

# James 01

by John W. Bramhall

---

*The Epistle of James emphasizes the importance of practical Christianity, spiritual maturity, and patience in the face of trials and tribulations.*

**Duration:** 59:24

**Scripture:** James 1:2

**Topics:** "Trials And Testing", "Temptation And Sin"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the practical teachings of the epistle of James. He emphasizes the importance of counting it all joy and being of good cheer in the face of trials and testing. The preacher highlights that these trials and tribulations can make us better Christians if we allow the Lord to have His way in our lives. He also clarifies that being tempted is not the same as sinning, but rather it is when we yield to the sinful desire that it becomes an act of sin. The sermon concludes with the reminder that sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

---

## Transcript

Beloved friends, shall we commence the study of the epistle that is filled with practical Christianity written by the beloved Apostle James, for it contains powerful words of divine wisdom for our practical testimony as Christians today. A few introductory words concerning the author would be of interest, for in the New Testament there are three men who are called James. There is one who was called the son of Zebedee, a brother of the Apostle John.

His name was James. A second one, among the twelve apostles chosen by the Lord, was James the son of Alphaeus, and third, there was James who was a brother of our Lord, and in the family of Joseph and Mary. It is very probable that it was James, the brother of the Lord, who has written this epistle.

His name as the Lord's brother is mentioned in Mark chapter 6 and verse 3, and again in Matthew 13 and verse 55. We can also determine from the gospel narrative that James and his brethren did not believe on the Lord Jesus during the years of our Savior's earthly ministry. This we can gather from John chapter 7 and the first ten verses, and also from the gospel of Mark chapter 3 and verse 21.

But, evidently, after the death and the resurrection of the Lord, James undoubtedly was brought into salvation, for it is written in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 7 that after his resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared to James. We also find him named with the disciples in the upper room when we read the first

chapter of Acts and verse 14. As well as being there was his own brother Jude, who is the author of the epistle of Jude.

It would be profitable for us to recognize that these brothers were undoubtedly convinced as to who the Lord Jesus was, and converted through the death and the resurrection of the Savior. We can praise God that they were ultimately saved, in spite of their unkind and perhaps very bitter criticism of Jesus during the days of his earthly ministry. We should also know and acknowledge that James, the writer of this epistle, became a strong pillar in the early days of the church, and his leadership is acknowledged very prominently in Acts chapter 15, and even the beloved Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians comments on that fact.

Let us first understand the character of the epistle that James has written. We should do this clearly from chapter 21 in the book of Acts verses 17 through 26. It would indicate to us that James leaned very heavily towards the Jewish law in the early days of Christianity.

This emphasis can be detected in his epistle, for in chapter 1 and verse 1, his letter is directly addressed to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad. These were specifically Jews. Even before the Savior came to the earth, many Jews had been dispersed among the nation, and during the life of the Savior, and even at Pentecost also, we have evidence that indicates that the dispersed Jews frequently returned to visit Israel annually.

But in their lands where they had been scattered, they established synagogues and sought to maintain their Jewish way of life, even in those foreign places. The Jewish flavor of this epistle of James is revealed in several ways. First, in chapter 2 and verse 2, you have the word assembly.

The word assembly, as it is actually in the Greek in this occasion, means synagogue, though the word is found again in chapter 5 and verse 14, yet the word assembly is the correct one from the original text. The Jews to whom James had written were unquestionably Christian Jews, true believers, but they were undoubtedly maintaining their Jewish customs in their separate Jewish communities. So, let us realize we cannot expect to find in this epistle the well-developed doctrines regarding the church as we find them in the Pauline letters.

The temple in Jerusalem was still standing when James wrote, and we confess that many Jewish synagogues were Christian synagogues, for the full truth of the one body of Christ had not dawned upon them, we know, yet they were Christian believers. According to James chapter 1 and verse 11, we can be sure that they were born again, and even according to James chapter 5 and verse 7, we can detect they had already been taught concerning the coming again of the Lord. Now, there is one more consideration, perhaps, that we should understand, and it will be elucidated in our detailed study later, and that is there are no conflicts between Paul's doctrine and James' doctrine on the subject of justification by faith.

