

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Temptations - Satan's Flaming Arrows

James 1:2-18

¹ Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 16, likens Satan's temptations to flaming arrows. ² It says, **Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

This tells us that exercising your faith against temptations is a daily battle. Our scripture passage in James, chapter 1, verses 2 through 18 should help us with that battle. ³

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ¹ ⁴

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the

¹ James 1:2-4.

Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.²₅

The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wildflower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.³₆

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives

² James 1:5-8.

³ James 1:9-11.

birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.⁴ 7

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.⁵

**So, in the realm of battling temptations, let's ask a couple of questions this scripture can answer for us.
First . . . 8**

⁴ James 1:12-15.

⁵ James 1:16-18.

I. Where Do Temptations Come From? - v13-18

Where do temptations come from? ⁹

Satan produces temptations. ¹⁰

The word **trial** here, temptation, ⁶ signifies a test, a thought designed to produce evil action. ¹¹ Verse 13 says that God doesn't produce that. ⁷ ¹²

Job's trials were given by Satan but limited by God. ⁸

¹³ The Lord's temptations came straight from the devil!

⁹ ¹⁴

When Satan shoots the flaming arrows of temptation at you, he uses your own attitudes as ammunition against you. Notice verse 14, . . . **but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed**. ¹⁵

Evil desire, here, ¹⁰ is the Bible word for lust. ¹⁶

⁶ πειράζω.

⁷ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

⁸ Job 1 & 2.

⁹ Matthew 4:1-11.

Dragged away ¹¹ means to be lured or to be drawn out by beating the bushes. Visualize a movie you've seen where the African aborigines are beating the brush to drive the game toward the big game hunter. That's the visual picture here. ¹⁷

Enticed ¹² means to lure with bait. Why do you risk sticking that wiggly worm on that hook when you're out fishing? You want the fish to bite into the worm, and also the hook. Right? As gross as it looks to you, the fish love it. You are using the worm to lure the fish to the hook so you can grab him. ¹⁸

Verse 15 shows us that when these thoughts persist, they produce bad conduct. ¹⁹ As this sin continues, it produces death. ¹³ ²⁰ Romans, chapter 6, verse 23, nails this home, **For the wages of sin is death.** ²¹

¹⁰ ἐπιθυμία.

¹¹ ἐξέλκω.

¹² δελεάζω.

¹³ James 1:15 - Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Another very important thing to understand is that God doesn't provide temptations. He motivates us to do good by His kindness. ¹⁴ ₂₂

Good certainly isn't provided by Satan. In fact Lord Jesus was accused of doing His miraculous good deeds by the power of Satan. ¹⁵ In Matthew 12 (sighted below) Lord Jesus described the ones having the unpardonable sin as those who are so biased that

¹⁴ Romans 2:4 - . . . do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

¹⁵ Matthew 12:22-32 - Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

they refused to accept the kindness of the Lord even when it was so obvious. Their hearts were too hardened. ²³

In fact, verse 17 says that God is the provider of every good and perfect gift. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ²⁴ God's goal for you, then, is to use His Word to produce **you** as the first fruit of His creatures!

¹⁶ ²⁵

The second question this scripture can answer for us is . . .

¹⁶ James 1:18 - He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

II. How are You to React to Temptation

When It Comes? - v2-12

How are you to react to temptation when it comes? ²⁶

Notice verse 2, Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

You are to **consider it pure joy!** Chew on that for a minute! There are a couple of reasons for this. ²⁷

First verse 3 states it is because the testing of your faith produces perseverance. It's kind of like this. An iron bar is worth about \$2.50. If you make it into a horseshoe it is worth about \$5.00. If you make it into a bunch of needles, it's worth climbs to about \$175.00. If you make it into a knife blade it could be worth \$1625.00. If you make it into watch springs it could bring you up to \$125,000.00! It all depends upon what

you make it into! God is making you into something very valuable! ²⁸

Second verse 4 states it is because when perseverance matures, the result is a complete Christian who lacks nothing in his faith! ²⁹

So, how can temptation be transformed into this blessing? ³⁰

Through your prayer life. See verses 5 through 8, If any of you lacks wisdom, *he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.* That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. ³¹

God gives liberally to those who pray. Notice what happened when Solomon humbly asked the Lord for

wisdom. ³² But effective prayer must be trusting prayer! ³³

Next, verses 9 through 11 state that this is accomplished through being content with where the Lord has you right now! *The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position,* because he will pass away like a wildflower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business. ³⁴

Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil! ¹⁷ ³⁵

John the Baptist told the Roman soldiers to be content with their pay! ¹⁸ ³⁶

¹⁷ Proverbs 15:16.

¹⁸ Luke 3:14 - Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely — *be content with your pay.*"

The Apostle Paul learned to be content in whatever circumstances he was in. ¹⁹ ₃₇

Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 5 tells you and me to **keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have**, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” ³⁸

So, accept your testing with joy, whether through temptation or affliction, with grace and discernment. ³⁹

Then, the third way a temptation can be transformed into a blessing, we find in verse 12, **Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him**. That is the hope that when you endure the testing you will be rewarded.

Diamonds are usually found in the rough. They must be burnished for months with diamond dust before they are fit to be jewels for a crown. Consider your

¹⁹ Philippians 4:11 - I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

**trials and temptations the preparation of your
diamond life to be suitable for your crown! 40**

Each trial makes you a winner!

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