



A THEOLOGY OF TESTING & TEMPTATION

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JAMES 1:12-15

¹² 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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

SUMMARY

Trials are inevitable, but our response defines us. Testing is God's sovereign tool for growth, while temptation is the heart's internal pull toward sin. To 'Raise the Standard' in our lives, we must distinguish between God's refining tests and our own desires, ensuring we do not blame God for the sinful reactions that rise from within our hearts and minds. James 1:12-15 provides the theological foundation that should enable us to reflect Christ in our trials.

PASSAGE OUTLINE

What We Must Know about God - James 1:12-13

What We Must Know about Ourselves - James 1:14-15

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Hebrews 4:14-15

¹⁴ Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.

WHAT WE MUST KNOW ABOUT GOD:

- God will always test the faith of His people.
- God will never tempt His people to sin.

Proverbs 9:1-6

- ¹ Wisdom has built her house;
she has hewn her seven pillars.
- ² She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wind;
she has also set her table.
- ³ She has sent out her young women to call
from the highest places in the town.
- ⁴ "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
To him lacks sense she says,
- ⁵ "Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶ Leave your simple ways, and live,
and walk in the way of insight."

Proverbs 9:13-18

- ¹³ The woman Folly is loud;
she is seductive and knows nothing.
- ¹⁴ She sits at the door of her house;
she takes a seat on the highest places of the town,
- ¹⁵ calling to those who pass by,
who are going straight on their way,
- ¹⁶ "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
And to him who lacks sense she says,
- ¹⁷ "Stolen water is sweet,
and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."

¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Swindoll, Living Insights Commentary on James, 1 & 2 Peter

“Temptation knows no limits. It respects no title. It plays no favorites. It ignores all human obstacles, cares nothing about the time of day or night, and camouflages itself in any situation, prepared to pounce at any moment.”

WHAT WE MUST KNOW ABOUT OURSELVES:

- We carry the blame for our sin.
- We turn from sin by applying God’s Word.

WHEN TEMPTED, USE THESE TWO VERSES

Hebrews 2:18

¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did you come to faith in Christ?
 2. Read James 1:12. What does it mean for a person to be “blessed” while enduring trials?
 3. Read James 1:13. Why does James emphasize that God cannot be tempted by evil, and what problem is he correcting?
 4. Read James 1:14. How does James describe the internal source of temptation?
 5. Read James 1:15. What progression does James give from desire to sin to death?
 6. Read Proverbs 9:1-6. How does wisdom’s invitation describe what it offers to those who respond?
 7. Read Proverbs 9:13-18. How does the progression from “stolen water and secret bread” to “the dead are there” mirror or contrast with James’ sequence of desire leading to death?
 8. How do these passages together help you distinguish between faithful endurance and destructive desire?
 9. What did God have most for you from the passage and this week's sermon?
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