

Counseling James
God's Reputation
James 1:13-18

Sermon Audio

Title: God's Reputation

Scripture: James 1:13-18; misc.

Key Words: trial, temptation, lusts, desires, deception, heart

Reading-James 1:13-18

Introduction

A. The Book of James is rich in discipleship counseling themes.

1. Ja. 1:2-12 the main themes are trials in general, endurance in a trial, the divine purpose in a trial to **prove faith genuine. (theme throughout the book)**

2. God will give generous wisdom during a trial without a scolding to the non-doubter.

3. The doubter is automatically disqualified.

B. Every trial is a temptation and every temptation a trial.

1. A person in a trial is tempted to sin in many and various ways.

2. A person being tempted (by their own lusts) is involved in further trial as they resist the temptation.

3. Never-ending mental battle

C. Blaming God for temptations

1. "God made me like this."

2. "Why did God let me sin?"

3. "If God made everything then he made evil as well including the temptation to evil."

I. Deception to Blame God (vs 16)

A. Negative and positive assertions regarding God

1. Do not be deceived means something of critical importance.

a. The statement, “do not be deceived...” occurs four times in the NT.

b. Each time it is used as a hinge focusing on what just was said and what is about to be said..

B. Pay Attention! (examples)

1. Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 1 Cor. 6:9, NASB

2. Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” 1 Cor. 15:33, NASB

3. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Gal. 6:7, NASB

C. Main Points regarding God’s Character

1. God, by his very nature, cannot have any part in our temptation

2. God, by his very nature, can only give that which is good and perfect.

II. Negative Assertion-God Does not Tempt (vs13-15)

A. “Let no one say”

1. Prohibitive command that focuses on the individual

a. God, by his very nature, cannot have any part in our temptation

b. When he is tempted”

1) The way this is written shows that the claim God is responsible for the temptation occurs during the temptation itself.

2) By implication the person on the edge of giving into the temptation has started to rationalize.

a) To rationalize: attempt to explain or justify (one's own or another's behavior or attitude) with logical, plausible reasons, even if these are not true or appropriate. synonyms: justify, explain, explain away, account for, defend, vindicate, excuse "he tried to rationalize his behavior"

b) "Rationalization is Christianity's most subtle sin.

-"God understands." (God does not justify sin.)

-"I was only being honest with so-and so." (and unkind)

-"I can't forgive that!" (protecting bitterness)

-"Well I was really stressed out when I yelled at the kids." (excuse)

-"Well, he did it and so will I." (excuse, revenge, justify)

-"But we love each other." (excusing sexual impurity with love)

-"God predestined it to happen anyways." (the attitude of the fatalist)

2. Paul writes of the better way (1 Cor. 10:13)

B. Why James is speaking so strongly.

1. The reason for this strong prohibition is the character of God.

2. God cannot be tempted is found only in this passage and it simply means that God is not capable of being tempted.

3. The idea is related to the transcendence of God meaning that He stands outside of the realm which temptation exists.

a. Transcendence

b. Immanence

4. James is referring to the innate attribute of God's perfection and absolute purity with absolutely no stain of sin.

a. This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 1 Jn. 1:5

b. Isa. 6:1-7

c. Luke 5:1-8

d. Mark 9:1-6

C. "Evil" is not speaking of a specific kind of evil but by which its very quality is evil.

III. The True Source of Temptation (14-15)

A. The focus is on the individual

1. "Tempted" speaks of a repeated event-part of our existence.

a. "enticed by his own lust"

b. Simply put-it's our own fault.

2. "Lusts" speaks of strong desires that are born out of a sinful heart

3. Gone fishing

4. It's death

B. The Role of Satan

1. Satan operates in two primary areas.

a. Slander.

b. Deception

1) Temptation and deception

2) Satan dresses up sin and its consequences to deceive us that's its not so bad or even innocent.

2. Satan is secondary. He can only tempt to you towards that which you already lust after.

IV. The Positive Assertion (17-18)

A. God, by His very nature, can only give that which is good and perfect.

1. Every good thing

a. every good thing...every perfect gift

b. every good thing speaks of method-it is good.

c. every perfect gift emphasizes that God's gifts are perfect.

2. Examples from Scripture

a. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:36, NASB)

b. also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (Eph. 1:11, NASB)

c. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. (Col. 1:16, NASB)

B. The gifts come down from the Father of lights...

1. God is the creator of the heavenly lights and he stands beyond them and their changing. God does not change!

2. Scripture Examples

a. "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Mal. 3:6, NASB)

b. God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Ex. 3:14, NASB)

c. Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. (Psa. 119:89, NASB)

d. The Lord appeared to him from afar, *saying*, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. (Jer. 31:3, NASB)

C. The Word of Truth

1. The terms “brought forth” in 18 are the same terms as in v15.
 - a. Their lusts (like our lusts) had put them on the road to destruction (death) but God, via sovereign grace chose to save them.
 - b. sin brings death; God brings life
 - c. Ephesians 2:1-6
2. James refers to the Jewish Christians as “first fruits.”
 - a. These Jewish readers were among the first to hear the gospel and believe.
 - b. The terms “first fruits” were especially meaningful to the Jews.
 - c. In the OT law the first fruits of the harvest belonged to God. Think a harvest tithe. The first fruits were a pledge of a full harvest to come.

V. Application

- A. Stop Blameshifting
- B. Correct in grace and truth
- C. Don't flirt with evil (or sin)
- D. Don't blame God for your sin.
- E. God saves wretches like you and me.

Questions for Community Groups:

1. What stood out to you and why?
2. In what way is a temptation like a trial and a trial like a temptation?

3. Read and discuss Matt. 15:1-20 and the parallel passage in Mark 7:1-23. Pay special attention to the verses that mention “heart problems.” In what ways do the passages relate to James 1:13-18.