

When Temptation Becomes Sin James 1:13–18

James 1:13–18 (NKJV)

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.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

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.

Introduction

The universal problem that all of mankind has is sin. Everyone has it and everyone does it. There has only been one man on this planet who has never had sin or sinned and that was the God-Man Christ

Jesus. All others, from Adam and Eve to all the current occupants and future occupants of this planet have the sin problem. Every baby that is born, is born with a strong disposition to evil. Left to himself, he will go as far into evil as he can go.

And from the time the first humans sinned in the garden of Eden, men and women have been finding ways to excuse and blame the evil thoughts and actions of their hearts on something other than themselves.. The Blame game is active and well on planet earth.

We are deeply indebted to Psychology for the wonderful job they have done at blame shifting and making humanity not responsible for their evil actions.

In Psychology Today,

Robert M. Sapolsky,
in, “Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst”

_____wrote, regarding evil actions, “ whenever we might be tempted to conclude that we have arrived at a complete explanation and understanding of what makes humans do the things they do: “It’s complicated.” Genes and the environment interact inextricably, all the time.

How a person will behave is strongly influenced by genetic predisposition, past experience (especially early childhood experience), socio-economic and cultural factors, the presence of an intact society with prosocial norms, specific interpersonal dynamics between individuals, and the particularities of the immediate circumstances.

Robert M. Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017). <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/finding-purpose/202106/what-actually-is-evil-and-what-makes-people-carry-out-evil-acts>

With the exception of the genetic predisposition, everything is external. What happened to me. Where I'm from, family, society, relationships, circumstances. But even with the reference to Genes, the point is that I am made that way, so I can't help it. It's my DNA.

This is not knew... For a long time we have been blaming our evil on others or the circumstances and society. But it needs to be noted. That had Man not sinned and fallen. No society would be evil and no one around us would be leading us to evil. There would be nothing made by man to solicit the sinful desires of his heart, because there would be no sin. There would be no hate, no murder, no liquor stores and illegal drugs. No stealing and no coveting. No disobedience to parents and no sexual perversion.

There would be no parental abuse of children and not corruption communication influencing your toddler. The governments would be pure and righteous and justice would reign and the government would never lie.

Society is not the cause of the evil of men. It's the evil of man that causes our society to be corrupt and evil. To many in the social sciences are looking in the wrong place. We are the reason things are so messed up.

The Bible is very clear about why there is sin and evil. There was an event that took place approximately 6006 years ago when a man and woman committed cosmic treason. As a result man's heart was corrupted, and bound up in sin and evil, so much so that by the time we get 6 chapters into the Bible, it says that man's thoughts and imagination were evil continually.

Sin is the source of the corruption of our society and the breakdown of the family and governments. But man's evil heart is the source of all the sin.

And this the point that James wants to make in our text today.

Review.

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.

Lesson

I. The Source of our Temptation

A. Internal

B. External

II. The Sequence of our Temptation

A. Conception

B. Birth

C. Death

I. The Source of our Temptation

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”..... ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

A. Internal

—-by his own desires—-

James waste no time getting to the root of the problem. The Source of all our temptations are not God, the Devil or demons, but our own desires. This is where it all begins. In the fallen human heart. The wellspring of all evil desires. The fountainhead of all that is foul. The eruptions of all that is evil.

The word *epithumias*, rendered “evil desire,” is in itself a neutral term simply denoting strong desires or cravings.

The desires may be either good or bad

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 93). BMH Books.

In the Greek language it is *epithumía*. The English word “lust” is almost always associated with the bodily appetites and lasciviousness, whereas the Greek *epithumía* is rather associated with the desire of the soul, which is the moving force of that which pertains to the body. It is an ardent desire, the

inclination of the soul to enjoy or to acquire something. In its verbal form it means “to set one’s heart upon a thing, to long for, to covet, to desire.”

Zodhiates, S. (1999). [Faith, love, & hope: An exposition of the epistle of James](#) (electronic ed., Jas 1:14). AMG Publishers.

