

Trials Can Lead to Deception

by Shane Idleman

Trials can lead to deception, but by being obedient to God's word and seeking His guidance, we can avoid deception and live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Duration: 33:37

Scripture: James 1:12-15, James 1:17, James 1:19-20, James 1:22, James 1:26 - 2:4

Topics: "Trials And Temptation", "True Religion"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the danger of trials leading to deception, highlighting the vulnerability we face during challenging times and the potential for deception when we question God's intentions. It explores the impact of trials on our faith and the importance of enduring temptation to receive the promised blessings. The sermon delves into the concept of deception, warning against being misled by our own desires and the consequences of sin. It also addresses the need to avoid partiality and judgment based on appearances, emphasizing the importance of true religion in caring for others and remaining untarnished by the world.

Transcript

James chapter 1 verse 12, the title of the message is, trials can lead to deception. Trials can lead to deception. Here's why, here's where we need to be careful.

When we experience trials, we are susceptible to deception. It's an open door. Here's what happens.

We say, why is God allowing this? Why is God allowing this? And that deception, that trial, that difficulty can lead to deception. Because what usually happens, why is God allowing this? We get happy or mad. We get upset and we go back to the old lifestyle.

Most people who struggle with addiction will tell you that they usually go back to that addiction once the bed of roses has ended and life is getting challenging. God, how can you allow this? Why did you allow this to happen? And that can open the door for deception. That's what James is going to get to in a minute here.

So let's recap, James 1 verse 12, blessed is the man who endures temptation. It means you're going to have to go through temptation. You're going to have to suffer a little bit.

It's okay to say that on Wednesday nights, right? Sunday mornings, I won't get away with that. But Wednesday nights, we can say you're going to have to suffer a little bit for your faith. So you endure temptation for when you have been approved, you will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

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. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Then he goes right into this passage.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of light, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Basically saying that God is not deceptive.

God, there's no variation. You know how if you turn things, it can look different? Or you turn something the other way, it looks different? With God, there's no turning, there's no variation. He's not a good God one day and a bad God the next.

He doesn't have your best interests at hand one day and then He doesn't love you the next. God has no variation at all. So you can stand on His Word that He is true, that He will see you through.

There's no shifting in God. Verse 18, of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. So basically He's saying do not be deceived.

Don't get thrown off course. Because James wasn't written with James 1, 2, 3. James just wrote a whole letter to the believers. And He's saying to be careful of these deceptions.

Be careful of going into temptation and don't be deceived when you do. So the next point in verse 19, He talks about qualities needed to prevent deception. So if you're saying like I was, okay, I don't want to be deceived.

How do I prevent that? Well, here's a few different ways that James talks about. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. So in a nutshell, be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Slow to react, basically, and not let anger dominate our decisions.

So the first thing we see is reacting versus responding. Reacting, so when a situation arises, we are to react or are we to respond. You know the difference? Reacting usually calls for apology later.

You hit me, I hit you. You do this, I do this. It's reacting.

But responding is being quick to listen. We listen, we perceive, and then we respond according to God's Word. And God brings clarity while we wait and when we respond, but confusion arises when we rush ahead.

Have you ever been confused and you just rush ahead? Or when you rush ahead, it brings confusion? That's why God's telling us to be quick to listen. I often tell people, make sure to hear both sides of a story. Make sure to look at everything on both sides and be quick to listen and not get your tongue going.

Because when the tongue's going and the ears are closed, there's trouble. So that's one point I hope you take away from this. Just be slow to speak.

You don't have to get into the last word. You don't have to always comment on everything. We have to be slow to speak.

Hear both sides. And then he also mentions that anger is not productive. The anger of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Basically means you'll never get anything done right when it's done with anger. It's not going to be done according to God's Word when it's done in anger and frustration. That's not how God operates.

So one way to not live in deception is to be slow to speak, quick to listen, and not respond in anger. Or not react in anger, but respond later. So we have this picture of this person who I wish I could be all the time.

Quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get upset and angry. Because the enemy has a hard time. The way he moves us is like pawns on a chess game with anger.

There goes that queen with frustration. There goes that with a quick temper or with a quick this. Do most of us, we look back, we got the majority of the amount of trouble we've ever been in is with this.

Right? These have gotten me into some trouble. Usually when they're like this, right? A long time ago. But this is where the majority of the problems come from.

And you know it. It's right here. So James is saying, stop that.

We have the ability to stop that. Lay aside, he says. Means we have the responsibility.

And the key is really for us is to obey God and let Him handle the consequences. We try to handle the consequences. And we will obey God, but I'll handle the consequences.

Basically, God says obey me and leave the results to me. Leave the results to me. You just obey me and leave the results.

And often when we obey Him, it doesn't happen like we thought. I don't like the results. I don't like where this is going.

So I'll take matters into my own hand. And I'm not quick to listen. I'm slow to listen.

I don't want to listen. I'm very quick to speak, and I move ahead quickly. So James is saying, here's one thing, especially during a trial.

When you're going through a trial, you want to respond and not react. I mean, just last week, as soon as we start on this, many of you know, I overfilled the baptismal at Hope Chapel for an hour. The water just kept.

We're talking thousands of thousands and thousands of dollars. Thank God for insurance, right? So I'm there with the insurance adjuster, and it's like unbelievably embarrassing. And then we find out this week we're trying to refinance, and Morgan's Social Security number was hijacked.

So they tried to run our credit four or five different times in a week on different charge cards. So talking to the fraud agencies, calling all the major, that, and you add what's going on. Next door, you add everything that's going on.

It's like, I want to react. I don't want to respond. But that's, he says, don't be deceived.

Handle this by responding, not reacting. And when I called our insurance agent, and she said, oh, water damage is not covered. Call me.

I said, I don't want to call you right now. I'll show you. I said, I don't want to talk right now is what I said.

So I waited and called her tomorrow because I did not want to talk right. Don't tell me water damage is not covered. That's what this was.

What's insurance for? Mosquito damage? Telephone pole falls and, you know, and you've got power outages. But I know we should have did our due diligence in that area. But hopefully, I mean, the other church's insurance is going to cover it.

So God worked out in that. He's working out in all of this. But when you fall into these trials, we have the tendency to get angry, don't we, and take things into our own hands and get upset.

That anger does not produce the righteousness of God. Wait on God and leave the consequences to him. Leave the results to him.

If not, we get very sidetracked. And that little, well, it's not a little trial. It's a fairly good trial.

That fairly good-sized trial becomes an enormous trial when this gets involved, doesn't it? Now I've got to apologize to that person. I've got to fix this. I've got to undo this.

So that's why he's saying be very careful when you go through trials that you're just quick to listen and slow to speak. And then my favorite verse, you've heard me teach on this many times, but be doers of the word. Now remember, this is all one letter.

So he's saying receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your soul. So he's saying lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive, which is repent, receive God's word. It's able to save your soul.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourself. This is probably what I see more often than anything else in Christians, is they know what to do, but they don't do it. And because they know what to do, they think they're okay.

So they're living in this life of deception. I've counseled everything from people living together to marriage counseling to financial difficulties, everything. And people, I'm like, okay, you know what to do.

That's not enough. You have to apply it. If not, we live in deception.

And I can get caught in this too. I know what the word of God says. I know what this says.

And I can live in deception unless I apply it to my life. So it's interesting. You can live in deception.

I can live in deception if we know God's word, but we do not apply it. And it just dawned on me today, what if we just started working on every area that God wants us to work on? The reason I say this is because most people have one point or two points or three points of rebellion in their own personal life. They know they should be doing something, but they're not.

