

## Temptation

### 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?”

#### d) Practical application in your position

##### 1. The imparting of wisdom about your position

a. Putting on Christ is essential (**Colossians 3:9-11** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; **10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: **11** Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all. **Romans 13:12-14** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. **13** Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. **14** But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.)

b. We are in the predetermined plan of God to put me in His plan. Ephesians 1 shows an obvious example of God’s eternal purpose. We must start with the correct position of God in our position. In Ephesians 1:3, God is placed in a superior position. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1) The important fact is if God doesn’t have the primary place in our thinking and we don’t understand His purposes and predeterminations, we will never understand our position.

a) God’s purpose is to unite all in Christ. Verse four shows that this was God’s eternal plan: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” Chosen means “to choose out, with the accessory idea of

kindness, favour, love. So, God chose to present to Himself a people that would be holy. “Metaphorically, it means morally pure, upright, blameless in heart and life, virtuous, holy.” And without blame, “indicating the absence of internal blemish.” Through the means of His love. Second, God’s predestination “to determine or decree beforehand.” Verse five is very clear about God’s act: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” God declares that all that are accounted holy and without blame according to His favour would be adopted as children. “Paul, in these passages, is alluding to a Greek and Roman custom rather than a Hebrew one. Since *huiiothesia* was a technical term in Roman law for an act that had specific legal and social effects, there is much probability that Paul had some reference to that in his use of the word. Adoption, when thus legally performed, put a man in every respect in the position of a son by birth who had adopted him so that he possessed the same rights and owed the same obligations. Being a *huiós*, a son, involves the conformity of the child that has the life of God in him to the image, purposes, and interests of God and that spiritual family into which he is born. In eternity there will be a revelation by God which will indicate the measure of this conformity to God.” Third, God the Father did the planning and predestining for verse six, “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” So, to the commendation of the Father’s grace, “Justified freely by His grace” refers to the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to a holy God.” The outcome of the grace we are given is reconciliation through Christ to God. Through His Son, or Beloved, because through Christ’s blood, we have a ransomed or sin debt paid a release of a sinner from His sin. According to His grace, “But that is not all. God has superabounded that same grace toward us in all wisdom and prudence. This means He has graciously shared His plans and purposes with us. He desires that we should have intelligence and insight into His plans for the church and the universe. And so, He has taken us into His confidence, as it were, and has revealed to us the great goal toward which all history is moving.” Verses nine and ten give us the particular way God abounded to us through grace, wisdom and prudence “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.”

b) God’s purpose for both Jew and Gentile (**Ephesians 1:11-14** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: **12** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. **13** In whom ye also trusted, after that, ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, **14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.) The Jews obtained an inheritance. “To cast lots, determine by lot, i.e., to determine something, choose someone. In Eph. 1:11, it means, "in whom the lot has fallen upon us also, as foreordained thereto ... to be" (a.t.). The idea expressed here is that Christians have become heirs of God because God predestined them according to His purpose. In a manner of speaking, the "lot" fell to Jews not by chance but solely because of the gracious and sovereign decision of God Almighty to select them to be His heirs.” Verse 12, “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.” First, “referring to the Jews as having had of old the hope and promise of the Messiah in contrast to the Gentiles who had heard of Him just then (1:13 [cf. Rom. 3:1ff.; 9:4ff.]). Verse thirteen, “In whom ye also trusted, after that, ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

2) The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance (**Ephesians 1:14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.) Earnest, “money, a pledge, something which stands for part of the price and paid beforehand to

confirm the transaction. Used in the NT only in a figurative sense and spoken of the Holy Spirit which God has given to believers in this present life to assure them of their future and eternal inheritance.”

2. Praying for the imparting of a full knowledge of the position (**Ephesians 1:17-23** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, **19** And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, **20** Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, **21** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, **23** Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

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.