In the New Testament, the word is used in a good sense in Luke 22:15, Philippians 1:23, and 1 Thessalonians 2:17

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 93). BMH Books.

Luke 22:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Then He said to them, “**With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;**

Philippians 1:23 (NKJV)

²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is far better.*

1 Thessalonians 2:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

....but generally it carries an evil connotation. The context must decide the meaning. Desires are necessary for human survival, but human experience shows that man's desires and cravings are predominantly evil. They are evil whenever they are self-centered and contrary to God's will. James's assertion assumes depravity of human nature.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 93). BMH Books.

No Greek word corresponding to “evil” is found in the text, but the NIV rendering is nevertheless justified

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 74). Eerdmans; Apollos.

James uses it with its more typical NT sense: fleshly, illicit desire. The word often carries for us a sexual connotation (and it has this sense in the NT), but it usually has a broader meaning, including any human longing for what God has prohibited. Similar occurrences of the word are found in 1 Pet. 2:11 — “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul” — and 1 John 2:17 — “The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does

the will of God lives forever.” Other Jewish writers used the word in a similar way; cf. Philo, in his tractate on the *Decalogue* (par. 153): “For all the wars of Greeks and barbarians between themselves or against each other ... are sprung from one source, desire, the desire for money or glory or pleasure. These it is that bring disaster to the human race.”

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 74). Eerdmans; Apollos.

It is consistent with Jesus’ teaching in Mark 7:21–23 that the things “from within, out of men’s hearts” defile the person

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 93). BMH Books.

Mark 7:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

Genesis 6:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Genesis 8:21 (NKJV)

²¹ And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

²³ Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

also, emphasizes the personal, individual, responsibility of the source too.

14 But each one

The singular “each one” (*hekastos*) stresses that the universal experience of being tempted is an individual matter, assailing each individually. None is exempt from the experience. The present tense “is

tempted” points to the repeated experience of being tempted as characteristic of each human being.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 92–93). BMH Books.

Here James stresses the individuality of the human race. You cannot blame God for your desire to sin; you cannot blame the circumstances of life; you cannot even blame Satan or those who assist him in this business of temptation. Each one is characterized by what we call the idiosyncrasy of his own nature. Just as there is a physical idiosyncrasy, there is also a moral one. There may be two Christians looking at the same tempting thing. One falls for it and the other resists it

Zodhiates, S. (1999). [Faith, love, & hope: An exposition of the epistle of James](#) (electronic ed., Jas 1:14). AMG Publishers.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires

“By” (*hupo*) implies direct agency and serves to personify “his own evil desire” as the active agent of temptation. “His own” underlines the individual peculiarity of the temptation in the case of each **person**. Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 93). BMH Books.

This “by” (hupo) is not the same as the “by” (apo) in verse 13.

v. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted **by** God”

“apo” — more of a general, indirect sense. Not making me sin, our causing me to be tempted, but in a more general sense of creating or ordaining the circumstances or trials of life in which I find myself tempted.

‘hupo’ is a more direct, and specific sense, the direct agency.

God is not the direct or indirect cause of your temptations, rather your desires are the direct source.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires

ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας

idios: one's own, distinct

Original Word: ἴδιος, α, ν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: idios

Phonetic Spelling: (id'-ee-os)

2398 ἴδιος (a primitive word, NAS dictionary) – properly, uniquely one's own, peculiar to the individual. **2398** / ἴδιος ("uniquely one's own") is "stronger than the simple

possessive pronoun ('own'). This emphatic adjective means 'private, personal' " (WS, 222).

Each person is responsible for his own unique evil desires. And everyone does not have the same set of desires. What may be a temptation to one may not be a temptation to another. What may be a strong inclination in one may not be in the other. Martin Luther referred to this as our "bent" and everyone is bent different. We all have evil desires, but those can be different from one person to the other.

One who has a desire to be drunk or High may be tempted with alcohol or drugs. But someone else would not have a desire for drunkenness and would have no temptation with those things

Others may have a desire for nice and expensive things and can be tempted to covet, whereas another person may be content with what they have and not be tempted with expensive items.

