

Trials and Temptation

James 1:12-15 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Trials

- Remain steadfast ("to remain under");

- Steadfastness is produced under trials (seasons and time) with the goal of godliness; being more like Jesus

- Trials are inevitable and they are opportunities not obstacles;

- Trials are an opportunity to grow; therefore, the question is not "how can God change my situation?" but "how can God change me?"

- Reward of what's to come

- *"Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable." (1 Corinthians 9:25)*

Temptation

- God does not tempt us, but trials present temptation;

- Under trials, we usually lean toward two lines of thinking:

(1) An immature understanding of the gospel (Genesis 3);

- *The man said, "the woman who you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3: 12)*

(2) Complacency on who we are (how we are is not who we're supposed to be)

- Our nature is corrupt

- *"Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins." (Ecclesiastes 7:20)*

- We need to understand a few things about temptation:

(1) Temptation isn't sin but an opportunity

(2) Temptation always begins with a question or a twisting of scripture

(3) You will be tempted like Jesus was tempted;

- Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him..." (Matthew 4:1-11)

- Temptation comes as a result of our desires

- We are responsible for our decisions (human responsibility);

- *"Temptation involves the innate desire toward evil as it is enticed by the superficial attractiveness of sin. If a person should welcome rather than resist that temptation, desire conceives; and if not turned away immediately, it produces sin."* (Douglas Moo)

- Your maturity is not determined by how often you're faced with trial and temptation, but by how you resist temptation in the face of trials.

James 1:16-18 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

- James' exhortation to not be deceived is a result of him providing clarity and a reminder of what God doesn't do but what we are responsible for; wants everyone on the same page;

Who God Is

- (1) God is a father who gives good gifts;
- (2) God is a father who is unchanging;
- (3) God is a father who doesn't tempt us in times of trials;

What God Does

- (1) God doesn't work apart from His will or Word;
- (2) God is intentional in drawing us to Himself;
- (3) God's grace has been extended through His word to people to bring a glimpse ("firstfruits") of what will eventually happen; restoration; all things new.

Final Thoughts

- In order to withstand trials and temptation, we must stand firm believing that Jesus is better ;

- *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."* (Romans 8:18)