Taking care of their body, eating better, avoiding this, avoiding that, shouldn't watch this, I shouldn't go there, I shouldn't, all these areas. What if we just took God at His word and begin to obey Him in those areas where the Holy Spirit is prompting us? Because we can live in deception. I love what, I've shared this a few times, you'll know from Lancaster, but maybe not if you've been attending Leona Valley, that an African pastor was asked, I think I shared it Sunday even, that why is there so much counseling in the American church? People know this.

I mean, I can go into counseling appointments, and they'll tell me exactly what I was going to tell them. Why is there so much counseling in the American church, but not in the church in Africa? And he said, it's because in America you counsel, in Africa we repent. And that's very true.

There's a lot of truth to that, because we can go into counseling appointments or trying to work on certain things, but we just don't get around to doing it. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror, for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. So it's like, you look in a mirror, and you're like, okay, I'm ready for the day.

Wait a minute, what did I look like? And you go back to that mirror, you keep, what was that again? And you look in the mirror. Who would do that? But that's exactly what we do when we know what God's word says, but we don't do it. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, God's word, and continues in it, is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work.

This one will be blessed in what he does. Many people are lacking blessings in their lives because they are not obeying God's word. They're running from it.

Hearing cannot replace doing. Hearing cannot replace doing, and you'll never grow. And I hope somebody takes this home as a practical application.

I'll never grow, you'll never grow, if instead of changing and obeying and doing what God's word says, you make excuses. How often does that happen? I'll talk to somebody, let's just say a guy, about, you know, we're talking about their marriage, and yeah, but she does this, and she does that, and she does, yeah, but okay, great, what about you? Yeah, but she does this, she, yeah, but what, do you understand something? I hope this helps somebody. It doesn't matter what your spouse does.

It's what you're doing before God. Okay, Jim, thank you. Because I hear that, okay, you need to change, yeah, but they're doing this.

You need to change, yeah, but you're doing this. And you'll never go forward unless somebody says, yeah, I've got to work on that. Help me work on that.

Lord, please help me work on that. Remove the excuses. And that's what we do.

We blame shift, even in other areas, what we have with that person. For example, if I need to go to somebody and ask forgiveness, maybe my wife will tell me, you know, you need to go to somebody and say, no, I don't, they did this and that and this and that, and I don't need to do that. Look what they did to me.

And see, I stop taking that step of obedience because of excuses. Another person, caught in addiction. Yeah, but Shane, I had a hard day, but I'm going through a lot.

And they'll excuse that addiction and continue in it because, do you see where I'm going with all this? We fail to obey God's Word with all these excuses. And, yes, it's challenging for me. It's hard to see when I have, say, a husband whose wife is not being all that she should be, or vice versa, a wife.

And it's hard. I don't want to say, oh, who cares? But on one hand, the Bible doesn't say, oh, okay, you don't need to do any of that unless they do this, because you'll never get anywhere. The Bible always puts it back on us.

And that's hard to hear. Isn't that hard to hear? You're like, oh, darn it, Shane. Why did you bring that up? I'm feeling good in my justification and my excuses.

But it's sad for me to see a spouse put down another spouse, or always saying certain things, and they don't want to work on their own character issues. However, a lot of people in this church are doing that. They're filled with the Spirit.

They're loving their spouse, even in the midst of difficult challenges. So I want to encourage you in that area just to keep doing what you're doing. There will be results.

There will be fruit. But for those who need to obey, I want to just throw that out there. What if we begin obeying God in many areas of our lives, in everything He's convicting us in? Saying, I've got to do that, is not doing it.

What I mean by that is a lot of people say, I know, I've got to do that. I've got to work on that. And I talk to them six months later, I know, I've got to work on that.

A year later, I've got to work on that. At some point, you know, the Bible doesn't give us a lot of wiggle room. It gives us grace, but it also tells us to man up and to obey what God's Word says.

The blessing of obedience. If you hear God's Word and you do it, you will be blessed. The blessing of obedience.

