



# VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Wednesday Bible Study - 18:02:2009

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## STUDY 8: VICTORY OVER TEMPTATIONS

James 1:13-15

In our last study we considered the process and progress of sin based on an illustration from the life of David. From the same text, we will in this study consider some fundamental principles for gaining victory over temptations. **"Every man is tempted"** (James 1:14). No place, company, age or person is temptation-free. Even Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). If the devil tempted Jesus repeatedly when he knew he would not succeed how much more will he tempt the ordinary Christian when he knows he might succeed. Saint or sinner, young or old, every man is tempted, but Christians with the life and grace of Christ don't have to yield and sin.

As temptation is common to all, so also is man's tendency to blame others or God when they fall into it. They do this because of their ignorance of the source and process of temptation and also because they are generally too proud to accept the workings of lust and evil desires in themselves. Ignorance and pride push men so far to the place where they accuse God as the tempter. Who tempts us? Why are we tempted? What gives temptation so much strength to overcome some people? How can we be victorious? What provision has God made for our victory and holiness? The Scriptures answer these and many other questions.

### **1. MAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON TEMPTATION**

*James 1:13; Proverbs 19:3; Genesis 3:9-13; Isaiah 63:17; Psalm 5:4; Habakkuk 1:13; Leviticus 19:2; 20:26; Psalm 99:5,9; Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16; Genesis 20:6*

God is Holy. He never entices us to do evil. His whole plan of redemption was designed to destroy sin. He cannot encourage or entice any of His creatures either directly or indirectly to sin as that would violate the purpose for which He gave His only Son. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God (James 1: 13). Let no one accuse God of being responsible for his sin, fall or backsliding. God is holy, pure and perfect. He is not an agency of temptation. Evil of any type has no place in Him. He has no delight in making anyone to do evil. Evil or sin can never be an 'act of God.'

Satan is the great accuser of God and man. He is ever at his wicked business of telling us that God does not love us, that God is the One tempting us, wanting us to fall, rejoicing at our fall and having delight in our death and damnation. Satan is a liar (Ezekiel 33:11; 18:23,32; 2 Peter 3:9; John 8:44). Only those who accept the lie of Satan and permit his deception to take root in their heart accuse God of being the cause of their temptation, sin and evil.

As Adam and Eve shifted blame for their sin, so many today blame God for their temptation and sin. What a terrible thing for human nature and depravity to blame God or their circumstances instead of accepting blame for sin and seeking God's mercy, forgiveness and salvation. "For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). As God cannot be tempted with evil, so neither can He be a tempter of others. He cannot be a promoter of what is opposed to His nature. It is very bad to sin; but it is much worse, when any one has sinned, to accuse God of causing him to do evil.

### **2. MANIPULATIVE PROCESS OF TEMPTATION**

*James 1:14-16; 4:1,2; Joshua 7:20,21; 1 Kings 21:2-4; Isaiah 44:20; Mark 7:21-23; Job 15:35; Psalm 7:14; Isaiah 59:4; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:21,23; Galatians 6:7,8*

**Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern**

Temptation is Satan's bait to entice or draw man away into sin and disobedience against God. One temptation can be the beginning of a possible series of infinite evils. It is the ringing of an alarm bell whose melancholy sounds may reverberate through eternity. Better shun the bait at the beginning than struggle in the snare later (Proverbs 22:3; 6:2,4,5). A vacant mind invites dangerous inmates, as a deserted house tempts wandering outcasts to enter and take up their abode in it. Although temptations come to all at different times, idle people have more temptations than industrious people. It is said that 'some temptations come to the industrious but all temptations attack the idle'. Another saying goes thus: 'He that labours is tempted by one devil; he that is idle, by a thousand'.

Satan, demons, men and circumstances may conspire together to tempt man, yet what causes him to yield and fall is within him. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). "Drawn away" - lured into a trap - is a hunting term. A bait that appeals to his lust and fleshly desires is used to catch him. "Enticed" is a fishing term. The destructive hook is hidden or covered by the desired bait. An appeal is made to the passion and consuming desire which is peculiar to the individual. "His own lust" actually pulls him into the trap.

Temptation often comes not at our strongest, but our weakest moments. When we are at the limit of our perseverance, self-control, prayerfulness, love, we are tempted to be unchristian. *It goes through a process* of desire, deception, decision and disobedience. First, the emotion, then the mind, after that the will and finally the wrong behaviour. It begins with a desire to be satisfied with a forbidden thing, which affects the emotion. Then comes the deception in the mind, trying to rationalize and justify the steps to be taken. After that a decision is taken with the will making plans to yield and sin. At last, there is an act of disobedience which manifests as wrong behaviour. If sin is allowed to be brought forth, then there is death - spiritual death, separation of the soul from God; physical death, separation of the soul from the body; eternal death, separation of the soul and the body from God throughout eternity.

### **3. MASTER'S PROVISION FOR OUR TRIUMPH**

*James 1: 17,18; Psalm 84:11; Matthew 7:11; 1 John 1:5; Numbers 23:19; John 1:12,13; John 3:3- 7; 1 Peter 1:3,23; Leviticus 23:9-11,17,20; Jeremiah 2:3; Romans 11:16; Revelation 14:4*

Evil cannot be associated or traced to God; only good, unending, unbounded, unlimited good comes from God. He is the inexhaustible Fountain of every good gift and every perfect gift. Instead of taking the devil's bait which will result in our death and doom, we should receive grace and good things from God, which will give us temporal and eternal satisfaction. From Him proceeds every good and perfect gift, both pertaining to this life and that which is to come, God is always good and gracious; He does not change. He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). What He was millions of ages before the worlds were made, He is now; what He is now, He will continue to be for countless millions of ages from now.

As every good gift is from God, we owe the beginning, the strength and the consummation of our spiritual life to God. He accomplishes the new birth and all our spiritual victory by the instrumentality of "the word of truth". Being born again, we become "a kind of first fruits of His creatures". In the Old Testament, all first fruits were sacred to God. They were offered in grateful sacrifice to God because they belonged to Him. So, when we are born again, we become the property of God, even as the first fruits of the harvest.

In contending with certain temptations, the only way of victory is to flee. He who will always overcome temptations must run away from them. How do we deal with temptation to sin? Is it at the point of wrong behaviour? No, it should rather be at the very beginning - at the point of emotion. To overcome temptation and conquer the tempter, be much more in prayer and spend longer time in holy adoration; read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly; watch your life more carefully and live nearer to God.