



3Q 2014 The Book of James Lesson 3 – Enduring Temptation.

SABBATH

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

What does it mean to “endure temptation”? How does this relate to loving the Lord??

Consider Christ’s temptations vs our own.

From the lesson: “Sometimes it seems that the more we focus on not sinning, the more powerless against temptation we feel, and the more hopeless our condition appears. We wonder if indeed we are saved at all. It’s hard to imagine any serious Christian who hasn’t wondered about his or her own salvation, especially after having just fallen into sin.”

Where is the focus in this passage??

SUNDAY

The Root of Temptation.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15.

This should be a familiar passage for our class. Why is it so important for us to conclude that God cannot be tempted or does He tempt?? Also, consider the metaphor used – conception, birth, growth, death. Any insights??

From the lesson: “Thus, the battle against sin begins in the mind. As much as many might not want to hear it, the truth is that we choose to sin. No one can force us (Rom. 6:16–18). Sinful desires, inclinations, and propensities do constantly capture our attention. By using common hunting and fishing terms, James 1:14 describes these inward promptings. Our own desires lure and entice us, and when we give in to them, they finally hook and entrap us.”

No question, the battle against sin [for humanity] begins in the mind. Where else is the battle against sin being fought? Do we actually choose to sin?? What should our choice focus on?? Did we choose to be born infected with a sinful human nature?? Without the Holy Spirit, and a healthy conscience do we have any power to choose not to sin?? Does the TB patient have a choice of symptoms??



Again, from the Lesson: “Dwell on the idea that sin is always our own choice. (After all, if it weren’t our own choice, how could we be condemned for doing it?)”

How, indeed, “could we be condemned for doing it” [sinning]??

See Matt 12:37 [“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”]

John 3:17-19 [17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.]

John 8:9-11 [9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”],

Rom 8:1 [There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.]

Rom 8:33-35 [33 Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?]

Titus 3: 10-12 [10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.] Interesting, this concept of “self” condemnation. Any thoughts??

MONDAY

When Lust Conceives.

From the lesson: Several Greek words are used in this passage to describe how sin begins, and all of them are connected with giving birth. When a wrong desire is nurtured, sin is “conceived,” like a baby in the womb. “Sin, when it is completely grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:15, author’s literal translation).

The picture is paradoxical. The process that is supposed to give life results only in death (compare Rom. 7:10–13). Sin, like cancer, takes over and consumes its host. We all know this, for we have all been ruined by sin. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them [emphasis provided].



I think this is very well said. Sin, not God's anger or justice, is the problem, and un-remedied, will cause permanent death. Also correct, is the statement that our hearts are inherently evil [through NO fault or choice of our own], and we [alone] cannot change them.

The lesson invites us to consider the fall of mankind in Gen. 3. What went wrong??

- Eve corrected the “serpent”, missing the subtle questioning of God’s trustworthiness. This should have been a major “red flag” that she was being approached by “the enemy” she had been warned about. The seeds of distrust had been planted, and were about to be fertilized.
- Eve believed the lie that the forbidden fruit would not cause death, was pleasing to the eye, and “was useful for obtaining knowledge”. This is at the heart of modern “spiritualism” – the quest for knowledge, above/beyond, what God has given us for our benefit.
- Satan, then, used Eve to tempt Adam. It’s highly likely that some coercive pressure was used, given that Eve had already fallen, though Scripture is silent on this.
- Adam suspended his reason and judgment, and followed emotion/desire, and also consumed the fruit. Also noteworthy, men have been selling their souls for the approval of women ever since.
- They ran & hid “because they were afraid.”
- Note the blaming of God. “It was that woman you gave me ...” “That serpent [You created] deceived me ...”

God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God’s plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan’s charge of God’s arbitrary rule. PP 49

Again, from the lesson: At its root, sin begins with distrusting God. Satan, using the same successful method by which he deceived a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4,7–9), raised doubts in Eve’s mind about God’s character (Gen. 3:1–5). Approaching the forbidden tree was not sin, but taking and eating the fruit was. Even so, wrong thoughts seem to have preceded her sinful act (Gen. 3:6). She adopted Satan’s suggestions as her own.

Sin always begins in the mind. Like Eve, we may think about the supposed “benefits” of wrongdoing. Then our imagination and feelings begin to take over. Soon we seize the bait and fall into sin.

Again, well said.



TUESDAY

Every Good and Perfect Gift

“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” James 1:16, 17.

Any thoughts on the above passage?? Why does this begin with, “Do not err, my beloved brethren”?? Why does James mention the Godly attribute of “no variableness, neither shadow of turning”??

At the end of the 2nd paragraph in the lesson it beautifully states “... God wants us to be saved. It was His will, from even before we existed, that we should have salvation and a new life in Him now and for all eternity.” Why does God want us ALL to be saved?? Is this consistent with any Scripture [Eze. 33:11, Isa. 6:10, Jer. 51:8, 9]?? What is it that prevents us from salvation/healing??

In the bottom section, the lesson asks us “What are the gifts you have been given “from above”?? Anyone want to mention a few?

WEDNESDAY

Slow to Speak.

“Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt.” Abraham Lincoln

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. Prov. 17:28.

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1: 19, 20.

What do you think James meant by “the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God”?? Compare and contrast “the wrath of man” and the “wrath of God or The Lamb.” Any similarities? Differences??

When Mother Teresa was interviewed by Dan Rather for a “60 Minutes” piece, he asked her what she said during her prayers. Her response was, “I just listen.” Rather then asked what God said to her. Her response was, “He just listens.”

How many here prefer to be with someone who listens, instead of talks incessantly?? What is it about listening instead of talking??



THURSDAY

Saved by Receiving.

The lesson does a great job of comparing James 1:21 with Zech. 3:3, 4 [the illustration of Joshua, the High Priest, plucked from the fire and given a new, clean robe]. It also goes to great lengths to differentiate between just covering our filth, and actually cleansing us.

The first question in this lesson asks, “What role does the ‘word’ have in what James is saying?” Clearly he’s speaking of the Word of God. What is that??

The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. Ps. 119:160.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. John 17: 17 [From Christ’s prayer to His Father just before the Crucifixion].

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. Matt. 10:34.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12.

He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. Rev 1:16. [Description of Christ in Heaven].

And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. Rev. 19:21. [Description of Christ after the Holy City has been established on Earth]. Note in verse 13 that Christ’s name is literally “The Word of God.”

Using Scripture, the Word of God has the capability to heal [Sanctify in John 17: 17], and to cause death [Rev 19: 21]. What determines the outcome, healing vs death??

What does James mean in verse 25 by “the perfect law of liberty”?