

Understanding Temptation

James 1:9-15

Background Information

The Jewish Christian community had problems:

- They were facing temptations to sin.
- Some of the believers were catering to the rich, while others were being robbed by the rich.
- Church members were competing for offices in the church, particularly teaching offices.
- They were impatient in difficulties— 1:1–4
- They were talking the truth, but were failing to live the truth— 2:14ff

Background Information

- The failed to properly control their tongue— 3:1ff
- There was quarreling among them and coveting— 4:1ff
- Some were focused on material gain – 5:1ff

James gives correction for all of these problems.

Today: Understanding the nature of temptation.

James 1:9-15

^{NIV} **James 1:9** Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

¹⁰ But the rich should take pride in their humiliation-- since they will pass away like a wild flower.

¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

James 1:9-15

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

James 1:9-15

¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 1:9-15

The exhortation of **James 1:3**, speaks of the ability to “count it all joy” when we encounter various kinds of trials.

The word for “trials” is again found in **James 1:12** and has the idea of “temptation.”

In **James 1:9-11**, James addresses the “trials” or “temptations” two different segments of the community face: the **poor** and the **rich**.

James 1:9-15

To the poor he says:

James 1:9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

- The poor Christian, in humble circumstances, finds acceptance, love, and security in his or her relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- They are now children of the heavenly Father.
- They have the comfort and help of God now, and spiritual riches of greater value than material riches.

James 1:9-15

My Father is rich in houses and lands; He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands! Of rubies and diamonds of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold!

I'm a child of the King! a child of the King! With Jesus, my Savior, I'm a child of the King!

James 1:9-15

My Father's own Son, the Savior of men, Once
wandered o'er earth as the poorest of them! But
now He is reigning forever on high, And will give
me a home in heav'n by and by.

I'm a child of the King! a child of the King! With
Jesus, my Savior, I'm a child of the King!

James 1:9-15

To the rich he says:

- **James 1:10** But the rich should take pride in their humiliation-- since they will pass away like a wild flower.
- ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

James 1:9-15

To the rich he says:

- Your temptation was to trust in your riches and not feel the need to be saved.
- The desire to be saved brings with it a confession of spiritual poverty – and the need for God' mercy.
- How blessed is the rich person when he or she see their spiritual poverty, humbles themselves in true confession of sin, and are saved.

James 1:9-15

To the poor and rich he says:

- Realize true riches are found only in a personal, saving, relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Once a person is saved, rich or poor, they are members of the same body, and are equal in the eyes of God.
- They are equal in standing before God and they have equal access to God.

James 1:9-15

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under **trial** because, having stood the **test**, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

10 Biblical Facts About Temptation

1. To feel temptation, in itself, is not good or evil. Jesus was tempted and He was without sin.
2. The purpose of temptation is always *to trigger a choice and provoke a definite stand or action*

James 1:9-15

3. Temptation is not the cause of sin, trouble, or wrongdoing. It just presents us with a choice to make.
4. Temptation will bring out what is really in our hearts, for how we respond to temptation reveals what we really are!
5. Our response to temptation also reveals whether we have learned the lessons God wants us to learn.

James 1:9-15

6. Some temptations are the result of natural causes (i.e., biological design, emotional temperament); other temptations result from wrong or sinful choices in the past.
7. Temptation and testing, when faced correctly, becomes a means of grace and can result in a more powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit in your life.
8. How we respond to temptation reveals the depth of our love, commitment, and loyalty to God.

James 1:9-15

9. Temptation and testing is part of God's character development curriculum. God uses it to rebuild our minds and give us new values.
10. When facing temptation, there are just two choices on the shelf: pleasing God or pleasing self.

James 1:9-15

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¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own desire and enticed.

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Six Steps in the Temptation Process

Step 1 is ATTENTION.

Step 2 is ATTRACTION. “our own desires”

Step 3 is ALLUREMENT. “enticed”

Step 4 is ACCEPTANCE. “conceived”

Step 5 is ACTIVITY, APPETITE and ADDICTION.

Step 6 is the AWARD for sin. “Sin, when it is finished (full-grown), gives birth to death.”

James 1:9-15

Dealing with temptation

1. Avoid places, people, and things that tempt you.
2. Flee temptation.
3. When temptation hits, pray,
 "Lord, show me Your way of escape!"
4. Quote Scripture against temptation.
5. Remember sin always has bad consequences.
6. Remember that temptation is a lie.
7. Recognize the danger of the second look.

James 1:9-15

Dealing with temptation

8. Picture in your mind Christ suffering on the cross for that specific sin which tempts you.
9. Confess and become accountable.

Next week: More on Successfully Combatting Temptation.