James does not contradict Paul's teaching of the subject, as Paul has written in Galatians, because the Galatian epistle had not been written when James wrote his epistle, which he wrote in about 50, the year 50 A.D. While Paul explains that a man is justified by faith alone, James explains that a man's faith is dead unless it is proved by true Christian evidence that is good works. For we are not saved by works, but the faith that saves will lead to good works. So, we consider that fact, for many are disturbed over what seems to be a conflict between the teaching of James and the teaching of the beloved apostle Paul regarding justification.

Now, may we say also, in the way of introduction to this study, we perhaps can state that there are two great themes woven throughout the whole letter. First, there was persecution being endured by the Christian Jews from the outside. How often that was true of all the Christian gatherings in the days of the early church.

And then, second, there were problems on the inside of their gatherings, and is not this often found to be true today? Facing dangers that are with outside the testimony, and inward dangers and problems that are within the testimony of the church. James, in his epistle, seeks to counsel and to encourage in the midst of these conditions, and he also seeks to exhort them to confess and to forsake their sin. There is one word that is prominent in the epistle of James, occurring five times, that should have an explanation before we study.

It is the word perfect, which only means, properly in the Greek text, spiritual maturity, and the frequent use of it only indicates how that even the apostle James was anxious that these early Christian Jews should grow up in the Lord to spiritual maturity, and without doubt he emphasized that their various trials would help them to mature if they would obey God. Surely we can say, as we approach this letter, if believers with confidence that God can teach us today to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, there is much for us, then, to learn from the study of this practical epistle that James has written. We approach the study by saying, once again, the main theme of the letter can readily be determined by your careful reading to be practical Christianity.

It is a down-to-earth commentary on the practical exhibition of Christian faith, and in a matured expression. Again we repeat, this is suggested by the five occasions in the epistle where the word perfect is used, implying, as we state and repeat with emphasis, the chief subject through the letter is regarding the practical faith of the perfect or the matured Christian. It is necessary, though, we should not be mistaken in the meaning of this word perfect, which signifies having reached a confirmation, yet does not mean to be sinlessly perfect.

The thought or the teaching of a person reaching sinless perfection has no substantiation in the word of God, and the highest conviction of any sincere believer who is properly instructed in the word of God will never lead that believer to make such a claim as being sinlessly perfect. That perfection, when we shall be without sin as believers, will be at the coming again of the Lord Jesus, at that blessed eternal and even momentary change that will take place. It was only true of the Son of God when He was upon the earth, living amongst men, He was the only perfect person.

However, let us again realize when the word is used of a believer in any sense, and in any place of your New Testament, it means to be matured. We have the same word in Hebrews chapter six and verse one, where Paul writes, let us go on to perfection, meaning maturity. In other words, full Christian growth, for there should be in all Christians a continual process of Christian growth as Peter declared, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Second Peter three and verse 18. But now let us turn to the epistle of James in chapter one, where we can begin the study of the subject of the matured Christian and the testings of his and her faith. May I repeat that for the subject of chapter one? The matured Christian and the testings of faith.

Considering this verse from the first 12 verses, wherein God, in regards to the testings of faith, we are able to learn God's purposes for such experiences. The salutation of the letter begins in verse one, to say, James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are gathered abroad,

greeting. Let again it be emphasized that this letter is not directly addressed to the church as a whole, but particularly to the very early Christian Jews, and that sometime before the destruction of the temple which took place in the year 70 A.D., the epistle of James may have been written approximately 20 years before the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus, when the great truth concerning the church had not even been revealed by the Spirit of God, as they were later revealed through the special ministry and the revelations given to the Apostle Paul.

