

## PRACTICAL FAITH

A Letter from James



The Firstfruits of a New Creation - James 1:13-18

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## INTRODUCTION

- If God sovereignly controls and designs our particular trials to bring us to wholeness, if at whatever point we fail, can we blame God?
- Isn't He somehow responsible for our sin if He put the possibility for it in the first place? After all, He is the one who allowed it.
- Transition by James from "trials" to "temptations"
- Same root word, but the former is expressed by James by a noun (peirasmos) and the latter a verb (peiradzo)
- In James' use, the first is a *situation of testing* to reveal character, the second an active attempt to *lure to sin*
- (the vocabulary is not always as clear cut in other usages of these terms in NT)

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## TEMPTATION'S EVIL WORK (13-14)

Let no one say when he is *tempted*,  
 "I am being tempted *by God*,"  
 for God cannot *be* tempted with evil,  
 and he himself *tempts* no one.

But each person is tempted  
 when he is lured and enticed by *his own* desire.

Then desire when it has *conceived*  
 gives *birth* to sin,  
 and sin when it is *fully grown*  
 brings forth *death*.

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A TRANSITIONAL WARNING (16)

Do not be *deceived*, my beloved siblings.

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GOD'S GOOD WORK (17-18)

Every *good* gift and every *perfect* gift is from above,  
coming down from the *Father of lights*,  
with whom there is no *variation* or *shadow* due to change.

Of his own will he *brought us forth*  
by the *word of truth*,  
that we should be a kind of *firstfruits* of his creatures.

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RESPONSE

- The battle against temptation, sin, and death-fruit is fundamentally fought at the level of our *desires*
  - There are in fact things outside of us that we *don't control*
    - At the same time, there are things *about* and *in* ourselves we can influence, particularly the *cultivation* of our desires
- God's work...
  - is the giving of the greatest gift, the new birth, that we now have the power to change and bear Spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)
  - Is not merely concerned with what happens in the end, but the spreading of life-fruit in the here and now
- This is all made possible by the Word of Truth, the Gospel

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