Some temptations are uniquely gender specific. Men will have temptations because a unique evil bent in their heart toward pornography that a woman may not. Women may be tempted with adorning the outside beauty with jewelry and dress to the exclusion of inner godliness whereas a man may have no desire for it.

Temptations are unique to every person, because to the desires one has.

What James wants us to know and recognize is that the source of our Temptation is not God, it is not the Devil, it is not the Trials, or the circumstances of life. It is the unique Internal set of evil desires that occupy every human heart.

I would add one more thought to this. The more you feed the desire, the lust, the stronger it gets. The more you satisfy the lust, the more it takes to satisfy it again.

Those who become drunks and drug addicts started with one drink and one pill..

The rapist did not start with raping. He started with feeding his lust thru illicit thoughts, that led to illicit sex and feeding on small amounts of pornography to more violent porn.

Ted Bundy, known as the “lady killer”, who is on many list the leading rapist and murderer. In his own confession said that it all started with lusting after women in department store catalogs.

Ted Bundy **murdered at least 30 people**, and took victims in Ohio, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Utah, Oregon, Florida and possibly California. Ted had a thing for young, brunette coeds, and would often pretend to be

injured in order to lure these unlucky women into his now-infamous VW Beetle. Once inside, Bundy would attack them with a crowbar, rape them, then strangle them to death in the woods.

As he progressed, Bundy began to take more risks, even going as far as to invade a sorority house and attack four women within a span of 15 minutes.

This is not all James wants us to know about the Source of Temptation.

Not only is the primary root and source from from
Internally

But there is also a **External** component

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

Could translate this verse

But each individual person is continually tempted when, directly by his own unique desires is continually being dragged away and continuing being enticed

The words “drawn away” (ESV -Lured NASB-carried away) and “enticed”

“**drawn away**—-(ESV -Lured NASB-carried away)

ἐξέλκω -to drag away, with connotation of initial reluctance, drag away

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 347). University of Chicago Press.

to be or become enticed, conceived of as a heavy object being drawn out of something with great effort

Brannan, R., ed. (2020). In [Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#). Lexham Press.

ἐξέλκω: (present passive participle **ἐξελκόμενος**); to draw out, (Homer, Pindar, Attic writings); metaphorically, equivalent to to lure forth (A. V. draw away): **ὑπό τῆς ... ἐπιθυμίας**

ἐξελκόμενος, [James 1:14](#), where the metaphor is taken from hunting and fishing: as game is lured from its covert, so man by lust is allured from the safety of self-restraint to sin. (The language of hunting seems to be transferred here (so elsewhere, cf. Wetstein (1752) at the passage)

helkýō – properly, induce (draw in), focusing on the attraction-power involved with the drawing.

The first term, “is dragged away” (*exelkomenos*), is a compound form of the preposition *ek*, “out,” and the verb *helkō*, “to draw, drag.” It expresses the intensity of lust forcefully drawing the tempted individual toward the object of desire and pictures the movement of the tempted one toward it.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 94). BMH Books.

enticed**deleazó: to lure****Original Word:** δελεάζω**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** deleazó**Phonetic Spelling:** (del-eh-ad'-zo)

1185 deleázō (from delear, "bait") – properly, to bait a hook or set a trap with bait; (figuratively) entice a victim into a moral trap, luring them in through their own selfish impulses.

(*deleazomenos*), which occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Peter 2:14, 18, conveys the picture of catching with bait (*delear*). It depicts the juicy worm being dangled in front of the fish. His inner craving to appropriate it for himself prompts him to bite, but he is deceived and caught. Instead of enjoying the anticipated pleasure, he is caught on the hook concealed within. It is an apt picture of the deceptiveness of lust. When a person is confronted with alluring temptation, he sees only the attractiveness of the desired object.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 94). BMH Books.

The picture of Satan casting the enticements of sin before us and then hooking us and dragging us away when we “bite” is both vivid and terrifying

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 75). Eerdmans; Apollos.