Now, as we continue our study, we find that the divine purpose of God is now revealed concerning the trials of life as believers and Christians. In verses two through four, listen to the words that James has written, My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers, meaning various temptations or testings, knowing this, that the trying or the testing of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, meaning complete, wanting or lacking nothing. The first truth that we should emphasize is the fact that the Christian must expect trials in life.

Testings are bound to come for the believer in the Lord Jesus, and please do not misconceive, do not misunderstand the real meaning of the word temptation in our text. It must not be restricted to temptation to do evil. It represents every kind of testing that may be faced, and as James declares, there are various kinds of them appearing in one form and in another.

But a second truth to learn from our scripture here, it is important not only for a Christian to expect testing, but also it is very necessary to know how we should go through them. Now, carefully, this is what James tells us in verse 2. He declares when we go through such experiences, we should count it all joy when these testings come. It may not be our attitude when such things cross our path.

It may not feel that it is possible to have such joy, but then, if we would only realize as Christians that all our troubles and all of our trials can be expected, and to realize this should prepare us, for we know that God has a purpose for it. May I repeat that? Though we do not invite and would not invite testings and trials to cross our path, nevertheless they come, but the confidence of a believer's heart in the Lord should assure him or her that such testings God has a purpose for them. Now, let me insert the encouraging words of the Lord Jesus Christ at this particular point.

His own words that were repeated and found in John chapter 16 and verse 33, on the occasion when he was with a disciple for the last occasion in the upper room, before going to Gethsemane and then to Calvary, he made this comment, and it was a word of admonition and warning and in counsel, in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Just as James has written, the Lord Jesus himself confirms what he has said, except tribulation of trouble, but nevertheless, said the Lord Jesus, be of good cheer. May I point out the similarity of the Savior's words to James? James says, count it all joy.

The Lord Jesus said, be of good cheer. Oh, beloved, would that we could take these words into our hearts and think them deeply and embed them deeply into our souls to know the truth of what they mean. Beloved, naturally this can never be done, we know, but as the Lord Jesus went on to say, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and knowing that he has overcome the world and the trials and the difficulties which he passed through, so can we, through his grace and power and his power, his help is available and his deliverance we can depend upon.

Therefore, as James has declared, count it all joy when you enter into the trials of life, for God your Father, Christ your Savior, has very definitely a purpose within it. Can I quote here the words of Hebrews chapter

12, in verse 11, where the beloved apostle is well written, saying, now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. My beloved fellow believer, I say it humbly and I say it sincerely to my own heart as much as to yours, when you and I go through testings and trials, shall we not realize with an inward joy that is deeper than an outward happiness that God is a purpose for our blessing within it, and the afterward will bring the peaceable fruit of righteousness in the life of God's child? But then, there's a first thing to learn from our scripture that James has written in the opening of Ephesians, verses two through four, and it is this.

What is the trial or the testing as James begins to reveal it? What is the testing to accomplish? What is God's purpose behind it and within it? This, James says, we ought to know. Knowing this, knowing this, he says, the testing of your faith worketh patience, or meaning endurance. Christian, my fellow believer, do we really know this? There's only one way that we can be sure of this, and that is to take God in his word, he says so.

You may not feel it, the outward circumstances may not appear to be that, but the confidence of a believer's heart in the truth and the verity of the word of God, we can say, I know it. God says so, and as James has written, the testing of your faith worketh patient, meaning endurance. Would to God that when trials come, we should actually face them with confidence, because there is a knowledge that has been imparted through the word of God from God himself, that when trials come, he has a definite purpose for them in our lives.

We often quote Romans 8 28. We do it so glibly, we confess. We know that all things work together for good to them that are, to them that love God, and to them that are called according to his purpose.

Beloved, what does that mean? We know that all things, not something, not 99 out of a hundred things, not 999 out of a thousand things, but a hundred things out of a hundred, one thousand things out of one thousand, all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. May God give us the grace and the inward ability by the spirit dwelling within to prove this. We should.