When a person obeys God's Word, he is blessed abundantly. People say, I hear to love and forgive, but I don't do it. I hear turn from sin and obey, but I don't do it.

I hear remove these weights that are easily ensnaring me, but I don't do it. That's the whole point of James' context here. We can hear something and not apply it.

And that's one of my concerns for when I was preaching on weekends or wherever I'm at, is that people hear something. Here's what happens. They'll hear it and they'll go, that's right.

That's a good point. I'm convicted. That's not good.

I need to work on that. But they don't work on that. They don't make the changes.

So they go out, but they feel better. They feel justified because they heard it. They heard it.

They felt convicted, but that's where it ends. So they're in this endless cycle of conviction, defeat. Conviction, defeat.

And James is speaking here about just be doers of the Word. Verse 26. If anyone among you thinks he is religious.

Now, for all of us, we think we're religious, right? We probably wouldn't use that term because we have a relationship with God. But if anyone among us thinks we are religious, if you do not bridle your tongue, you deceive your own heart, and your religion is useless. So the tongue is the best gauge of maturity.

Not how often you read the Bible. That's good. Not how much time you get in and worship.

That's great. Not how often you go to church. But the tongue is the gauge of maturity.

So if you're constantly, back to the example, if you're constantly putting down your spouse, or this person is constantly putting down their spouse, or they're constantly putting down something else, that tongue gauges your level of maturity. Because we should be able to hold that tongue. Whoever is truly religious, truly filled with God's Spirit, will hold their tongue.

But those who are not, can't. It's like, I have to say it. It has to come out.

So pure and undefiled religion before God is this. To visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. So if you want to know what pure and undefiled religion is, if I really want to be a person loving God, then I need to visit orphans and widows in their trouble.

Basically saying, minister to those who are in need. That's why it's so challenging, and I don't know why it is, but it is. It's hard to find people who want to help at the hospital homes.

We've got four or five hospital homes throughout the Yellow Valley that we need more helpers to go and visit these patients. That's true religion. If you want to know what true religion is, we have to do things we don't want to do, and go and minister to those that need ministry.

And then when you leave there, you feel the filling of the Holy Spirit. You don't get as angry. You're not as short-tempered.

Your tongue isn't loose like a cannon. Boom, boom, boom. Shooting people because you're filled with the Spirit.

True and undefiled religion is this. To visit widows and orphans to help those who are in a time of need. And then, of course, this one, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

To keep yourself unspotted from the world. Now, do you know what unspotted from the world means? It basically means untarnished. To keep yourself untarnished from the world.

And if you go next door, you can go next door, you can see the big Kids Connection remodel that's going on. There's a lot of tarnishes that were out. Five, six different tarnishes and colors and different things.

It got on the wood. That was the idea. But in the case of a Christian, we're supposed to remain unspotted from the world and untarnished, which means you look at yourself and like, is the world on me? Is there no difference? There's no distinction? And this is what's challenging about Christianity, because yes, it's full of love and grace and mercy, but it's also warfare.

It's also warfare. We have to put feet to our heart and go out to minister to those who need it. To visit those in their times of trouble and to remain unspotted, untarnished from the world.

This is exactly why I often say, the world is either influencing you, or you're influencing the world. The world is either infecting, like you get infected with a disease. The world is either infecting you, or you are affecting, with an A, you are affecting the world.

One of those other things is happening in your life. And as we are infected by the world, we are tarnished. We are, you look, and you know those people, right? They look just like the world.

So he's saying here, if you want to know what a true believer is, you're going to put feet to your heart, you're going to visit those in their times of need, you're going to reach out, you're going to be a loving, caring, compassionate person, and in addition to that, you're not going to be resembling the world. So, for example, you go down your past history on Netflix, right? Is it Fifty Shades of Grey? And all these things that look just like the world. You're visiting on Facebook, just like the world.