You have often heard the expression, “He is hooked.” Well, here it is. You are in danger of being hooked when before you there appears something which promises to satisfy your inner yearning

Zodhiates, S. (1999). [*Faith, love, & hope: An exposition of the epistle of James*](#) (electronic ed., Jas 1:14). AMG Publishers.

Men and women can entice each other, the world and the materialism of the world can entice. The devil and demons can entice and with it drag you into sin.

The world, the flesh and the devil...

I. The Source of our Temptation

- A. Internal
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II. The Sequence of our Temptation

- A. Conception
- B. Birth
- C. Death

James now changes the metaphor from hunting and fishing to child birth, life and death.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Aided by the fact that the underlying Greek word is feminine, James pictures *desire as conceiving and giving birth to sin*. And sin, once in existence, if it becomes *full-grown*, produces death

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 75). Eerdmans; Apollos.

II. The Sequence of our Temptation

A. Conception

15 Then, when desire has conceived,

“Then” points to a sequence. The inner craving demands action. It must either be acted on or be resolutely repulsed. When indulged, a chain of results surely follows.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 94). BMH Books.

Desire, (the— definite article). The specific desire that is unique to the individual

Conceived” (*sullabousa*) is a compound form, derived from the preposition *sun*, “together,” and the verb *lambanō*, “to take.” Hence it has the basic meaning of clasping. In a sexual sense, it denotes the woman’s resultant conception. In James’s figurative use here, it may well suggest the man’s will bending toward the evil suggestion and seizing it.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 94). BMH Books.

If a person should welcome rather than resist that temptation, desire conceives; and if not turned away immediately, it produces sin. James implies that temptation, in and of itself

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 76). Eerdmans; Apollos.

It will now move from an evil desire, or want to a plan.

It is no longer just a thought, it is a design, of how can I get it. Conception has taken place and the embryo has started to form. The DNA is now complete and will fully manifest itself in time. There is now no stopping it now.

This is an important thought and a very urgent reminders.

The battle begins and ends, succeeds or fails at the point of the evil desire. The thought that arises from within.

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NKJV)

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

It all Starts Here.

There are good desires and evil desires

natural desires and unnatural evil desires

It is natural to desire a woman to be married to and be in a relationship the rest of your life

It is unnatural and evil to desire another women who is not your wife.

It is good and natural to desire to have good job to provide for your family

It is an evil desire to become consumed with materialism and let things become your God.

That leads me to one of the raging debates today that is a slippery slope the evangelical that is affecting the sanctification and in some cases the salvation of some.

Currently there is a view in the evangelical circles, that is perfectly OK to have “same sex attraction” just so long as you don’t act on it.

Very prominent men and women in the evangelical community are teaching this. One well known apologist is Frank Turek. He says there is a difference between attraction and action. You can be attracted to the same sex but as long as you do not act on the attraction there is no sin.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ConversationsThatMatterpodcast> Frank Turek and Christopher Yuan on Homosexual Desires and Christianity 2,965 views Sep 16, 2022

an American [apologist](#), author, public speaker, and radio host. He is best known as the founder and president of [Christian apologetics](#) ministry [CrossExamined.org](#). Turek co-authored two books (*Legislating Morality* and *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*) with Christian philosopher [Norman Geisler](#).^{[1][2]} In addition, Turek has authored two of his own books (*Correct, Not Politically Correct* and *Stealing from God*). Turek hosts a call-in talk show called *CrossExamined* on [American Family Radio](#). Turek also hosts a television show, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, which airs on the [NRB Network](#).^[3]

We don’t say this with any other sin or desire that is unnatural or evil

Is it ok to covet as long as you don't steal?

Is it ok to be attracted to stealing as long as you don't act on it.

Is it ok to be attracted to children as long as you don't act on it.

Minor attracted people MAPS

Is it ok to want to kill my baby or be attracted to the thought of an abortion as long as I don't act on it.

The point is that there are some desires and attractions that are contrary to nature, to God and to what is natural and good.