Now, James tells of one great and needed lesson that every believer can and should learn in and through and by the trials of faith, a needed discipline, and that is to have patience. The word patience here means endurance, and the trial of faith thus is a work to accomplish in us and through us. It worketh patience.

I'm sure that we're all familiar with the words of Romans 5, where the apostle says, tribulation worketh patience. One thinks of the incident of a young believer coming to an older believer and said, brother please pray with me and pray for me that I will have more patience, and so the old brother invited the young brother to kneel with him and then together pray, and the old brother prayed to the Lord asking, Lord please send this dear young brother more trouble and tribulation, and the young man interrupted immediately said, brother I didn't ask for tribulation. The older brother turned and said, brother you'll have to get it the way God sends it, through tribulation.

That worketh patience, and then we can realize that James goes on, this patience will produce a Christ-like character very plainly to make one a mature Christian, for it is a virtue that certainly is an indication of spiritual and Christian maturity. It's that lovely virtue of patience, the patience of Christ, but this certainly clearly follows according to verse four to tell, but let patience. Now there's the trouble, there's the problem.

Do we let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, meaning complete, wanting or lacking nothing? Let me quote another excellent translation of this verse, but let endurance have its perfect work, that she may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. The troubles and the trials of a Christian in the purpose of God have always in view Christian maturity, a full developed character. My fellow Christian, did you and I actually believe this? The test is this, do I count it joy when the trials come? I can, I should, may I say I will, if I am confident that I am sure that God has a reason for the trial, no matter how great or small, no matter how difficult or grievous.

Am I sure, if I'm so sure, is it not to make me a better Christian? My beloved, I'm sure that every Christian with any experience will testify that the troubles of life have matured them spiritually far greater than prosperity in this present scene. Adversity and trouble is one of the greatest instruments in the hands of God to shape and to mold his beloved children into the character and the likeness of his beloved son in our testimony upon the earth as he was. May I point out, we should thus see what the Christian's responsibility is in our scripture.

Let me emphasize that word again, it is to let patience, it is to permit patience, to have a perfect or complete work, saying in substance, Lord, I may not understand exactly what this trial is all for. Lord, I may even wonder why I should have this experience that I'm going through, but according to thy word, Lord, I am willing to accept it with joy, for I have this confidence. You promised to make me a better Christian by it, through it, and because of it, and Lord, you let me to learn this lesson well.

What a message! So practical, beginning immediately as James writes the episode with the testing of the Christian path in the life of a believer below upon the earth. We often sing the old hymn with joy, when all my labors and trials are o'er, and I'm safe on that beautiful shore, just to be near the dear Lord I adore, will through the ages be glory for me. But, O my beloved fellow Christian, let us not fail to realize the trials, the troubles, the tribulations, the heartaches, and all that we pass through in the testing of the path.

They will make us better Christians, as thus we let the Lord and his way. O beloved, it may be through sorrow, it may be through death, it may be through unnamed troubles that we could not even mention, that grieve the heart and the soul and touch the life. But, I say again, there's nothing better in the experience of a Christian to develop that Christian into fertility to be more Christ-like, and possess the blessed virtue of patience, than trouble itself.

May God help us to know the joy that the Apostle James has written of in times of trouble. Beloved friends, as we continue the epistle of James in our meditation, let us again realize that the testings and the trials of the Christian life are always experiences of divine discipline in order to produce spiritual maturity in the life of the believer. Because this is true, we are thus encouraged by James the Apostle to count it all joy when we fall into various testings.

God says that we should know this, no matter how difficult the testing may be, it will produce, and can produce, when yielded to matured spirituality. This we are found in James, chapter one, verses two through four. Now, we go on through verses five down through eight, and find that James mentions the need of wisdom, and how to obtain this, even in the in view of our trials.

May I repeat that? What follows is to reveal the need of wisdom, and how we often need that in the midst of trials, perhaps more than at any other time. How can we obtain that wisdom in view of the testing? This, I believe, James takes up in verses five through eight. The words of verse five declare, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all liberally, and upgradeeth not, and it shall be given him.

