



COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS FAITH ALIVE - A STUDY OF JAMES

BATTLING TEMPTATION - JAMES 1:13-18

Focus

James' purpose in this passage is to instruct, encourage, and forewarn in order to help equip us to effectively battle against temptation and not be deceived.

Opening Question

In your experience, what makes temptation so often feel overwhelming and bewildering?

Read

James 1:13-18

Some Questions for Reflection

What does James make clear in this passage about what it is that God does not give and what it is that God does give?

Considering the larger context of James 1:1-18, how would you explain the difference between a trial and a temptation?

The Bible makes the point in verse 14 that the temptation to evil comes from our own desires. (Note: the NIV helpfully translates this as *evil desires*.) How does this affirm what Jesus taught in Mark 7:14-23?

How should this cause us to view and treat our desires?

In verses 14-15, James puts the temptation process under the microscope so that we can see it up close from beginning to end. What is the process? Think through each phase carefully.

In verse 17, what does James emphasize about the character of God?



In verse 18, what does it mean to be *brought forth*?

What is the *word of truth*?

Why do you think James transitions the way he does from verses 13-15 to verses 17-18?

Closing Reflection and Application

You don't necessarily need to share specifics, but can you think of a specific temptation you've experienced that has followed this pattern?

How does knowing this pattern or cycle of temptation better equip you to battle temptation in your life?

Thinking about each stage along the process of temptation (desire – attraction – deception – enticement – disobedience – death), what actions can you take at each of these stages to help end the process? (For example, if you're already at the enticement stage, what can you do to end the cycle right there?)

How would meditating on the goodness of God help you to battle temptation in your life?

How can you grow in your awareness of God's goodness? What are some additional Bible passages you might meditate on?

How would meditating on what God has done for you and the new identity that you have in Christ help you to battle temptation in your life?

How can you grow in your awareness of what God has done for you and the new identity that you have in Christ? What are some additional Bible passages you might meditate on?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-14. Focusing on vv.12-13, what does this mean? Why is this promise in vv.12-13 so important?

How committed are you to waging war against the temptations that arise from your own evil desires? Pray for one another.



For Further Reflection

With a passage like this, questions naturally arise about the temptations of Jesus. The Bible is clear that Lord Jesus who is God incarnate was tempted in every way (Hebrews 4:14-15), but that at the same time God can't be tempted (James 1:13). Moreover, if temptation arises from our own sinful desires, how are we to understand where Jesus' temptations come from? There is certainly great mystery here but theologians have typically recognized that it was in Jesus' human nature that He was tempted (and not His divine nature), and that those temptations didn't come from within but from without. You might find the following lengthy quote from the pastor and author, Mark Jones to be helpful in this regard.

“Our temptations typically arise from within us, as we are lured away by desires that give birth to sins such as unbelief and sinful lust (James 1:14-15). Jesus was free from these types of temptations. He did not have an inclination towards evil. For example, as the Sinless One, filled with the Spirit beyond measure, he did not experience lust in his heart towards a woman; however, that does not mean he did not find certain women attractive. As a man, he would have experienced a natural attraction to a beautiful woman. Nevertheless, this ‘attraction’ was always kept perfectly in check. Never once did it move to the realm of lust or covetousness. The various temptations that Jesus would have felt may have had a certain appeal, but he fought ardently to repel them all. To depend on oneself or to give in for a moment to a lustful thought or action always carries an appeal, but Jesus could not and did not do that. He always entrusted himself to his Father. He always responded perfectly to any situation in which he found himself. There were, however, no sinful impulses in Christ that originated from within his human nature. Because Jesus had infirmities, he had natural human weaknesses that, for example, made him subject to hunger. Thus the devil tempted him in that area in the hope that Jesus would not depend on God but upon bread alone. The desire to eat when hungry is not sinful, but such a craving at the expense of faith in God's provision is. As the sinless one, Jesus felt the force of temptation more than we can imagine.” (Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ*)

Let us praise God that we have such a faithful and holy Savior.