

James: A Letter from Jesus' Brother

Temptation — James 1:13-18

Introduction

How can we see God as infinitely powerful, flawlessly wise, our all-satisfying Treasure — and still be pulled away from Him to other things?

In vv.13-18 James explains where these pulls — these temptations — come from.

What deception are James' readers facing? (v.13)

They were in a severe trial, which meant they faced many temptations — pulls away from Jesus. But they misunderstood where these temptations — pulls — came from. They thought these temptations came from God — that God was pulling them from God. But God can't be pulling them from God, because that would be evil, and God can't do evil.

Where do temptations come from? (v.14)

When you feel pulled from Jesus, what's pulling you is your own desire. When God saved you he did not remove all sin from you. That's why, at times, our desires pull us away from Jesus.

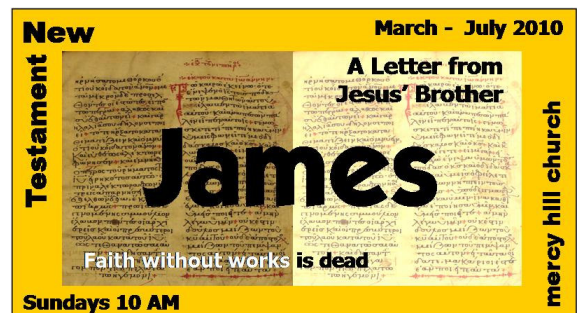
How serious is temptation? (vv.14-15)

When temptation first flares up, it's not sin. But if I do not cry out to Jesus for help, it will become sin. And if I don't confess and repent, that sin will grow. And if I let sin grow, it will bring me to eternal death. (Not because I lose my salvation, but because my lack of repentance would show I never had salvation.)

How can we avoid sin and death? (vv.16-18)

Don't think God is the one pulling you away (v.16)

Set your heart on God's passionate, perfect, and constant goodness towards us in Christ Jesus — as illustrated in His saving us by the word of truth. As you do so, sin's temptation will lose its power (vv.17-18)



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

When you have felt pulled from Jesus to something else, have you ever thought it was God that was tempting you? What have you thought was the source of your temptation?

What are some of the excuses or rationalizations you've used for your temptations? Maybe your circumstances? Maybe your family of origin issues? What would James say about these?

Before Sunday's teaching, how seriously did you take temptation? Did you understand that it could lead to sin? Did you understand that sin always grows? Did you understand that sin can grow until it brings you to eternal spiritual death? What impact do these truths have on you?

We want to avoid shallow clichés. So — really — does setting your heart on God's passionate, perfect, and constant goodness break temptation's power? Why or why not?

What temptations are you facing right now? What is the Holy Spirit saying to you about them?

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

New **March - July 2010**

Testament **A Letter from Jesus' Brother James**

Faith without works is dead

Sundays 10 AM **mercy hill church**