It is very noticeable at the end of verse four, in our preceding study, James declared that we would lack nothing if we let patience have its perfect work, and yet when we come to verse five, we face the statement of lacking wisdom. What does this mean? Is it contradictory? Well, let us examine the problem concerning the testings of the trials of life. Do we always understand them? Is there not often a difficulty, and a great difficulty sometimes, to know why they have appeared? And, even though the heart may be sincere toward God, we still may be raising the question why such a trial? This is perhaps the reason that James now introduces us to an important principle, as well as responsibility, and that is to pray.

Let it ask of God when the understanding and the wisdom is needed. Oh, what a ministry of prayer this certainly brings in, and so needful at the time of great testing! This well reminds one of the truth that is expressed by a well-known hymn. We know it very intimately, aren't we? What a friend we have in Jesus! All our sins and grief to bear.

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! Oh, what heat we often forfeit! Oh, what needless pain we bear! All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Is there any more needed time to use this great privilege and opportunity of prayer when under trial and difficulty? Prayer to God will enlighten our hearts and enlighten our minds when we ask of him. He gives the promise who giveth to all men liberally, not miserly, liberally, and neither will he scold us for our ignorance.

But, in his matchless love and grace, the needed wisdom and understanding he generously will give, and he assures us of. Now, as we follow, it certainly is indicating to us from verses six through eight the condition of prayer is emphasized by James. We need to take this in as a most important and an essential requisite in seeking the help of God.

But, let him ask in faith, nothing doubting or wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and pots. Please note very carefully, in other words, God has promised wisdom when the believer asks of him. But, it is a promise, and you and I ought to believe that he means what he says, and the Christian is every encouragement to know God and not to doubt his promises when we ask of him, and this requires, as James demands, the confidence of faith.

Doubting God will not bring the needed blessing or help in our trials. James boldly declares this, portedly double-minded, as James expresses it only proves our spiritual instability and the instability of character. How this failing characteristic can be revealed when we're in our trials and show the lack of faith.

At such times we're tempted to doubt God, and the adversary throws dots of doubt and fear into the mind and heart of a believer when going through testings and trials, and how the hymn writer is certainly encouraged by writing. Simply trusting every day, trusting through a stormy wave, even when my faith is small. Trust in Jesus, that is all.

It may be that the winds and the waves of trial produce trembling and fear within us, but the Lord would have us all fast in faith and rest fully upon his assurances of help. To doubt him and to fear is but to sink as Peter did beneath the waves when he walked upon the sea and took his eyes off the Lord Jesus. The heart of a Christian should ever be fixed upon the promises that God gives, for it has well been written in the words of a very familiar chorus in my early days.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise see, and look to God alone, less than impossibilities and cries it shall be done. The words of James, these words need to be indelibly impressed upon your heart and mind, my fellow believer, and in relation to our prayer life, let him ask in faith nothing doubting. O beloved, one

question, the heart and the conscience, how much do we ask in faith believing? For if there's any doubt connected with our prayer, characterizing our testimony, and our lack of confidence, then note what James said, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

I think of the words that the Lord Jesus said to the distressed, terrorist-tricken ruler Jairus by name when he learned that his daughter had died, as he had come for help to the Savior, and were acclaimed that she was already dead. What horror it must have brought to the heart and mind of that dear father! What did the Lord Jesus say to him? Only believe, only believe. It's a good thing it was the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, that said those words.

No other one could, and my beloved, when you and I lean upon the promises of God and upon our Lord, please let us remember we should take him at his word. For if doubt characterizes the prayer life, and our petition, and the attitude of our heart in the troubles, trials and difficulties, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Then what a great leveler the trials of life are, even to all the congregation of the Lord's people.

For James goes on to say, it matters not whether a man is rich or poor. There's one thing about trouble, my beloved friend, it strikes the rich, it strikes the poor, and amongst the congregation of the Lord, dear saints, there may be both. In the assembled companies of saints wherever we gather, that James goes on to say, in those trials the brother of low degree is exalted by the blessing that God gives, and the rich one is made low.

