

Avoid Temptation!

James 1:13-16 ESV

6th Sunday of Easter – 2013

Sunday, May 5 at 8:00 & 10:45; Monday, May 6 at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, *we are so blessed!* The Almighty God has ♦shown us our sins, ♦made us sorry, and ♦made us alive in Christ! *So we are Christians* – forgiven and heaven-bound. Now, *remembering who we are in Christ*, James continues to teach us how to live as Christians.

Similar but different:

- James 1:2: “**trials**” – *the challenges we experience as Christians; they are for our good; God allows them to toughen us up and grow us as Christians.*
- James 1:13: “**being tempted**” – *being led into sin; the goal is our spiritual harm and death; God leads us from them to keep us alive in Christ.*

1. **Don't Blame God:** ¹³ 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. //
 - a. God is God: He is not like us, so *He cannot be tempted by evil*. The Bible says: “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent...” (Num. 23:19 NAS) **Instead, the Bible instructs us to:** “Exalt the LORD our God... for the LORD our God is holy!” (Ps. 99:9 ESV)

- b. God is Almighty: Therefore, *He is blamed for many things!* Some reason like this: Since God is almighty, He could have prevented the disaster but He didn't; therefore, *the disaster is His fault!* Some may also apply that reasoning to temptation: Since God is not preventing my temptation *He must be causing my temptation!* But both ways of thinking are wrong:

- i. **Temptation comes from the devil; he entices us to believe him over God's Word.** God said to Adam & Eve, regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: “...in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen 2:17 ESV) Then **the devil** said: “You will not surely die.” (3:2 ESV)
 - ii. **Suffering comes from sin;** the first sin brought thorns, thistles, and pain in child birth (Genesis 3:16-19)!
- c. Lord's Prayer – Sixth Petition: We pray: “And lead us not into temptation.” What does this mean? Martin Luther wrote: “**God tempts no one...**” Therefore, we are really praying: “God, lead me so that I am not tempted!” Here are some sample sins and prayers:
 - i. Unfaithful – *Make me faithful!*
 - ii. Sinful thoughts – *Give me pure thoughts!*
 - iii. Greedy – *Make me generous!*

2. **Realize the Actual Source:** ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured [*baited – think about fishing*]

and enticed by his own desire. // So temptation *ultimately* comes from the devil, but also from the sin-sick world in which we live *and* from the sinful desire that dwells within us. Paul described *his own* sinful desire: ^{ESV} **Romans 7:15** “...I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate....¹⁷ ...it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.” As we continue in Christ, so will the battle continue within us – between our *old desire to sin* and our *new desire to follow the Lord*. **The one who wins is the one we feed!** The old feeds on *whatever opposes God*; the new on *God’s Holy Word!*

3. **Be Aware of the Horrible Outcome:** ¹⁵ **Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.** ¹⁶ **Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.** // So we have, for example, desire—sin—death; or sex—conception—child; or greed—theft—prison. In each case, *there is a step-by-step progression*. Luke Timothy Johnson wrote: “**The progression moves from desire to death and passes through sin.**” (194)

- a. Notice the progression and key words in this verse: ^{ESV} **Psalm 7:14** “Behold, the wicked man **conceives evil** and is **pregnant with mischief** and gives **birth to lies.**”
- b. Notice the progression with David to Bathsheba:
 - i. ^{NIV} **2 Samuel 11:1** ...when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s

men and the whole Israelite army.... **But David remained in Jerusalem.**

- ii. ² One evening David...saw a woman bathing.... ³ **and David sent someone to find out about her.**
- iii. The man said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba... the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” [*One of David’s mighty men!*] ⁴ **Then David sent messengers to get her.... and he slept with her.**

David’s sin is so sad, *but God’s forgiveness is GREATER than David’s sin!*

Conclusion: God does not tempt, but He does control each temptation and always provides a way out: ^{NAS} **1 Corinthians 10:13** “...God... will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it [not fall into it].”

Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

- Does God ever tempt us? Y N
- Do those who trust in Jesus as their Savior still have sinful desires? Y N
- How do we strengthen our new desire? _____
- Since sin leads to death, what is God guiding and strengthening us to do? _____
- Why should we avoid temptation? To avoid this progression: Temptation--____--____--_____
- What word describes the way to heaven? Do Done

Jesus work is finished; through Him we are saved! Amen!

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Rd., Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230