

Sermon Outline

WHY DO WE FALL INTO TEMPTATION?

(James 1: 13-18)

1. Introduction
A case in point: Why an admirable and respectable Christian leader would fall into temptation?
2. The two distinct meanings of the Greek word, *peirazo* (noun: *peirasmos*) used:
 - a) Trial (verses 2-12) refers to the outward, circumstantial trial, came from without.
 - b) Temptation (verses 13-18) refers to inner enticement to sin, arising within us.
3. Trials which may lead to spiritual growth and blessing, may also become temptations which lead to sin and death. It depends on our response.
4. From the very beginning of time it has been man's instinct to blame others for his own sin. Is God to blame for Adam's sin? (Gen. 3:11-12). Israel's sin? (Isa. 63:17).
5. James absolutely forbids such a thought (v. 13a). Inconsistency with other Scriptures?
 - a) Calvin: "[W]hen Scripture ascribes blindness or hardness of heart to God, it does not assign to him the beginning of this blindness, nor does it make him the author of sin, so as to ascribe to him the blame: and on these two things only does James dwell." Compare Ex. 4:21 with 8:15.
 - b) God may put us to test, that is, the outward temptation which James has been talking about in verses 2 to 12, but He never tempts us as to induce inner enticement to sin in us as James is talking here. So God tempted Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (Heb. 11:17) and even the Lord Jesus was led up by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
 - c) God may allow Satan to tempt David for the fulfilling of God's judgment against Israel (compare 2 Sam. 24:1 and 1 Chro 21:1). But God does not tempt David to sin because he has a choice to respond or not to respond to the enticement of Satan.

6. James gives us three reasons that God is not responsible for inner temptation and therefore sin:
- i) The nature of God (v. 13b) – He is holy (Lev. 20:26). He cannot be tempted with evil. This seems to contradict Psalm 78:18, Psalm 106:14, 1 Corinthians 10:9 and Hebrews 3:9 which say that the Israelites tempted or tried God. Certainly evil creatures may tempt (external temptation) God with their rebellion and disobedient, but God cannot be overcome by evil (internal enticement to sin). So the more literal translation of verse 13b is “for God is inexperienced with evil.”
 - ii) The nature of man (vs. 14 and 15) – the total (desire, mind, will and behavior) depravity of man. Sin is not an act but is the result of a process from the depraved man. The process is: Beginning from DESIRE → the MIND justifies/reasons (“lured and enticed”) → the WILL makes decision (“conceives”) → the ACT of disobedience (“gives birth to sin”) → final RESULT (“death”). Hence, when we deal with our sins, we do not deal with Satan or our circumstances, but with our heart.
 - iii) What God gives (vs. 16 to 18).
 - Every good gift (*dosis* = act of giving) and every perfect gift (*dooreema* = the gift) comes from God. *My application*: God has a purpose for *giving* His gift to us which is always good, but the good *gift* received by us can become bad because we misused it. We also may not like God’s *gift*, but it is good *giving* for the result, that is the gift, will accomplish its good purpose in us.
 - The highest and most precious gift: “*Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*” He gave us new life out of His own will, not our will. Through the selection of words James uses, he makes it very clear that God’s goodness is a planned course of action even before the foundation of the world. We are to be born again by the word of truth, the good news preached to us.
7. My application.
- a) If God has provided us with the solution and regenerated us, why do respectable Christians still fall into temptations? *Answer*: the conflict of the new man and the old man in us (Gal. 5:17,18).
 - b) How to be led by the Spirit and overcome our temptation?
 - To realize our own sinfulness/depravity: “Poor in spirit”. This is not something that we can do by looking to ourselves and trying

to make ourselves more humble, but it is the result of coming face to face with a Holy God: in daily meditation of His Word and in daily prayer.

- To always come to our Abba Father in repentance should we fall into temptation after a severe struggle. We do not have to live in defeat. The door to God is always open, there is always “the way of escape” (1 Cor. 10:13).