The poor man is rich in the Lord, and after all he's so poor perhaps he can lose nothing. But the rich man, oh that rich brother must not live for his earthly riches, neither must he trust in them. For he, as well as the poor brother, is dependent for all things upon the Lord, especially when the trials of life reap across the soul.

Verse 11 would clearly remind the rich man that if riches can fade away, they can wither like the grass and the flowers of the field which perish. For it is certain that we brought nothing into this world, wrote the Apostle Paul, and it is just as certain that we can carry nothing out. No, beloved, how precious it is to see that all saints, whether rich or poor, they're on the same level in the congregation of the Lord, and the rich brother cannot, should not at least, look down upon the brother that is poor, and vice versa.

Are in the trials of life we share the afflictions together? We bring our prayers to the same blessed person for deliverance, and then you have James telling the blessing of the trial, the ultimate purpose which God has before his people when they experience the varied testings of life. It is declared in verse 12. Look at this wonderful beatitude, and it should be a beatitude for us.

Blessed meaning happy, the same word you have in the beatitudes of Matthew 5. The Greek word for happy, not the Greek word for praise or eulogy, but for the word meaning happy. Happy is the man that endures temptation of testing, for when he is trying, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him. We raise the question, what is the crown of life? Is it not that divine reward for being faithful to God in and through all kinds of testings and trials? My beloved, you and I are so often concerned about winning a crown by winning souls by doing some great work for everybody to see and hear about.

I wonder if we realize that perhaps our troubles and testings of life, and how we go through them, can bring us greater reward in the day of glory. Does it not indicate by going through them to the glory of God,

one is a victor over all the testings and trials? Did not the Lord say, be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life to the church, the suffering persecuted saint in the church of Myrna, as recorded in Revelation 2.10? It is not what we go through that counts, but how we go through life which will characterize the victorious Christian. This, my beloved Christian friend, is God's purpose in trials to bring out our faith in practical evidence, to enable us to be the happy victor in living a life that is pleasing to God regardless of the cost.

May the Lord teach us how to endure all the trials and testings of life to his glory, no matter how great and difficult for us to do. This will make one a happy Christian, and also a victorious one. The words of a poem often remembered from my early days.

I would like to quote, Teach me to live, tis easy afar to die, gently and silently to pass away, on earth's dark night to close the heavy eye, and waken in realms of glorious day. Teach me that harder lesson, how to live, to serve thee in every path of life. Arm me for conflict now, fresh vigor give, and make me more than conqueror in the strife.

May God help us to be that happy person that endures the testings of life to the glory of God, and who will receive from the blessed Lord above that victor crowned when he comes. Well, let us proceed as we have also, as we have already noticed from the preceding section, from verse 1 through 12, regarding the trials of life that they contribute to Christian character. Now, let's follow on as we read from verse 13 through 15 in this first chapter of James.

For the apostle now deals with the temptations. Now, note carefully, he now deals with the temptations that invite us to do evil. It is very wise and needful for us to recognize the difference between testings that test our faith, and testings or temptations that invite us to do evil.

The word tempt, in the word of God, has two meanings according to the context. It can mean to be tested by God, and also, on the other hand, to be tested or tempted to sin. Let me give you an example of the first occasion, which you may read in detail from Genesis chapter 22.

It was in regards to the life of Abraham, and the first verse of Genesis chapter 22 says these words, Now the Lord God did tempt Abraham. From the incident that followed in relation to Isaac and the offering of Isaac up on the altar, as you may well know, from that story we can realize God was testing. It was not an invitation to do evil, it was a testing from God to do, to prove the obedience and the faith of Abraham in God, and from that story we can understand that it was God testing Abraham's obedience and his faith, and we know the great blessing it brought to God, as well as to Abraham, because of Abraham's trust in God and his confidence and faithfulness in and through God.

