

HOW TO “JUST SAY NO”

James 1:13-18

“Most people who flee from temptation usually leave a forwarding address.”

Temptation comes to us in good times and bad times, during trials and during prosperity. Sometimes we see it coming a mile away, while at other times it catches us completely off guard. James steers us away from two mistakes we often make: 1) that we are powerless to resist, and 2) that God is against us in the process.

What Does It Say?



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 one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

“You can’t stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair.”

Martin Luther

What Does It Mean?

“What makes resisting temptation difficult for many of us people is that we don’t want to discourage it completely.”

What do we tend to do when we’re tempted, according to **verse 13**?

Describe the process of temptation outlined by James.

Give a real-life example of how this process works.

Is temptation sin? (Be ready to support your answer from Scripture.)

Why is **Hebrews 4:14,15** so important in this discussion?

How did **Joseph** respond to sexual temptation? (find him in the book of Genesis)

“With irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh. It makes no difference whether it is sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money. Joy in God is extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature. At this moment God is quite unreal to us, He loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

What was **Job’s wife’s** advice when he was tempted to blame God for everything that had happened, and what was his response (read Job 2)?

What answer did **Adam** give to God when God asked him if he’d eaten from the forbidden tree? (find it in the book of Genesis)

What do you learn about the process of temptation from these 3 examples: Joseph, Job, and Adam?

“drag & entice” were words used by Greeks to describe the process of fishing.

How does **1 Corinthians 10:13** apply here?

What do you think is the **death** that James refers to in verse 15?

Read **Proverbs 9:13-18**. What insight does it add to this discussion?

¹⁶ *Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

Read **1 John 2:16** and **1 Timothy 4:4**. What do these verses remind us of?

Why do we tend to forget, doubt, or question the goodness of God?

Are you struggling with this in your own life? If you were really honest, could you say right now that you believe God is good? (By the way, an excellent book dealing with this very issue is Philip Yancey's Disappointment with God.)

What does the Lord's Prayer have to say about temptation?

How is God's goodness the greatest deterrent to sin? *"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."* Psalm 34:8

"Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the world, who formed the light and created the darkness, who makes peace and created everything; who in mercy gives light to the earth and to those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness day by day and every day renews the works of creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiwork and for the light-giving lights which He has made for his praise, Selah! Blessd be the Lord our God, who has formed the lights."

A first-century Jewish daily prayer

Are you or is someone you know on the verge of making some disastrous moral decisions right now? Pray for them. Perhaps God will give you the opportunity to lovingly remind them of the pain and destructiveness that sin causes.