

The Letter of James

Faith that works!

Study 3 – Facing Temptation

Introduction

We all live with the reality and the struggle of temptation. Sometimes of course we are tempted in small and unimportant ways – that extra helping of desert, that extra few minutes in bed when we really need to get going, that putting off of a task that needs to be done but which we don't want to do. At other times however, the temptations that we face are very serious indeed, temptations which according to our passage “give birth to sin and ultimately to death” (James 1:15), temptations such as those which were faced by our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

The striking thing that we learn from James 1:12-18, the passage for this study, is that all temptation, whether great or small, finds its power in the same basic reality, namely the desires of our hearts. And given that our hearts are by nature sinful, this means that temptation will find an ally within us and we in our struggle against temptation will find that there is a traitor within.

In a stark but honest way, our passage thus reminds us both of our responsibility for our own sins (we cannot blame God for them) and of God's gracious provision to help us in the battle with sin. For as discover in this remarkable passage, God's remedy for the sin that comes from the meeting of temptation and desire, is not law or religion, but the gift of His word of truth which brings new birth and a changed heart.

Read James 1:12-18



Investigate

1. What has God promised to those who persevere in the faith, despite the trials of life? (1:12)

2. What word sums up a true relationship between the Lord and His people? (1:12)

3. Why should we not blame the Lord when we are faced with temptation? (1:13)

4. According to this passage where does temptation find its power in our lives?
(1:14)

5. Why is it important for us to resist rather than to give in to temptation? (1:15)?

6. What do we learn about God from 1:13 & 1:17?

7. Far from tempting us to evil what has God done for us? (1:17-18)

8. What is God's purpose in giving new birth to His people? (1:18)



Think

1. How are trials and temptations connected?

2. What is God's remedy for our sinful nature? How does this work out in practice in regard to facing temptation?

3. What does this passage teach us about 'new birth'?

Apply



In what way has this passage challenged your thinking?



In what way has this passage spoken to your heart and challenged your deepest affections and desires?



What needs to change in your daily life as a result of this passage?