God really proved Abraham. But now, in our scripture of James 1, 13 through 15, the apostle deals with the temptation to do evil. Now, what is the source of such temptation? Listen to the words.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man. As we read in verse 13, how contrary to God's holy character it would be for anyone to accuse God of leading him or her into sin. But then ask the question, where does the temptation to do evil spring from? Here is a deep lesson that we should understand.

We that are Christians, where our desires to sin really originate, they come from within our own hearts. Look at verses 14 and 15 carefully. We pray, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own

lust and entice.

Then, when lust hath conceded, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The source of evil temptation, do we really recognize it? Is it not the devil which so frequently the majority of people would say? Well, often it may be true. The devil can, and the devil does seek to place temptation in our path, we know.

But let me ask the question, why does the devil put temptation to do evil in the path of a Christian or anyone? Well, because he knows that, by nature, every one of us possesses an evil nature. We have evil desires in our natural heart. Contrary to the modern and liberal preaching and psychology of today, God's word plainly declares, and our own lives verily prove we all possess a sinful nature.

Now, my fellow beloved, my fellow Christian, please, when God saves you, he never removed that nature that you were born with. You'll never get rid of it till you die, or when the Lord comes, thank God, we'll get rid of it then and be good riddance. But, did you ever read the great confession of David in Psalm chapter 51, when he penitently repented before God for his great sin? Verse five records him saying, behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Now, what he acknowledges is not that he was a sin to be born, not at all, but he began, he entered life with a possession of a sinful nature, and the tendency to sin does not take long to appear, even in the youngest child today. Let's take a careful reading of this verse, the 14th verse, particularly of James 1. We find that that man is drawn into sin by his own lust, his own desire by nature to sin. He's enticed, but now let us make clear another fact, and that is to be tempted does not mean that temptation is sinning.

Verse 15 very carefully follows to clearly state that it is when the lustful desire that has been presented by the adversary, or by the human heart, it seems to arise. It's when it is carried out then it bringeth forth sin. Please not please not to step carefully.

First, there appears the desire, or the lust to sin. Then, second, the sinful desire is committed, and that produces an act of sin when we yield to the temptation. The old hymn has properly stated it in the following words, yield not to temptation for yielding is sin, and each victory will help you some other to win.

But now, let's look at the first step in regards to this found in verse 14, and then James says that sin, when it is finished, it bringeth forth death. Now, let me repeat again the three steps in relation to temptation to do evil. Note them very carefully.

First, it's the desire of a natural heart to sin, which is possessed again. Let me repeat it. We may be saying, and my beloved fellow believer, do not think for one moment that it's an impossibility for you to sin.

May I never think it of me, or that we may humbly acknowledge we have two natures, the old, yes, still with us, but thank God, the new, which should be fed, encouraged, and grown, and developed. But that old nature is still possessed by us, and well may we say, as Jeremiah wrote, the heart is desperately wicked, and these people above all think who can know it. In Jeremiah chapter 9 and verse 17.

Do you remember the words of the Lord Jesus in Mark chapter 7? Read them sometimes, verses 21 through 23. The words of the Lord Jesus tell that it's out of the human heart that proceeds all manner of sin, and as he names them, he tells their origin is the human heart, and these desires, lusting to sin, they are possessed by all men because of their nature with which they were born. But now, let us particularly take note, carefully note, it is not sin to be tempted, but when the desire to sin is carried out, when that

desire is fulfilled, then that temptation has become sin.

Then we are sinning, then we have sin. One is very appropriately quoted, I cannot keep the birds from flying around my head, but I can prevent them from building a nest there. My beloved one can realize, let us drive these sinful desires away.

May I mention an incident that came to my attention many months ago? A dear young Christian came to me and said, Brother Bramhall, how can I get the sinful thoughts out of my mind which seem to trouble me so frequently? And he spoke here of himself being a believer in the Lord Jesus, but having trouble with sinful desires and sinful thoughts. I looked at the young man, I said, young brother, fill your mind with the thoughts from the word of God. And, beloved, the positive aspect, the positive side of this difficulty is to put the mind to be filled with the word of God.

