

Introduction

1. Summary of last week—we learned how to properly handle trials:
 - a. When we face trials, we should consider it joy because we know that trials produce endurance (1:2-3)
 - b. We are to let endurance have its full effect, which is that we might be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (1:4; e.g. spiritual maturity)
 - c. We are to ask God for wisdom without doubting the wisdom He gives knowing that He gives it willingly and without reproach (1:5-8)
 - d. Finally, we are blessed when we persevere under trials because ultimately, we will receive the crown of life Jesus has promised to those who love Him (1:12)
2. Today we are going to learn how NOT to handle trials

A. We are to recognize that God is not to blame for our trials (1:13)

1. The first thing we need to understand about this passage is that the word translated **“tempted”** is the exact same root word translated **“trials”** in 1:2:
 - a. Greek peirazo: two usages in the NT
 - 1) To try, test, or examine in order to learn the nature or character of something
 - 2) To tempt, trap, lead into temptation
 - 3) In essence, the main difference between these two uses of the word is the goal or the purpose: is the purpose to prove and perfect our faith (thus test it like gold or silver) or destroy our faith (tempt us to act contrary to faith)?
 - b. Since most translations use the word **“tempted”** or **“temptation”** in vs. 13-18, it gives the impression that James has changed subjects from trials to temptation, but he really hasn’t—it’s all still about trials

- c. However, there are a number of reasons why most translations use the word **“tempted”** throughout vs 13-18 two fold:
 - 1) The statement by James in 13 that God **“does not try anyone”** which appears to conflict with examples throughout the Bible that God does indeed try people
 - 2) The context indicates that James is referring to the temptations that from our own sinful desires during trials
2. When we are tried, we are not to blame God (READ 1:13):
 - a. The Bible makes it clear that God does indeed tests us (SEE Job 23:10, Genesis 22:1, Exodus 16:4, Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 1 Peter 1:6-7; “approved” (tested) in 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:15, and James 1:12)
 - 1) What each of these verses have in common is that they represent God’s work in testing one’s faith in order to prove or perfect it
 - 2) What James is talking about here in 1:13 is someone accusing God of trying or testing them for the purpose of destroying their faith or causing them to sin
 - b. But, such a claim runs contrary to God’s character in two ways:
 - 1) **“for God cannot be tempted by evil,”**
 - a) James’ point is not that we cannot tempt God (Israel did and we are warned against it), but rather God cannot be tempted **“by (or with) evil”**—likely moral evil
 - b) The implication is that God cannot be enticed by evil to act contrary to His righteous nature
 - c) We have an example of this in Jesus who even though He was tempted as we are because He of His human nature, He was without sin because He was God
 - 2) For this reason, **“He Himself does not tempt anyone”**:
 - a) If we take this more literally, God **“does not try anyone”** and **“with evil”** is implied
 - b) In other words, God is not out there dangling evil in front of us trying to entice us and cause us to stumble

- c) When we face trials, we may struggle and be tempted to sin, but God is not to blame; rather, there is another source

B. When we face trials, we are to recognize the true source of any temptation (1:14-15)

1. James identifies the true source of temptation during trials (READ 1:14):
 - a. At the root of temptation is our own “**lusts**”:
 - 1) The word here refers to a strong impulses or desires
 - 2) It can be used in a positive sense to earnestly desire something like when Jesus said, “**I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**” (Matthew 22:15)
 - 3) But it is also used to describe unrestrained or uncontrolled desire; in other words, a lusting after things—this is what James has in mind here
 - b. James uses an amazing word picture here to describe how temptation and sin work (1:14; pregnancy, birth, and death):
 - 1) Temptation begins when we are “**carried away and enticed**” by our lusts:
 - a) “**carried away**” comes from the word for bait and means to lure (like a fish)
 - b) “**enticed**” is similar and means to be drawn out or lured away
 - c) Both of these are in the passive voice implying that it’s our “**own**” lusts that control us bait us, lure us like a fish to a hook
 - 2) When this happens, it leads to sin (1:15a): “**Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin...**”:
 - a) “**conceived**”: the Greek word means to seize, catch, or take as a prisoner, but is also used of conception in pregnancy
 - b) “**birth**”: to bring forth

- 3) And ultimately, sin leads to death (1:15): “**and when sin in accomplished it brings forth death**”:
 - a. “**accomplished**”: The Greek word here refers to completing or finishing something, or being brought to its end
 - b. “**brings forth**”: another synonym or giving birth
 - c. Romans 3:23: “**For the wages of sin is death...**”
 - d. James does something interesting here—“**accomplished**” is related to the word “**perfect**” in James 1:4 when he says we are to “**let endurance have it’s perfect result (same root word)**” because it leads to our being perfect and complete, but sin when it is “**accomplished**” (same root word) it leads to death

C. When we face trials, we are to recognize the goodness of God (READ 1:16-18)

1. James calls on us not to be deceived about the source of temptation during trials—he’s already told us the source, and it’s not God
2. Rather, only good things come from God:
 - a. The language of v. 17 is a bit complicated but it can be broken down into three truths:
 - 1) Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above (e.g. God)
 - 2) These things are coming down (present tense) to us from God (the Father of Lights)
 - 3) And finally, this will always be the case because God does not change (there’s no variation or shift in the shadow he casts)
3. The ultimate example of this goodness is found in v. 18 (READ):
 - a. Why would God tempt us or try us in a way to cause us to fail if He brought us forth purely as a matter of His will?
 - b. Why would He do that when His purpose for us is to be a kind of first fruits (an offering) among all the creatures He created?

Conclusion