You're visiting YouTube, just like the world. You're in conversations, everything. Is it just like the world? Then James saying, and you don't do anything, you don't visit anybody, you don't care for anybody, it's constantly this, constantly the mouth is going, there's no maturity, we're not helping others, we're just, we're this.

Then James says, you might want to check your heart. Because pure and real and honest religion is caring for those who need it and also remaining unspotted and untarnished from the world. That's why the tongue is the best gauge of maturity.

Is it not? If you look at mature believers, they are very good at holding their tongue. Sometimes you wonder, aren't you getting mad? Don't you want to say something? Nope. Nope.

Aren't you want to argue? Nope. Mature believers will hold their tongue and they'll redirect the conversation. That's why I'm learning now when people get upset at me sometimes on theological issues, not people necessarily go here, but other places on theological things.

You know, just say, you might be right, we'll know in heaven, but you might be wrong. You just take that away. I'm not going to sit here and argue and debate in the tongue.

And I haven't mastered this area, so don't think Shane is really mature in the tongue area. Because that little sucker, he's this little, right? And he just can set the whole world on fire, James talks about. And you know, we think of the tongue in talking, do you know texting and email is the tongue too? And now voice texting, that's made it worse.

Right? Click this little button and you can just let them have it. You deserve it. You this, you that, I can't believe.

And you just let them have it by the tongue. So if you want to know, this is just your heart inventory, where's your spiritual maturity at tonight? How are you controlling the tongue? One of the best tests of this too are those little three foot people running around you all day. The kids.

And to be teenagers as well, watching that tongue. So he says this in order for us to say, Lord, I need you. God, I need you to help tame this tongue.

Help me take away this anger and this frustration. And he will do that. But this is true religion.

If you can hold your tongue, remain untarnished from the world, and you help those in times of need. And then he switches what we call chapter two. But when James wrote this, he was not writing chapter two.

He was just continuing. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with partiality. Now this one's going to step on some toes.

You ready to step on some toes? If we haven't already. This issue of partiality is difficult. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with partiality.

For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings and fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, you sit here in a good place, and say to the poor man, you stand here or you sit there, and basically just sit in the back. Have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? And we often say, how can this person benefit me? And we treat them accordingly. The key is to see somebody who cannot benefit you at all, at all, financially, spiritually at all, and you treat them the same way that you would treat somebody who you perceive you'll get something from.

That's why we show partiality. Also, we look at skin color. Do we not, many times? There are believers who look at partiality, they'll make judgments based on skin color and how certain things have happened.

Partiality on gender. Women and men, and men can look down on women, women can do, and we make judgments. Or we look down on people because they have a particular struggle in an area.

And this often is very evident in the church. You'll see somebody who's got a very judgmental spirit and they're critical. And they're often chiding the person who can't seem to give up cigarettes or drinking or whatever it is.

And I want to say, yeah, but you can't give up your critical spirit. Do you realize that that judgmental, critical, negative attitude is just as bad? Is the person struggling with something else? And often this person sees their need for God. And Lord, help me, help me, I'm struggling in this.

And this person doesn't even see their need. So we can show partiality, like I've never struggled with that. I've never struggled with that.

How could you? We just can't relate, can we? Like cigarette smoking, I can't relate. I smell it and I run for cover. I don't want to have anything to do with it.

Or other things. Vicodin people get for dental work or injuries and I don't have any desire for that. So we start to, well, how can you get hooked on that? Or how can you get hooked on Oxycontin? Or how can you get hooked on that? Well, you're hooked on caffeine.

We're hooked on coffee, this addictive nature sugar we have. So we start to have this partiality and we look at other people forgetting to look in the mirror. And that's what partiality is.

Or you see two people and one is dressed well and what would happen is, oh, they must be a giver and this other person must be, they're going to be a drain on the church. This person's going to be in constant care, they're probably going to need some money or this person probably will give some money. So we form judgments based on that but God says there's no partiality in a true believer.

