

## DAILY DOSE OF JAMES



### **MONDAY—What is the Difference Between a Trial and a Temptation?**

James connects the two words “trials and temptations”. Too many times we consider these to be synonymous. However, they are vastly different! Trials come in the form of difficult circumstances or outside influences that make it very hard to “do life” sometimes. God uses these experiences to make us more like Christ. Temptations, on the other hand, are attacks on our heart and mind by Satan to test our faith and cause us to sin. We choose to sin when we give in to temptation and complain against God, question His love, or resist His will.

- Take a moment to reflect about the temptations you experience.
- What is a trial that you have been experiencing recently?
- How were you tempted to sin as a result of that trial?
- What is the relationship between *testings without* and *temptations within*?

Giving in to temptation is sin. Facing our trials and learning to walk through them with our hand still in God’s hand spurs us on in our journey of becoming more like Christ!

### **TUESDAY – Overcoming Temptation: Look at the Consequences (1:13-16)**

Sin has its consequences and making a practice of continually giving into temptations will result in death. The Bible is very clear on this (Rom.7:13). James describes the process of sin in four stages:

1. *Desire*. (v.14) Lust refers to any kind of unbalanced desire in our life, not necessarily sexual passions only. It is trying to satisfy our normal desires outside of God’s will that leads us to sin. We must master the desires within us; and this we can do through Jesus Christ.

2. *Deception.* (v.14) Temptation always includes a lure to our natural desires. It is the deception of that lure that promises satisfaction outside of God's will, instead of showing the tragic consequences that are ahead.

- In what normal, God-given desire have you been tempted to sin within the last month?
- How did Satan try to deceive you?

When Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan, He defeated the temptation with the power of the written Word of God. The more you know your Bible and study it; it becomes a sword in your hand to defeat Satan! Then you begin to learn what it means to walk by Faith!

## **WEDNESDAY – OVERCOMING TEMPTATION: LOOK TO THE CONSEQUENCES (CONT.)**

The last two steps in the process of sin involve making a decisive choice and then paying the consequence of that choice.

3. *Disobedience.* (v.15) We decide in a moment's notice or sometimes after careful deliberation whether we will obey...or whether we will disobey. Thus we arrive at the real test of our faith: when we have the opportunity to wander away, to disobey, to leave God's presence...do we take that opportunity? Or do we choose instead to stay close to Him, to walk in His will, to obey?
  4. *Death.* (v.15) The choice we make to disobey will always give birth to death, not life. If you have not chosen to place your faith in Christ's death as being the payment for your sin, then you will die a spiritual death as well as a physical death, forever separated from God. While sin does not lead to spiritual death for the believer, it can result in other forms of death such as physical death, the death of a relationship, etc.
- How can knowing that God will reward you for obedience help you to choose His path in tough times?
  - What other spiritual promises can help get you through the most difficult temptations?

Whenever you face one of the hardest trials in your life, and Satan is whispering his deceitful lies in your ear, look ahead to see how God judges sin (Romans 6:23) and how He rewards obedience (Heb.11:6). Then choose wisely, dear one! Choose wisely!

## **THURSDAY – OVERCOMING TEMPTATION: GOD IS SO GOOD! (1:17)**

One of Satan's most clever approaches is to convince us that God is not as loving as we think and seeks to harm us instead of care for us. When we are convinced and learn to trust in the goodness of God, we learn that He is sufficient and worthy of our praise!

James tells us four aspects of the goodness of God:

1. God gives only good gifts, even if we do not see the goodness in them immediately.
2. The ways that God gives His gifts are good. He always gives with love and grace.
3. God gives constantly. His good gifts just keep on coming and coming!
4. God never changes. That is His nature. If He gave good gifts in the past, His gifts continue to be good.

This is the positive aspect of fighting against temptation and choosing to obey – everything He has planned for us will come from His hand and He is good!

- Why do we need to be reminded of God's goodness when we are fighting off temptation?
- What are the good gifts that God has given you in the past?
- Was there ever a time you doubted God's love and goodness, only to understand it later?

## **FRIDAY – OVERCOMING TEMPTATION: CHRIST'S POWER WITHIN US (1:18)**

When facing a temptation that has the potential to drown you in its power, James tells us to remember three things. First of all, look ahead and consider God's judgment of sin. Second, remember who God is and how he constantly showers His goodness down upon us. Then he tells us to realize that if we are truly a child of God, then we possess His divine nature within us. We have been miraculously changed from the inside out by *God Himself* and nothing that *we* did. Because of our "new birth", we *can* overcome any temptation by the power of Christ living within us!

- What have you learned about temptations this week?
- What temptation is threatening to cause you to disobey this very day?
- The next time you face a temptation, what three things do you need to remember?

God wants us to win every time we are tempted and He has given us all that we need to do so! We *will* win because Christ already has!

**Saturday/Sunday**

**In Preparation for Sunday's message, please read  
James 1:19-27**