This is what Paul means in Roman chapter 12, that by the renewing of your mind you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. How is the mind renewed? Well, beloved, first of all, there's regeneration. We get a new life, but that renewal should be constantly known.

It's constantly to go on, and thank God the renewing of the mind can keep going on. And me, I say, my brother, my sister, good to God every one of us realize that the mind under God, and by the Spirit through the word, should constantly be in a state of renewal. And I tell you, if I fill my mind with what's going on in the world, it doesn't help me spiritually, it often depresses me.

But, oh, the word of God, the truth of God, and the word of God in the mind, thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. Said Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 2, in the last verse, that we have the mind of Christ, and what Paul meant there, meant we have the intelligent faculty of Christ, we have the blessed Spirit of God. And me, I say, you know there's a lot made much of in the world regarding education, and I tell you one thing, the spiritual education of a believer in his and her mind is the most important education that we should indeed be undertaking.

And I'll guarantee you, you'll never graduate from the school of Biblical theology when you take the word of God and study it, led by the Spirit, and taught by the Spirit. Oh beloved, look, temptation to do evil comes from the original nature that we possess, but to overcome it, let us recognize that we should fill our minds with the thoughts of God in Christ, and the word of God. For, let's be reminded, in that we should drive these simple desires away, and fill our minds with the thoughts of God, thou keepest him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts us in thee.

And the Christian will be given strength. I think of that old hymn we quoted in part, and quoting another part of the hymn, ask the Savior to help you, strength and confidence keep you, he is willing to aid you, he will carry you through. And we are reminded again, as we come to the close of this section, the results of yielding to sin brings what? Death.

It bringeth forth death. May I point out to you, it does not mean particularly physical death. It can, it does in some cases.

There is a sin unto death, as we read in 1 John chapter 5, but what the Apostle is referring to is that if we sin, we're not manifesting spiritual life, but what we're contributing is the testimony of spiritual death. Oh my beloved believer, may you and I ask, in my life, in your life, is our testimony contributing the evidence of spiritual life, or are we showing by our sinful disobedient ways we contribute death to the testimony?

And so we should ever realize, as we summarize these words from James chapter 2 verse 13 through 15, we must never say that God tempts us to sin. He permits, and He even may send trials and testings in the lives of His children of very many very times, but He never tempts them to do evil.

The title of the tempter belongs to the devil, and we could say of our God, He's one of the greatest testers. My beloved, let me just say this frankly. To be tested of God is one of the highest privileges we could ever go through.

Did you not ever notice, in the life of Abraham, that in Genesis 22, when he was tested by God, it was the highest testimony of his obedience, and faith, and of his character as a friend of God? A most amazing test. And you know what God asked him to do? He asked Abraham to give up the greatest treasure that his heart had upon the earth, Isaac, in whom were all the promises of God. That was a test, but he believed that even God, if he slew his son, even God was able to bring him back from death and resurrection, bring him back alive again.

God didn't need to have him go all through that experience. Abraham did everything up to the lifting up of the knife to slay his son that proved his faith and his obedience, and I tell you what, he knew Jehovah-Jireh as he never knew him in a way before. My beloved, tell a believer it takes the testings of life to know God, but he never tempts us to do evil.

Oh, may indeed we take the closing remarks of James, so suitable, regarding this question of testing and temptation. Do not stray, my beloved brethren, do not err. May God help you and me, my fellow believer, to see the distinction between being tested by our trials and difficulties that can be to the glory of God and our eternal blessing, as well as earthly blessings, and the difference between that and temptation to do evil.

Let us not stray on the matter, for his name's sake. Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus, teach us, we pray, the truth that we have covered to live it out and prove it, whatever the cost, in Jesus' worthy name. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9708.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-w-bramhall/james-01/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**