There are desires and attractions that are good but if not kept in check can become sins

I can desire to have a new car that does not always break down, without that being sinful as long as it does not consume men and make me love money and it becomes an idol

You as a young man can be naturally attracted to a woman and desire her to be in a relationship with you and become your wife. But if the desire becomes lust it is wrong.

But for same sex attraction— This is not normal, it is not Moral and it is a perversion of the God intended plan for marriage. To be attracted as a man to a woman is natural and God created it that way. But to be attracted as a man to another man is not natural and is something to be repented of and every instance of the thought of it.

Colossians 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

II. The Sequence of our Temptation

A. Conception

B. Birth

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.

Once it has been yielded too. Allowed access to remain. It has started the chain reaction and now immediately grows into sin. Whether in thought or

deed. You don't have to commit the act physically to have committed sin.

Coveting can lead to stealing but Coveting by itself is a sin

Hatred can lead to murder but hatred by itself is sin

Lust can lead to adultery but Lust by itself is sin.

So evil desire give birth to a child, and the child is SIN

The result is that impregnated lust “gives birth to sin.” McGee tersely remarks, “There cannot be a stillbirth.” Thus lust (*epithumia*, fem. gender) is the mother of sin. “Sin” used without the article is general—an actual sin of one kind or another. Its exact identity is immaterial. Each lust gives birth to its own kind of sin. “Sin” (*hamartia*) is “the most comprehensive term for moral obliquity” in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is “a falling short of the target, missing the mark.” Trench observes that it contemplates sin “as a failing and missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is God.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 95). BMH Books.

II. The Sequence of our Temptation

A. Conception

B. Birth

C. Death

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

James sees the sequence of Temptation becoming sin and leading to death, as a baby that is conceived and then born, and becomes full grown and dies.

And” (*de*) indicates that this further result must be added to complete the picture. “Sin,” literally “the sin,” takes up the story of the particular “sin” just mentioned. That sin, having been born, has its own life and development. Unless its life and growth are

terminated by repentance, sin will have its sure development until it becomes “full grown”

apoteleó: to bring to an end, complete

Original Word: ἀποτελέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: apoteleó

Phonetic Spelling: (ap-ot-el-eh'-o)

Definition: to bring to an end, complete

Usage: I complete, accomplish, form fully, perfect, bring to maturity.

(*apotelestheisa*). As an aorist passive participle, the term suggests the thought of something having been effectively brought to its goal, brought to completion. The rendering “full grown” views the sin as having reached its full maturity. Mayor holds that sin becomes “full grown when it has become a fixed habit determining the character of man.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 95). BMH Books.

brings forth death.

The “death” that sin brings forth is mentioned “in all its undefined terror.” The statement is “intended to cover

every form of disintegration and final collapse to which man is heir.”³²

The primary reference seems to be to spiritual death, but physical death is certainly included and ultimately eternal death also.

The basic meaning of “death” (*thanatos*) is separation. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body; spiritual death is the separation of the spirit of man from God because of sin; eternal death is the separation of the self-conscious personality from God forever. Eternal death is not cessation of existence but rather the loss of that life of fellowship with God that alone is worthy of the name. Death in all its forms is traceable to sin.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 95–96). BMH Books.

Sin can bring all forms of death and can only bring death. No life comes from sin only death. Sin kills and kills completely and unless repented of, kills finally.

Sin kills life, relationships, love, marriages, parent child relations. Sin kills productivity, community, churches. Sin kills natural desires, normal life, and

happiness. Sin is a killer and it starts in the heart with your desire and your attractions.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

"Sin Will Take You Farther"

As a child, I foolishly turned
God away,

Not knowing the heartbreak a sinner must pay,
But God, in His goodness, has let me return,
To share with His children this lesson I learned,

Chorus

Sin will take you farther than you want to go,
Slowly, but wholly, taking control,
Sin will leave you longer than you want to stay,
Sin will cost you far more than you want to pay.

So with pleasure and promises, Sin took
control,
Leaving me dying, with nothing to show,
Gone were my loved ones, and my dearest
friends,
Only the Savior could love me again.