A true believer, yes it's difficult, yes it's challenging, but we should not judge people based on appearance, based on dress, based on financial status, different things. And that's one reason that when it comes to giving to the church we want to make sure that, like I wouldn't know or elders sometimes wouldn't know, we don't know what people give because we want to remove that element of having that knowledge. You know, if you've got somebody who gives \$1,000 a month and somebody who gives \$5 a month, there would be the tendency there to make sure that other person's happy and the other one's not.

Not that we do that, I don't think that's a sin that we struggle with whatsoever, but you want to remove those, even the ability to know these things or you want to remove the temptation to know these things. And we have to be careful because partiality is something, do we not, is there people who make judgments on skin color or on women or men or attire or how we dress, our ages. I know sometimes we won't give a 15-year-old the time of day, but a 30-year-old we'll talk to or vice versa.

Somebody can be older and then we think, okay, well they're bothering me but somebody who's 30 isn't. And we draw these partialities. So James is saying, true religion, my brethren, do not hold the Lord, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with partiality.

You have not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts. So that's where we're going to leave off in chapter 2. So I would just encourage you to read chapter 2 this week. And here's the application.

What if we obeyed God in all these areas? There's areas in my life that I have not obeyed God in and I know it. Some can be little struggles. I've opened up before about putting certain things in my body, whether it's caffeine or Coke or it's Pepsi, different things where I know this caffeine turns me into a jerk.

It makes me like irritable and anxious and traffic and I just, you know, I've opened up, I've told you before, I know God's, and that's just me because I know the fruit of the Spirit's not there. Or other areas, forgiveness in an area or going to somebody in an area, taking better care of our health and this gift that God has given us. God is convicting us in certain areas that we're not willing to give up.

So what if we took God at His word, be doers of the word and not hearers only? Be doers. I know there's people with anger problems I've talked to before and they don't do anything for it. They don't do anything for their anger problem at all except stop by the liquor store on their way home.

Like that's going to fix it for about an hour and then what happens after that? It doesn't fix it. It multiplies the problem. And we don't, we have this tendency to be doers, I'm sorry, be hearers and not doers.

So what if, what if we begin to follow God's word, we respond in love, we do what God says, we bridle the tongue and we show no partiality. So that's the practical application. And any teacher has this struggle if they're teaching through the Bible is we don't want to get on this side of all you got to do, you got to do, you got to do, you better do this and better do this and better do this and this side is all God's grace and

the work of the Spirit and mercy, Lord just rest in that, let God change you.

You know, but if that's all you do, then God changes us often through obedience. And through obedience He draws closer to us and they work together. It's almost like somebody I've met many times before and I've helped people, they want to lose weight, say 50 pounds.

Well, having Oprah on and eating donuts with your feet up on your couch saying Lord change me doesn't work, it never works. Now you can pray Lord change me, help me and He will but it's going to take some effort on our part. So that's where God's word obedience meets God's grace and mercy.

He helps us as we begin to submit to His work and the work of the Spirit which we've been talking about on Sundays. So that's really, if you want to change, what I would encourage you to do is you have to admit it and you say Lord I need help in this area. I'm fully willing and ready now God to change this area.

Will you help me? And I'm going to bring it to the light. I'm going to stop excusing it. Yeah, you've had a bad day, so have I. Yeah, you know, I've just had a tough week, so have I. Well, you don't know what they did? No, I don't.

But I know what God's word says. And we have to stop hiding behind all these excuses. And also, just an invitation too, if you don't know God and you've been hearing about Jesus but you don't know Him, you might have relation and not, I'm sorry, you might have religion and not a relationship.

So tonight, the good practical application would be to finally not be hearers of the word but also be doers and repent and say God I need you, I'm repenting, I'm putting my trust in you tonight and I'm not playing these games anymore. And He'll hear that prayer and He'll bring healing and restoration.

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