

The book of James

1:12-18

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of James. As promised more about trials/temptations.

✠ **James 1:12** *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

As we have learned in the past, the word blessed means “happy”.
So how in the world can we be happy when we are tempted?

Notice it doesn't say to be happy when you are tempted, but when you endure temptation.

The word “endure” means:

- 1) to remain
- 1a) to tarry behind
- 2) to remain i.e. abide, not recede or flee
- 2a) to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ
- 2b) to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments

So it could read as, “Happy is the man who holds fast to one's faith in Christ when he is being tempted.”

We also notice there is a reward for those who endure the temptations.

✠ *for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

“But I thought we had eternal life through Jesus and not through works? Isn't that what the bible teaches us?”

You are right, but this is not talking of salvation and eternal life, which is through Jesus Christ.

✠ **John 17:3** *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

✠ **John 10:27-28** *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

† **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

† **1 John 5:11-13** *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

So what is this crown of life?

The word crown used here is not the gold crown you would think of a king wearing, but more of a crown or wreath worn by those who won an event like the early Olympics, representing a victory or reward for your accomplishment.

The word life means for a lifetime. Therefore, the crown of life, as interpreted here, would be a reward that would last forever.

Also as we learned before to be tempted is not a sin, as we learned in earlier studies in James that Jesus was tempted, but He was without sin.

So to endure temptation is to first be tempted to sin like lust, or lying, or stealing etc. The enduring happens when you don't fall into the sin.

We remember Joseph in our study in Genesis and how he was tempted by Potiphar's wife to sleep with her. He was confronted with temptation as a young man in his late teens or early 20's with something any young man today would have trouble with. Satan was so sly that he even made it seem like it was ok, because everyone was gone and the only ones there were Potiphar's wife and Joseph. Who would know?

† **Gen 39:9** *"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

And as we know the story, Joseph ran out leaving his garment (or possible what we would call his shirt) behind. For Joseph it was more than someone else finding out, but he knew God did not want him to sin, and that God was watching, just like He's watching you and me right now.

But maybe you are not tempted with a woman (or a man) wanting to sleep with you, maybe there are other things that you are tempted with as we mentioned earlier in this study. What do you do?

Well, sometimes the best thing to do is what Joseph did, run! Don't turn around and look back and just get away from the temptation. (For additional help on how to handle temptation, go to the studies titled "Using the Sword 101".)

We are all tempted in one way or another, it's a part of life, and no one is exempt from it. But you must remember that it's not God who is tempting you, as James goes on to tell us.

✠ **James 1:13-18** *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

Through reading the bible we have learned that God and Jesus are one.

✠ **John 10:30-33** *"I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*

So if Jesus is God, how could satan have tempted him as mentioned in verse 13 *for God cannot be tempted by evil?*

The answer is in verse 14.

✠ *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

To be drawn away by your own desires is to have lust or to covet. Since Jesus was without sin, He had no lust nor did He covet; therefore, He could not be drawn away by lust or covetousness.

The word enticed means: *to bait, catch by a bait.*

So think about this for a minute. To be tempted is to be drawn away from God with the things of this world and our own self desires to have the things of this world.

Jesus did not desire the things of this world but the things of God.

✠ **John 4:34** *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."*

✠ **John 6:38** *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

And even though satan tempted Jesus with the things of this world.

† **Matt 4:8-9** *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*

And as we know, Jesus used the word of God and the fact that He desired to do God's will and not His own.

† **Matt 4:10** *Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

So the bait (so to speak) was put in front of Jesus but He didn't bite, therefore He was not tempted as described in verse 14.

But we are, we watch TV and see all these commercials that say we need this and that and without them, life is just miserable and we are not complete.

Commercials on TV and radio, ads in papers and magazines, pop-up's while searching the Internet, phone solicitors, e-mails, we could go on and on with the different ways we are tempted each day and told what we need.

But if you think about it, 20 years ago, 90% of these things didn't even exist and people got along fine without them.

So how are we tempted?

✠ **James 1:14-15 (NLT)** *Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death.*

As we just learned about Jesus and temptation, we are not like Jesus and we desire the things of this world, like a new home, or car, a better job, a faster computer, new clothes, better food, etc.

Satan knows these desires and uses them against us. He will put in our minds that we need it and can't live without it or that we will be happier if we had it.

That's how marriages end up in divorce, satan makes it seem like that other man or woman is so much better than your spouse and that you would be happier with him or her.

Sometimes he will make it appear like another job is better for you, after all it pays more money and it's closer to home. But maybe the Lord wants you to stay where you are because there are people you need to minister to at your workplace.

Think about some of the things you may have gone through in the past that you now know were wrong. If you think about it, they always start with a little subtle thought in your head (*the lure of our own evil desires*), then you think about it more and more to the point that it consumes you and you just have to give in to it (*These evil desires lead to evil actions*). At this point you have two options, first you can just ignore it and chalk it

up to a bad experience that you have learned from (*evil actions lead to death*). When you ignore it you still live with your sin and are more likely to do it again. The second thing you could (should do) do is confess it to the Lord and ask for His forgiveness.

† ***Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah***

We must also remember that even though God does not tempt us to do evil, He will allow us to be tempted so that we may learn and grow through these temptations.

† ***Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."***

God also will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle, so if God is for you, who can be against you!

† ***1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.***

If you really don't know the way of escape from a temptation (like running from it) then ask the Lord, because as it says that He will make a way of escape for you.

So we learned that God does not tempt us, and the reason why we fall into sin when we are tempted.

"So how do I know if I am tempted or if this desire is from the Lord?"
Look at verse 17 again.

✠ ***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.***

If you receive something and it turns out to be a bad thing, then it's not God's fault because He only gives good and perfect gifts.

Next week we should make it to the end of chapter one (Lord willing).

May God keep you in His love, grace and mercy and always show you the way of escape when you are tempted.