

## **Pt 4 James Series (Faith Made Perfect) – Tempted by Evil**

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 03-07-2018

### † James 1:13-18

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, 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.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

There are two usages of the word “**temptation**” in the Bible. Up to this point James has been dealing with it in one sense which is “**trials from situations or circumstances.**” But now he is dealing with it in the other sense and that is the “**solicitation to sin.**”

This perhaps could be a sin that someone is tempted to indulge in because of their circumstances so you could relate what James was talking about concerning temptations with being tempted.

I know that sounds confusing but maybe this will help clear it up:

Let’s say for example you are going through a trial of some kind, maybe you have lost your job and you are out of money and you begin to worry about feeding your family or paying your bills. So, instead of relying on the Lord to provide, you are tempted to steal instead. You have now allowed that temptation (or trial) to cause you to be tempted to sin.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

So, James is addressing the fact that these temptations that lead to sin, are not instigated by God. While God certainly allows us to go through trials, he certainly does not place the desire to sin in front of us. He says that God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

Some people will say, “well what about Jesus? Doesn’t the Bible say that he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness?” Sure it does, and the Hebrew writer says this: **Hebrews 4:15** 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.

So, while Satan certainly TRIED to tempt Jesus in the same manner that man is tempted; Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and Pride of Life; the Bible says that he was without sin.

I’m thankful that we serve a God who cannot be tempted to do evil. Think about it: What causes us to be tempted?

1. Greed – God has no greed
2. Wealth – God owns everything.
3. Power – God is the most powerful being in the universe, there’s none above Him.
4. Fame – God is already known by all.
5. Happiness – God possesses all things and cannot be tempted based on a mood.
6. Sex – God is pure and holy and cannot be tempted with sexual gratification.

I’m sure there are more that I overlooked. But the fact is God cannot be tempted in the same way that man can be tempted – He does not have a sin nature, and he does not tempt us with things to make us sin.

Jesus went through all kinds of trials: he was persecuted; he was poor; he was hungry, he was thirsty, he was despised; he suffered physical pain; he endured sorrows, and of course a very cruel death. Through all of those trials in his life he never once had the inclination or desire to sin.

When God allows things to happen in our lives there are certainly trials that try our faith, but it is never His intention to make us sin, but to bring us closer to Him and to make us more like His Son, Jesus.

Just as we said in last weeks study, Peter explains it very nicely:

**1 Peter 1:6-7** Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

So, if God isn’t tempting us to sin, then who or what is? Well, look at it in our next verse:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

It is our flesh that is tempting us to sin. Our fleshly, sinful, carnal, human nature that was passed down to us from the original man, Adam. The Bible says in

**Romans 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Just as we preached a couple of weeks ago about that old man and new man – you will always have that sin nature with you as long as you are living. It is that old man that causes us to be drawn away and enticed to sin.

Certainly, just as Adam sinned, the devil also influences us to sin. Just as he tried to tempt Jesus, he tries to tempt us. The difference is Jesus did not get drawn away and enticed to sin, but we do.

All crime that is committed today is the result of someone being drawn away of his own lust and enticed. The word “**LUST**” means “**a desire or craving for that which is forbidden.**” We all know what comes next ---- death.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Let me lay this little truth bomb on you: It is not a sin to be tempted. Being tempted is something that we cannot help. (Of course, if we purposely put ourselves into a position to be tempted knowing that we will be tempted then it is wrong) but if you are just living your life and suddenly something happens, and it presents itself to you in a way that tries to draw you – that is not a sin. Sin doesn’t happen until you conceive it.

By the way, that word **conceived** means: **Formed in the womb; framed in the mind; devised; imagined; understood.**

Let me give you an example from the Bible. This is the very familiar story of King David and Bathsheba. We all know it was the biggest blemish on the career and life of David. But if you examine what he did you can see the clear progression of sin:

### **2 Samuel 11:1-4**

1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to

*battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*

Okay, so at this point it appears that everything is fine. There is some question as to why David didn't leave with the rest of the army at this point. Some say he was out of God's will and enjoying a life of ease and pleasure instead of fighting as he should. We can debate that some other time. The fact is, as King, he can really do as he pleases and he chose to stay behind.

*2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.*

So, David has been laying in bed and around 3:00 in the evening he decides to get up. Again, some question why he was lying in bed in the middle of the day but that's not my concern at this point. He is King and if chooses to lay in bed all day that is his prerogative.

Then it says he went for a walk on the roof of the palace. This is not uncommon and there's nothing wrong with that. All the houses in that area were built so that you could use the roof for a place of relaxation.

Then, it says he "*saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.*" At this point David has still not done anything wrong. He's at his own house, on his own roof when he notices this beautiful woman bathing. At this point he has not sinned. The sin didn't start until he kept looking. If he would have just turned away, went back into his house and forgot about it, he would have been just fine. But, as he continued to look he began to lust and was enticed and began plotting how to make this woman his own.

*3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*

*4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

So, David's lust was conceived, and it brought sin, and, according to the Scriptures, it also brought forth death. The baby that was born between David and Bathsheba died and the LORD told this to David **2 Samuel 12:10** *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.*

Death came to David's family because of his sin.

**16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.**

Then James seems to give a warning to those that try to attribute the temptation to sin to the LORD. He says, "**Do not err, my beloved brethren.**" In other words, do not make the mistake of believing you sin because God caused you to sin. It had nothing to do with God that you sinned, you sinned because you were drawn away of your own lusts. You allowed your fleshly nature to take control. Instead of staying the course, fighting the fight, and keeping the faith, you indulged and gave in and conceived your lusts and sinned.

**17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**

Then James says a great truth to back it all up with and informs us that **every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**. In other words, God is only good. The things that he provides are good all the time. They are not bad gifts.

When we are drawn away by sin we for some reason think that sin we want to indulge in is a good thing because it pleases us – but no sin is ever good. There is no lasting joy in sin. Moses understood that, listen to what the Bible says about him in:

**Hebrews 11:24-26**

*24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*

*25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

*26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

There is pleasure in sin for a season. That means for just a little while, but it wears off fast because it is no good. There's pleasure in eating an entire box of Girl Scout Cookies, but it's only for a short period of time, afterwards you feel sick to your stomach because you did a bad thing.

Serving God is never a bad thing. But serving sin always is.

**17b... and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**

James uses that title for the LORD, "**The Father of Lights.**" This is referring to his magnificent creation of the sun, moon, and stars that he created. He says that with God **there is no variableness neither shadow of turning**. Of course, those things are in the sun, moon, and stars, but not God. He is not in the shadows and he does not change or go out. The Apostle John says this: **1 John 1:5** *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

And, of course John also says this about Jesus in his Gospel:

**John 1:1-9:** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

**18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

I love that phrase "**Of his own will begat he us.**" Aren't you glad of that? We were not accidents, God created us intentionally to be the firstfruits of his creatures. That means that he places us first above the rest of creation, above the animals, and above the angels. That is why he is our Heavenly Father. You father would never want to intentionally cause you to sin, he only wants what is good for you.

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† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version