

JAMES

A Faith That Works

Study 3

Understanding the nature of temptation

James 1:13-18

Part 1 of 3: Temptation is not caused by God

James 1:13-18

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

1) a) Objective Question. Which of these statements is true about Temptation?

- A. Temptation is caused by good desires.
- B. Temptation is caused by our disordered desires.
- C. Temptation is NOT caused by GOD.
- D. Temptation is inconsistent with God's nature & Ultimate intention.
- E. Temptation is used by GOD to destroy us.

b) Discussion Question. James 1:13 says "For God cannot be tempted by evil". Since Jesus is God, does that mean he cannot be tempted? (refer to Hebrews 2:18, 4:15 and 5:8 to help you)

The temptation of Jesus was an external trial but since Jesus was fully human, his human nature allows him to suffer temptation, but yet did not give in to it.

Quick Verse Reference

Hebrews 2:18

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

Hebrews 5:8

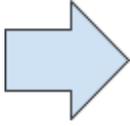
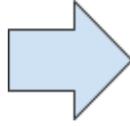
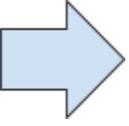
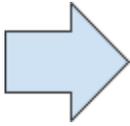
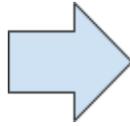
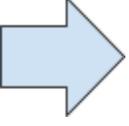
Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered

Part 2 of 3: Temptation is caused by our disordered desires.

James 1:2-4
 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:14-15
 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

2) a) Fill in the Blanks. Referring to lecture slide, fill in the difference between trials and temptations even though they are from the same word *Peirasmos*.

<i>Peirasmos</i>	Type		Produce/ give birth to		Repetition makes you...	Ultimate Result
External Trials	Tested faith		Steadfast Endurance Perseverance		Mature and complete 	Crown of Life
Internal Temptation	Desire Luring		Acts of Sin/ Conception of sin		Sin full-grown 	Death

b) Circle the correct answer. Choose the most appropriate answer. Which of the following scenario is trial and which is temptation?

Scenarios	Circle one:
Getting stopped by police for a traffic offence	trial (occasion)/temptation
The desire to bribe police so you can leave	trial (occasion)/temptation
Boss ask you to do something illegal	trial (occasion)/temptation
The desire to keep the job despite the illegal implications	trial (occasion)/temptation
The desire to eat something tempting in the fridge that doesn't belong to you	trial (occasion)/temptation

When you are busy but come across another person in dire need	trial (occasion)/temptation
The desire to meditate on Netflix day and night rather than God's words (Joshua 1:8)	trial (occasion)/temptation

c) Discussion question. The video lecture mentioned that disordered desire is when you “desire small things in large amounts and desire large things in small amounts.” “What the heart desires, the mind justifies, the will chooses.” Can you use that clue to explain what disordered desires mean?

d) Discussion question. Are all desires bad?

e) Reflection question. At this moment of your Christian journey, please fill in the right box from highest priority to lowest of these 5 items: God, Family, Job/Money (Ways to get income), Friends, Hobbies. (if you are unsure, a rough indicator is how you spend your free time outside of working hours.)

Priority	Types (God, Family, Job/Money (Ways to get income), Friends, Hobbies)
Highest priority	
Second priority	
Third priority	
Fourth priority	
Lowest priority	

(Don't worry too much if God isn't first at this moment in your life because the process of sanctification is ongoing and God will help us place Himself first if we continue to seek Him and pray for it)

Part 3 of 3: Temptation is inconsistent with God's nature and ultimate intention

James 1:16-18
 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

3) a) Discussion question. “The God who is redeeming creation is a gracious God. Such a gracious God is not one who is trying to lead people to fall, but one who would use his giving to preserve them in the test.” Based on James 1:16-18, how can we be sure God’s intention is good despite giving us trials?

b) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate. How do we overcome temptation?

A. Human willpower

B. Placing God as our highest love, desire and priority

Background information

“We know of no other way to keep the love of the world out than to keep in our hearts the love of the father” - THOMAS CHALMERS

c) Reflection question. When are you most tempted to doubt God’s goodness?

Takeaway

External trials are from God but internal temptations are not. The occasion and situation is placed by God to test and grow us, but the desire to sin in that situation originates from a combination of human and Satan source. The temptation is only successfully overcome when God is our highest love and desire, not through human willpower.

Case Study

Case 1 – Temptations

Yim Pei Shen woke up late on a Sunday morning, so he just changed his clothes to get ready for Sunday service. On the way to church in his car, he ran a few red lights and drove really fast in the housing area and overtook a few cars in a narrow road, putting others at risk.

One of the cars he overtook dangerously was one of his lifegroup member. The lifegroup member confronted him, he replied: “I don’t want to be late for God mah.”

1) a) i) Discussion question. If you are the lifegroup member of Pei Shen, how would you respond to his excuse?

ii) Do you think you think that reply will change Pei Shen’s mind?

Case 1.1 – Temptations

Pei Shen's lifegroup later found out that he stayed up late watching Netflix and porn instead of going to bed earlier the night before Sunday.

b) Discussion question. What kind of relationship the lifegroup leader will need to have with Pei Shen for him/her to advise effectively and reach to Pei Shen's heart issue?

c) Reflection question. How can you spot the seduction and deception of the sins in your life? How can that help you identify their destructive effects?