

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness
Part II: Godliness In Relation To Life's Trials, James 1:2-18
C. God's Directives Regarding Trials Of Temptation
(James 1:13-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Though we believers in Christ must watch that we overcome trials in general in our walk with Christ, the trials of temptations to sin are especially dangerous as they often lure us to commit sin contrary to our usual experience of needing to hide ourselves from being pelted by an unwanted entity in trials.
- B. That being so, James 1:13-18 directs us regarding the special trials where we are lured to sin (as follows):

II. God's Directives Regarding Trials Of Temptation, James 1:13-18.

- A. If our trial is the lure to commit sin, we must realize that this lure does not come from God, James 1:13:
 - 1. The believer may seek to justify his yielding to the lure of temptation to sin by rationalizing that God is the One Who is leading him to take that step of sin. The rationalization leaves one deceiving himself to conclude he is doing what is right when in reality he is only making an excuse to sin.
 - 2. Accordingly, James sharply rebukes such errant rationalization, noting that God cannot Himself be tempted with evil, and He Himself does not tempt any man to commit an act of sin, James 1:13.
 - 3. [We need to explain that God may *let* a person to be tempted to do evil by another party in judgment as in the case of wicked Ahab in 1 Kings 22:20-22, but He never Himself tempts anyone to commit sin!]
- B. Rather, the source of temptations to sin comes from within the believer himself as James 1:14 explains:
 - 1. One is enticed by his inner lust that "draws a person out (*exelkomenos*) like a fish drawn from its hiding place, and then entices him (*deleazomenos*), from the verb *deleazo* to bait, to catch a fish with bait, or hunt with snares," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 822.
 - 2. Accordingly, one is tempted as he "both builds and baits his own trap" due to the sin nature that is within him, and due to the believer's yielding to the pull of his sin nature, cf. Romans 7:15-24; *Ibid.*!
- C. To discern how such temptations arise, James explains the steps of temptation in James 1:15-16:
 - 1. The lustful desire within the believer's own sinful nature, if unchecked, is utilized by Satanic temptation as the Evil One utilizes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life in this world system (1 John 2:16 with Genesis 3:6) to conceive sin in the believer's walk, James 1:15a; *Ibid.*
 - 2. Eventually this yields the act of sin itself, James 1:15b.
 - 3. The final result of the act of sin is death, James 1:15c. For the believer, that may take some time and numerous repetitions of an act of sin, but sin eventually kills!
 - 4. Thus, James called his readers not to deceive themselves by rationalizing that their lures to commit sin are caused by God, James 1:16 NIV with 1:13a.
- D. Having explained these steps to temptation, James 1:17-18 provides the solution if we face it (as follows):
 - 1. In contrast to the failure of sinning, James focused his readers on the Father of lights, God the Father, from whom every good and every perfect gift we need is available to fill our human needs versus having to yield to ungodly lusts for them to be met, James 1:17a; *Ibid.*
 - 2. This Heavenly Father is stable and unchanging in His character while He offers the gifts of His goodness, so as the believer focuses on His Good Heavenly Father, all his needs will be met in ways that will keep him from being lured to sin by lust, James 1:17b with 1 John 2:15-17.
 - 3. This Heavenly Father created us in Christ when we trusted in Him for salvation by our trust in His Word, the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures, James 1:18. James is addressing Hebrew Christians (James 1:1; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to James 1:18), and as Hebrews, they were the first to be saved in the Church era, so God intended they of all believers be holy before Him! James thus urged his readers to live up to their lofty calling by staying close to their All-Sufficient, Good, Providing Heavenly Father that they might overcome the lures from within to sin.

Lesson: We must not rationalize that God ever tempts us to sin, for all sin arises from within ourselves. Thus, for victory over temptation and sin, we must closely fellowship with our Good, All-Sufficient God.

Application: May we fellowship with God, relying on His Spirit and Word to offset lures to temptation.