



12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:12-18)

At this point in our study of James 1, we might be inspired to look back to the 2nd verse of the chapter – *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”* (James 1:2) I believe we could read that line anew by including only the first six words, i.e., *“My brethren, count it all joy!”* I am not suggesting that the other words do not apply, but I am suggesting that the first six words apply to an even greater extent to all of the Christian life than the limiting provisions of the last six words. What is there of the Christian life that could not be called joyful? The only path to joy is by way of that divine and gem-studded stairwell called LOVE. Love brings perfect joy in all circumstances of life. Righteousness, without love, does not exist. Salvation without love, obedience without love, and all attributes of redemption without love, is impossible. Even human love is only an echo and reflection of that divine LOVE that was in the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ – the kind of love that surpasses every other and without hesitation gives its all for the object of its love. What is it that is poured into our cup to the point of running over (*“my cup runneth over”*)?

Whatever blessing God sends has its ultimate origin in His limitless love for us. Being the Author of Love, He writes His commandments upon our hearts with the Life-Blood of our Lord and Savior, if we have believed unto salvation.

So turning now to the beginning verse 12 of today's text, we observe temptation being mentioned a second time but with a different sense and meaning to the first mention in verse 2. In verse 2, the temptation referred to is that which is common to all Christians in the form of general trials of life. The temptation referred to in verse 12 is the solicitation to sin that comes from evil sources. God tempts no man and cannot be tempted because He is Holy; this temptation never comes from sources of good but only evil. **12 "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."** Falling into temptations along the way is a bit different from enduring them with Holy resolve. But enduring and withstanding temptations thrown at us by the devil and his minions brings a great blessing and confidence. It is the love for Christ that enables us to stand against the wiles of the devil: **"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."** (Eph 6:11) All of the armour of God may be comprehended in love. Without love, there is no meaningful service to God or man. (1 Cor 13)

Our faith may be tried by many hard trials, but He never sends temptation before us. The hard trials come when God may remove Himself by some distance from us and observe our manner of action. This is like a mother for the first time allowing her child to catch the school bus for the first time without her being right by his side; however, she is attentive to watch the child from the front door. If the child encounters a great danger by the road, she will immediately rush to his rescue. But the danger was not sent by the mother but from some other source. The child learns self-reliance in that way, and so does the child of God learn to live by strong faith. Job was a man of faith who faced many hard trials. God had a purpose for removing His constant protection from Job. But it was the devil who created the torments. How encouraged we may be when faced with difficult circumstances and then remember the trials of the good man, Job! **13 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."** God is blameless of every sinful thought and will not tempt a man to sin under any circumstances.

I am afraid the devil is given more credit than he deserves in the proliferation of sin. Certainly, he is the author of lies and evil just as God is the Author of Truth and Righteousness; yet, the human frame is capable of sins of its own imagination and making as well. The devil loves to present the temptation, but it is the carnal heart of man that agrees with the devil to do his dirty work. **14 "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."** Temptation comes as a result often as a result of our own created vulnerability. Out of our lust and sinful minds, we go where we should not go, and associate with those wicked people with whom we should not associate. We do so claiming that we can withstand the temptations which we have invited by our careless actions. So we frequent places of sinful activity by the impetus of lust. When we are then confronted by the temptation, we give way to it since our lusts grow in strength as we venture into its estate.

Well do we know from God's Word that the **"wages of sin is death."** (Romans 6:23). No man with the stain of sin on his soul shall be admitted to the Kingdom of God. Every sin must be remitted, and we have that remission of sin made available through the blood of Christ. He has redeemed, justified and sanctified us as His people. **15 "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth**

forth death." The heart conceives lust as a woman conceives a baby. The seed of the child comes from her consort. So is lust conceived in the heart of man, planted there in the Garden at Eden, by that Serpent of the ill-gotten Tree. Once conceived the child of lust will grow to maturity. So the very first inkling of lust must be subdued before it develops in the womb of the heart. If the child of lust is carried to term, the result is sin, and sin brings death.

16 *"Do not err, my beloved brethren."* Do not misconstrue the source of lust and temptation. It is never sent by God and it would be a great mistake to claim it so. God is only the Maker of Goodness. 17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* God is a Great Light to reveal Truth and expose evil. The dark forces of evil cannot tolerate the Light. God has not changed in His plan and operation from Eternity Past to Eternity Future. He is not like the 'fair weather' friend who deserts when the billows roll. He is *"the same yesterday, today, and forever."* (Hebrews 13:8) He is a Friend that will never forsake or leave us. He is a *"Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* (Prov 18:24) A Christian (true follower of Christ) should reflect the same nature of their Lord. They should be constant in morals and faithful in friendship.

18 *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* Our Lord Jesus Christ bought us into the family of God by His willing sacrifice at Calvary. He was the Word Incarnate as well as the Truth in all of its immutable expressions. Each of us in Christ have been made anew and born anew into His kingdom. We have been born from death unto life eternal. Christ was the very first fruit of God in His Resurrection, and He has enabled us to follow in that resurrection life through faith and love of His Person and Word. If you truly KNOW and LOVE Him, you are not among those who are deceived and destined for the abyss.