

## Temptation

C. Faith unlocks obedience through testing. (**Hebrews 11:17** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.) Tried - “Of persons, to tempt, prove, put to the test, God is said to try men by adversity, to test their faith and confidence in Him.”

1. God’s test (**Genesis 22:1-2** And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. **2** And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.)

a. The nature of the tempting “means to test, try and prove. Appearing nearly 40 times in the Old Testament, this term often refers to God testing the faith and faithfulness of human beings, including Abraham (**Gen. 22:1**.” Is the test an opportunity or a trap? We see God as a loving King who sets up an opportunity to do noble things and prove trustworthiness. However, there is a rebellious enemy that tries to convince the subjects of the King that they don’t need to trust in God. We see the testing trees in The Tree of Life and The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. (**James 1:2-4** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **3** Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. **4** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. **1:12-18** 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. **16** Do not err, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. **18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.) So, we see in James 1:2-4 see the nature of a noble test.

1. It is an occasion of joy. “Metonymically, the cause, ground, an occasion of joy.”

2. An occasion for growth is “when ye fall into divers temptations.” God allows many temptations, which refers to “a state of trial in which God brings His people through adversity and affliction to encourage and prove their faith and confidence in Him.”

3. The knowledge that leads to our confidence. “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Knowing or being assured

a. Our faith is proved: trying “The means of proving, a criterion or test by which anything is proved or tried, as faith by afflictions (James 1:3).” Faith - “As a technical term indicative of the means of appropriating what God in Christ has for man, resulting in the transformation of man's character and way of life. Such can be termed gospel or Christian faith (Rom. 3:22ff.). Of Christ, faith in Christ: Generally, as the Son of God, the incarnate Word, the Messiah and Savior, the Head of the true Church.”

b. Our faith’s product “worketh patience.” Worketh “To work out, to effect, produce, to be the cause or author.” Patience “generally means endurance, patience, perseverance or constancy under suffering in faith and duty.”

1. Complete: “but let patience have her perfect work.”

2. Content: “may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

The nature of the trap.

1. Not from God (**James 1:13** 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.)

2. From flesh (**James 1:14-15** 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.)

a. The passions of the flesh “when he is drawn away of his own lust.”

b. Persuaded by the flesh “and enticed.” Enticed or beguiled by the flesh.

c. The product of the flesh “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” When lust brings its grasp upon our decision, it brings forth:

1. Sin

2. Death

b. Guidelines for facing temptation

1. Holy trials or problems sent from God

a. Prayer for wisdom (**James 1:5** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.) If we lack wisdom, “In a higher sense, wisdom, deep knowledge, honest and moral insight, learning, science, implying cultivation of mind and enlightened understanding. Concerning divine things, wisdom, knowledge, insight, and deep understanding are represented everywhere as divine gifts, including the idea of practical application. As conjoined with purity of heart and life.”

1. The provider “let him ask of God, that giveth to all men.”

2. The character of the provision. “liberally, and upbraideth not.” Liberally and without abuse or reproach. God is pleased to take care of those that ask. Those who are teachable and humble before God will not receive reproach because of our lack of understanding.

b. Be fully persuaded (**James 1:6-8** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. **8** A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.) Don’t doubt the wisdom that comes from God.

c. Illustrations or proof: (**James 1:9-11** Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: **10** But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away. **11** For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.)

1. The perception of our position “Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.” William MacDonald explains in this way: “At first glance, verses 9–11 seem to introduce an entirely new subject or at least a parenthesis. James, however, continues with the subject of holy trials by giving specific illustrations. Whether a man is poor or rich, he can derive lasting spiritual benefits from the calamities and crises of life. For instance, when a lowly brother finds himself dissatisfied and discouraged, he can always rejoice that he is an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. He can find consolation in the truth that all things are his, and he is Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. The lowly brother probably has no control over his humble circumstances. There is no reason to believe he is lazy or careless. But God has seen fit to place him in a low-income bracket, and that is where he has been ever since. Perhaps if he had been rich, he would never have accepted Christ. Now that he is in Christ, he is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly. What should he do? Should he rebel against his station in life? Should he become bitter and jealous? No, he should accept from God the circumstances over which he has no control and rejoices in his spiritual blessings.

Too many Christians go through life rebelling against their sex, age, height, and even against life itself. Girls with a flair for baseball wish they were boys. Young people wish they were older, and old people want to be younger. Short people envy those who are tall, and tall ones wish they weren’t so

conspicuous. Some people even say, “I wish I were dead!” All this is absurd! The Christian attitude is to accept things we cannot change from God. They are God’s destiny for us, and we should make the most of them for His glory and the blessing of others. We should say with the Apostle Paul: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10). As we forget our disabilities and lose ourselves in service to others, we will come to realize that spiritual people love us for what we are, not for our appearance, for instance.

2. The passing away of our possessions (**James 1:10-11** But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. **11** For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. **Jeremiah 9:23-24** Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: **24** But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.)

A. A saved rich man can find joy in losing riches (**Hebrews 10:34** For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.)

b. A sound wisdom of the nature of possessions (**Isaiah 40:6-8** The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: **7** The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. **8** The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.)

c. A understanding of the prize (**James 1:12** 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.) William MacDonald explains the crown of life in this way: “Here is not the king’s diadem but the victor’s wreath, to be awarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is no suggestion, of course, that eternal life is the reward for enduring tests. Still, those who have endured with fortitude will be honoured for that kind of life and will enjoy a deeper appreciation of eternal life in heaven. Everyone’s cup will be full in heaven, but people will have different-sized cups—different capacities for enjoying Heaven. This is probably what is in view in the expression crown of life; it refers to a fuller enjoyment of the glories of Heaven.

Let’s make this section on holy trials practical in our lives. How do we react when various forms of testing come into our lives? Do we complain bitterly against life’s misfortunes, or do we rejoice and thank the Lord for them? Do we advertise our trials, or do we bear them quietly? Do we live in the future, waiting for our circumstances to improve, or do we live in the present, seeking to see the hand of God in all that comes to us? Do we indulge in self-pity and seek sympathy, or do we submerge ourselves in a life of service for others?”

2. Unholy temptation or temptation from self. (**James 1:16-17** Do not err, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.)

a. Don’t be deceived. Don’t allow your desires to deceive you.

b. Understand that God is the Creator; therefore, every good and perfect gift comes from God the Father, or originator.

c. Understand God is the consistent reality of all truth.