

You Can Resist Temptation (part 2)

James 1

(Part 1 outline)

- I. It is definitely worthwhile to resist temptation (v. 12)
- II. We need to understand how temptation works (vs. 13-18)
 - A. The difference between trials & temptations (vs. 2-3, 12-18)
 - B. Temptations can only work where there are desires (1:14-15; 4:1-3; 1 John 2:15-17)
 - 1. Desire not wrong in itself (cf. Luke 4:1-13; 22:15; Phil. 1:23)
 - 2. But when desires have the wrong motive, goal & standard they become “evil desires” (Col. 3:5) that “war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11)
 - 3. We Each Have Unique Desires (1:14)
 - C. How desires war against the soul (vs. 14-15) instead of moving the soul to righteousness (as in Luke 22:15)
 - 1. Illustration of fisherman’s lure (v. 14)
 - a. desire enticed by the lure (*epithumia*)
 - b. drawn away (reeled in) on the lure (*exelko*)
 - c. caught or netted (*deleazo*)
 - 2. Illustration of reproduction (v. 15)
 - a. desire’s intercourse
 - b. conception of sin
 - c. bearing sin to term (*tiktei* = to bear, produce or give birth; *apotelestheisa* - be fully developed)
 - d. giving birth to death (*apokuei* - to bring forth or give birth)

(This week outline)

- III. 18 Practical steps for redirecting our desires and overcoming temptation
 - A. Develop a consistently Biblical worldview. We must discipline our minds to think differently about life (v. 2-3 “count...knowing”). Your emotional outlook (including the direction of your strong desires) is hugely affected by your worldview. (cf. John 2:13-17; Matt. 8:24-26; Mark 6:34; Hebrews 11; etc.) Am I a servant or the center of the universe (v. 1)? Are the things that happen to me for my good, or the result of chance chaos (v. 3)? Have I been blessed with everything I need for godliness or am I the victim of a cosmic shortchange (v. 4,17-18)? Is God generous with me, or stingy (v. 5,17-18)? Does my sense of well-being come only from accomplishments in this life, or do I have an eternal perspective (vv. 9-11)? When I fall into sin, am I a victim or a culprit (vv. 12-16)? Etc., etc. The Biblical worldview glorifies God, generates faith, gives stability, produces optimism and makes life feel worth living. Your perception of reality changes how you relate to God’s providence. The more inconsistent your worldview is (being double minded – verse 6) the more vacillating your desires will be. The rest of James fills out this part of the equation.
 - B. Develop faith in all three of its dimensions (intellect, emotions, will).¹ Since “faith is the title deed of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” this means that the intellect, emotions and the will must be exercised in faith prior to “seeing” anything with the natural eye. We must strongly affirm our beliefs (see point A) when everyone affirms the opposite, and we must stop making any affirmations that undermine the intellectual side of faith (vv. 5,13, etc.). There will be times when we must strongly exercise the emotional dimension of faith (v. 1c, 2,9,12), and resist any emotional expressions that undermine faith (vv. 5,6,19-20,26). There will be times when we must step out in the obedience of faith (the will component of faith) even when the

¹ This is believing “with all your heart” (Acts 8:37). Both faith and repentance are defined as involving the intellect, will and emotions. Repentance involves the intellect in that we must agree with God’s evaluation of our actions (Ps. 51:1-3; Rom. 3:23). It involves the emotions producing sufficient sorrow to turn from the sin (2 Cor. 7:9-10). Repentance also involves the will in that it is a forsaking of sin (Prov. 28:13; Is. 55:7; Luke 19:1-9). In the same way, faith requires understanding (Ps. 9:10; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1; etc.). It also requires the will since living faith always obeys (Heb. 11; James 2:14-26; Gal. 5:6). But faith involves the affections as well (Luke 8:13; Phil. 1:25; Heb. 10:22; Rom. 15:13; contrast the enmity in Rom. 8:7 with love in Gal. 5:6. In some passages, love is almost a synonym for belief: Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 2:5). The bottom line is that the “whole heart” has neither repented nor believed if the mind, emotions and will are not involved. An illustration of lack of faith and full faith can be seen in the symbols of Orpah and Ruth. Orpah is only half-hearted. But Ruth says, “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” (Ruth 1:16-17)

world thinks we are nuts (vv. 4,5,21-27). Faith is never passive (see Hebrews 11). We must actively stir up our minds, will and emotions to serve God. If any one of those three components is missing, we lose faith and become double minded. “The reason we see so little change is that instead of being adventurous we try to stay in our physical and emotional and intellectual comfort zones.” (Edmiston) The rest of James fills out this part of the equation.

(Outline to be Continued Next Week)

- C. We must not deliberately step into trials (v. 2 – “fall into”)
- D. We should recognize trials as integrity checks of our character (v. 3)
- E. We must be committed for the long haul (v. 4)
- F. We must learn to say “No” to the present orientation of the flesh and to say “Yes” to the future orientation of the godly mind (v. 4)
- G. Make sure that your goal is holiness, not comfort.
- H. Ask God for wisdom (vs. 5-8)
- I. Don’t Hedge Your Bets (vv. 6-8)
- J. Begin in faith to thank God for your circumstances and begin to develop contentment (vs. 9-11)
- K. When the going gets tough, remind yourself that enduring is worthwhile (v. 12)
- L. Don’t blame anyone or anything except yourself when you give in to temptation (vs. 13-18). Blame shifting is destructive to conquering sin.
- M. Don’t get frustrated or angry (vs. 19-20; cf. Ps. 37)
- N. Begin the process of “de-habitation” - putting off your sinful habits (v. 21a)
- O. Meditate on Scriptures designed to “save you” from these desires. These implanted Scriptures will begin to replace implanted lusts. (v. 21b; cf. Matt. 4:1-11 for benefits even with innate desires)
- P. Begin the process of “re-habitation” - putting on godly habits (vs. 22-27)
- Q. Keep practicing until the godly behavior is a habit that you can’t forget (vs. 23-25)
- R. Get rid of every area of selfishness so that temptations will not have soil to grow in. The self-life can be weakened in the following ways:
 - 1. Make yourself open and vulnerable and thus less prone to self-deception (vs. 19-20,26)
 - a. Stop dishing it out and start listening to reproof for a change (vs. 19-20, 26)
 - b. Be eager to hear from others on how you can improve (v. 19)
 - c. Ask God for a heart religion without pretense (v. 19,26-27)
 - 2. Find ministry projects that won’t stroke your ego or give you anything in return. Serve just for the sake of serving (v. 27).