all necessarily caused by Him. They may be caused by Satan or somebody else, or they may be the natural consequences of our decisions. God told us in verse five that we can ask Him for His wisdom, which will help us to get through and endure the trial.

In vs. 13, James will talk about another kind of temptation, which is the temptation to sin.

I. A Different Kind of Temptation (vs. 13 – 16)

"(13) Let no man say when he is tempted (πειραζόμενος from πειράζω – peirazō), I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

(James 1:13-15)

A. Temptation to Sin Comes from Self

You will notice that temptation to sin never comes from God. He never tries to get us to do wrong. Temptation to sin begins in our own hearts, in our flesh. We are all born with a sinful nature that is naturally attracted to sin and evil; or “drawn away” as James puts it. Each of us have areas of weakness when it comes to sin. Maybe for you it’s your temper; or perhaps it’s sexual lust; maybe it’s covetousness, which is a different kind of lust; perhaps it’s in the area of controlling your tongue. Whatever it is for you, it starts on the inside.

That natural tendency or attraction is not sin, in and of itself. It’s merely part of the adamic sinful nature that is within you; but when temptation comes your way to sin, and you give in to it, it becomes sin. By the way, you cannot say that God made you this way, either. God

created a perfect world with two perfect people – Adam and Eve. They did not have sinful natures within them, but they did possess free will, and they made a decision to sin against God. Satan tempted them, but sinning was wholly their decision. Everyone now who has descended from Adam and Eve has a sinful human nature within them, sometimes referred to the flesh, which has all kinds of issues, and is attracted in many ways to sin. It's not your fault that you have a sinful nature, but it is your fault when you yield to it; when you give in and do that which know is not pleasing to God.

Read Romans 7:14 – 25

Wiersbe said:

Temptation always carries with it some bait that appeals to our natural desires. The bait not only attracts us, but it also hides the fact that yielding to the desire will eventually bring sorrow and punishment. It is the bait that is the exciting thing. Lot would never have moved toward Sodom had he not seen the “well-watered plains of Jordan” (Gen. 13:10ff). When David looked on his neighbor's wife, he would never have committed adultery had he seen the tragic consequences: the death of a baby (Bathsheba's son), the murder of a brave soldier (Uriah), the violation of a daughter (Tamar). *The bait keeps us from seeing the consequences of sin.*¹

Notice that sin always leads to death and destruction – “the wages of sin is death.”

B. Temptation to Sin Can Come from Satan

Sometimes the temptation to sin comes from a spiritual source, such as when Satan tempted Eve; or when Satan tempted David to number the people. Of course, the most famous example of temptation in the New Testament was when Jesus was tempted by the Devil. Of course, Jesus did not yield to Satan's temptation. Hebrews tells us:

“(15) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus fought back each temptation with the Word of God: “It is written”. We are often powerless to fight the temptations of the Devil because:

- 1 We don't know enough Scripture to fight back with.
- 2 We lean unto our own understanding instead of “acknowledging Him”. We like to get the credit: we say “I think” instead of “God says”.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 342.

C. Temptation Can Come from Human Sources

Sometimes temptation comes from a human source. People like to lure us out of the will of God and get us to join them in their sin.

"(16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)

The world is full of sinful pleasures, and there are plenty of people out there that want us yield with them, joining in on their sin.

"(10) My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. (11) If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: (12) Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: (13) We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: (14) Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: (15) My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: (16) For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. (17) Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. (18) And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. (19) So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof." (Proverbs 1:10-19)

Another example was in the story of Amnon and Jonadab (2 Samuel 13). David's son Amnon had within him a sick lust for his own sister. He had a wicked friend, a subtle (sneaky) friend named Jonadab, who gave him the idea of how Amnon could satisfy his sinful lust and be immoral with his sister.

Conclusion

Notice verse 16

"(16) Do not err, my beloved brethren." (James 1:16)

It seems that verse 16, though beginning the next paragraph here in the Scripture could be connected to this section on temptations. James is telling us not to "err" (πλανᾷσθε from πλανᾷω – *planaō*); don't wander off of the right path; don't yield to sin.

Practical Points

In the remainder of this chapter, James will give us a lot of practical tools that will help us to avoid yielding to sinful temptations, but let's consider what he already told us back in v. 5:

"(5) If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

1. You can run to God and ask Him for help.

When you are feeling like you are about to yield to something that you know God would not want you to do, immediately run to Him for help. He wants to help you, but He will not force you.

By the way – do not be so foolish as to think that you can do this on your – that you can resist temptation by yourself. You can't. You and I are sinful creatures – bent toward sin. We need God's help!

2. Stay as far away from situations that might tempt you to sin.

Paul told the Church at Corinth to flee fornication. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

If you struggle with alcohol, don't go near a bar.

Illustrate – Bob F and I have talked about the fact that we need to stay away from the news stations.

3. Stay as far away from people who will cause you to sin.

"(17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (2 Corinthians 6:17)

Run with people who will help you to avoid sin and stay inside the will of God.

There are people who you know are not a good influence on you – stay away from them.

4. Saturate yourself in the Word of God.

Much of the rest of this chapter will be devoted to the Word of God.

Someone once said: "This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book."

The psalmist said:

"(11) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11)

Hiding God's word in your heart means that you are committing Scripture to memory. We used to emphasize Scripture memory a lot more than we do today. Perhaps that is why we are losing the battle to sin.

John wrote:

"(1) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1)

5. Separate from the philosophies of this world.

This world is full of philosophies and ideologies that are in contradiction to the will of God. If you spend a lot of time listening to, or being entertained by this world system, you will begin to think like the world does, instead of having the mind of Christ. This world is like the pied piper, playing its tune and slowly but surely pulling people further and further away from God.

Illustrate – The new Superman Comic Book will portray Superman as a bi-sexual.

Homosexuality has become “normal” in our world, and those of us who call it sin are now considered by many to be the bad guys – bigots and racists, the villains. You can mark my words, if the Lord tarries, Christianity is going to be the enemy religion pretty soon, and Bible believers will be seen by this world as the number one problem. This world calls good, evil; and, evil, good.

"(15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16)

"(1) Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (3) And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (4) The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. (5) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. (6) For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psalm 1:1-6)

If we do not start separating from the mindset of this world, we will soon be swept away into sin, and we won't even realize that we are doing anything wrong.

Again, we need to think like God thinks, and in order to do that, we are going to have to tune out from this world, and tune into God. Separate and Saturate – it's that simple.

No one can force you out of the will of God and into sin, but they can tempt you in the direction of sin. What we need to do is immerse ourselves in the word and will of God so that the temptations will be limited and have less effect on us.