

Temptation

James 1:12-15

- Today, we'll discuss a topic that isn't (perhaps) mentioned often enough
- It is a reality for every person, every day
- Whether we know Christ as Savior or not
- You could even say this haunts us
- It comes to us in quiet moments, when we least expect it
- But it also comes to us boldly, in broad daylight, in front of everyone

- No one is immune
- We all allow it to get us off-course
- Sometimes multiple times in one day
- It is "Temptation," which is our theme of the day
- And the subject of James 1:12-15, which is our text of the day

- Temptation comes to us all
- It can take many forms
- What tempts me in a big way, may not tempt you at all
- What was a temptation when I was young, may not tempt me when I'm old
- That may be a result of my growth in Christ
- It may be a result of simple maturity, time, age
- I may have learned my lesson, suffering the consequences of giving in
- There are many factors to consider

- It would be wise for us, I think, to define the term before we approach the text
- Temptation: the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy - an enticement to sin
- This is what we are talking about, when we begin in James 1
- Let's read the entire passage first, then talk about each verse individually...

James 1:12-15

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

- Let's begin with verse 12...

James 1:12

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

- The man who gives in to temptation is not blessed
 - He invites upon himself trouble and difficulty
 - Sin gives him, in the end, exactly the opposite of what it promised
 - It is the man who endures temptation that is blessed
 - The one who remains steadfast under trial is blessed
 - Because those who stand the test are given a crown
- The attribute of steadfastness, in and of itself, brings rewards
 - But this endurance has a specific reward
 - One that is promised by God
 - And it's called "the crown of life"
- The type of crown referred to here is not necessarily a kingly crown
 - It is more like the wreath or garland a winning athlete would wear
 - One that is given to provide recognition and to publicly honor their victory
 - That wreath is often made of something perishable
 - Perhaps it was a twist of myrtle or parsley or pine
 - But this crown is incorruptible
 - It is designed to sit on the heads of those who are righteous
- No man can be righteous, but through Christ
 - And power to endure in temptation is given by Christ
 - It makes sense that this steadfast person is in Christ
 - It says here that he loves Him
 - That is why he is enduring, looking forward to heavenly reward
 - A reward promised to Him by his Lord
- There is something that cannot be said...

James 1:13

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

- We live in bodies of flesh, cursed by sin
 - We live in a sinful world
 - The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are real things
 - Satan is a liar
 - And yet, men are still inclined to say God is the author of some temptation they face
 - This is not true
- So, no man should say he is tempted by God
 - God cannot, Himself, be tempted
 - And He tempts no man with evil
- True, He doesn't immediately remove anyone who believes from this sinful world
 - True, He doesn't give us a new body, free from that sinful curse when we are born again

- And true, He allows temptation to come into our lives
- But He has also given us the tools to cope with temptation
- He gives us the power to have victory
- His Spirit abides within us
- And we have no excuse

- This is why any slander against God in regard to temptation is totally wrong
- He is our Deliverer from evil, never our tempter

- Then, what can be blamed...

James 1:14

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

- Temptation comes from the desires that dwell within us
- The desire to be our own god
- The desire to have our own way
- The desire to satisfy sinful passions
- The desire to have personal comfort and avoid difficulty
- The desire to avoid responsibility
- And a myriad of other desires we could mention

- When we sin, we must look to ourselves, not God
- That which is within us leads to temptation
- God does not tempt

- But every man is tempted
- Some give in to that temptation
- Others rely on the resources and empowerment of God and do not
- There is no magic formula for the one who avoids sin
- He simply surrenders every moment to God
- Leans upon His strength
- Saturates himself with God's word
- And follows God's will, not His own

- Resisting temptation is important
- Not the least of which, because of the alternative...

James 1:15

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

- The wages of sin is death
- Adam and Eve were told directly in the garden
- To disobey God would mean death
- Sin always leads to death

- And every man is a sinner by birth and a sinner by choice
- To sin is to give in to our fleshly desires
- It is to miss the mark
- To do that which God does not permit
- To be tempted with evil and to do evil
- Temptation is not sin
- It is enticement to sin
- Remember our definition: temptation is the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy
- To sin is to fail in our fidelity, to fail in our integrity, for virtue to be found lacking
- To show no constancy
- But this does not have to be the case
- Believers in Jesus Christ can be tempted and sin not
- He gives us the victory
- And we should know, as 1 John 2:1-2 remind us...

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

- Temptation will come
- Rely upon God and sin not
- But know, if we do sin, we have an advocate
- Jesus Christ the righteous

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