

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Pass the Tests of Life

SERMON REFERENCE: James 1:1-4

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0507

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 1:1-4
 - i) The word “temptations” in this passage means “tests” or “trials.”
- b) We each face tests in life, and we need to learn how to pass those tests.
- c) It is important to remember that the words “testing” and “temptation” are used interchangeably.
- d) Today’s message will help us learn how to pass the tests of life.

2) THE FACT OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:1)

- a) We see in this passage that the people are “scattered.”
 - i) The people have endured persecution.
- b) James is speaking figuratively in this passage when he says, “to the twelve tribes.”
 - i) He is comparing the New Testament saints to the Old Testament saints.
 - ii) He is comparing the church to Israel and Judah.
 - iii) James is speaking to Christians everywhere.
 - (1) This is a letter to Christians, wherever they may be, who suffer trials, temptations and tribulation.
- c) James 1:2
 - i) This Scripture says “when” we fall into temptations, not “if.”
 - ii) One thing we can expect in life is difficulty.
 - (1) All people fall into diverse trials and temptations.
 - (2) Christianity does not make us immune to problems.
- d) Persecution, trials and testing are a part of life.
 - i) They are unavoidable and universal.
 - ii) They are inevitable.

3) THE FORMS OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:2)

- a) The word “divers” (or diverse) means “various kinds.”
 - i) We all face trials and testings, but my trials and testings may not be like yours, and your trials and testings may not be like mine.
- b) Trials and testings are many and varied, but they come in two categories:
 - i) They may simply be a test.
 - (1) 1 Peter 4:12
 - (2) These trials are used as fire is used to test the purity of metal.
 - (3) This kind of testing is sent by God to cause us to stand.
 - ii) Other temptations and trials are sent by the devil.
 - (1) These temptations may not only be a trial or a test, but they may also be a solicitation to do evil or to sin.
 - (2) These temptations are not sent by God.
 - (a) God tempts no one with evil.
 - (i) James 1:13
 - (b) Trials are sent by God to cause us to stand; temptation to sin is sent by the devil to cause us to stumble.

- (i) One is meant for our maturity; the other is meant for our misery.
 - c) James uses the word “temptations” interchangeably.
 - i) It can be used as either a trial to cause us to stand or a temptation from the devil to cause us to sin.
 - ii) While God does not cause both kinds of temptations, He does allow both kinds.
 - (1) God will use both kinds, whether or not it is a testing of our faith or a temptation to sin.
- 4) THE FORCE OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:2)
- a) The phrase “fall into” shows how these temptations come to us.
 - i) “Fall into” in the Greek can be translated to mean “fall into suddenly.”
 - (1) Luke 10:30
 - (a) The same word is used to describe the man who “fell among thieves.”
 - b) Diverse temptations can be serious and can come suddenly and savagely.
 - i) We don’t know when they’re coming.
 - c) We need to be ready at our average moment to meet what the devil may throw at us at his selected moment.
 - i) Again, temptations and trials come to us all, saved and unsaved alike.
 - (1) Job 14:1
- 5) THE FACING OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:3)
- a) When temptation comes, it is like taking a test.
 - i) It is the testing of our faith.
 - ii) We should do our homework now so that when the examination comes, we are prepared and know how to face it.
 - b) It is not God’s will that we have the vacancy of temptation but that we have victory in temptation.
 - c) It is not a sin to be tempted.
 - i) Temptation to sin is not a sin.
 - (1) Hebrews 4:15
 - (a) Jesus felt what we feel.
 - (i) Jesus is the God-man.
 - 1. Jesus was just as much man as though He were not God and just as much God as though He were not man.
 - ii) Jesus faced in His manhood and in His humanity the temptations that we face.
 - (1) He knows what we face.
 - (2) Jesus was tempted as we are tempted, but Jesus never sinned.
 - d) Testings, trials and temptations are not necessarily because of sin.
 - i) Sometimes during trials, we examine ourselves and pick ourselves apart trying to determine what we did wrong.

- (1) It may be that we did absolutely nothing wrong but that God is simply testing our faith.
- (2) If we do not understand this, we may become discouraged.
 - (a) Seeds of doubt and discouragement sprout in the soil of ignorance.
- ii) When we face temptations, we need to do so with a wholesome attitude.
- e) 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - i) The word “but” is used three times in this passage.
 - (1) These three rebuttals answer the following arguments we use when we blame the Lord for why we don’t pass the test:
 - (a) My temptation was unique; no one else ever went through what I’m going through.
 - (i) “But such as is common to man.”
 - (b) The temptation was too strong.
 - (i) “But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”
 - (ii) Nothing comes to us but what first comes through God; God allows it even if the devil sends it.
 - (iii) Psalm 103:14
 - 1. God knows our frame and the load that we can carry, and God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we’re able.
 - (c) There was no way to pass the test.
 - (i) “But will with the temptation also make a way to escape.”
 - (ii) It is God who makes a way.
 - 1. It will not be in our strength.
 - 2. We will fail if we try to do it by ourselves.
 - f) God’s plan is for us to face the temptations of life and to not make excuses; for God is faithful, and He is with us.

6) THE FRUITS OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:3-4)

- a) If God could stop the trial or temptation, then why doesn’t He?
 - i) God is working something in our lives.
- b) Everything that God does and that He allows is for a reason.
 - i) It is for our good and for His glory.
- c) In these verses in James, the Lord mentions the four fruits, or reasons, for our temptations:
 - i) Enjoyment
 - (1) James 1:2
 - (2) We can praise the Lord in our trials, knowing that He is getting ready to send us a blessing.
 - (a) Trials and temptations, rightly used, are a prelude to a big blessing; God will bless us in a wonderful way.
 - ii) Endurance
 - (1) James 1:3

- (a) The Greek word for “patience” in this passage means “to bear up under,” “to endure,” or “to be steadfast.”
 - (i) This word has a much stronger meaning than just being calm in a jittery situation.
- (2) The trying of our faith works steadfastness and endurance.
- (3) The trials and tests of life are what keep us going, trusting and praying; they keep us relying upon God.
- iii) Enlargement
 - (1) James 1:3-4
 - (a) The Greek word for “perfect” in this passage does not mean sinless, but mature.
 - (b) Hebrews 2:10
 - (i) Jesus was always sinless; there was never a time when He wasn’t sinless.
 - (c) The word for “perfect” speaks of growth, enlargement and maturity.
 - (2) We grow when we work under pressure.
 - (3) God does not want us to live weakly and to die feebly, but He wants us to grow and mature until we’re strong.
- iv) Enrichment
 - (1) James 1:3-4
 - (a) God wants to enrich us in everything, wanting nothing.
 - (2) God has a plan; He is not working against us.
 - (3) God wants to enrich us, which is why we can count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations.

7) CONCLUSION

- a) God has a wonderful plan for us.
- b) Trials will not rob us; they will enrich us.
 - i) God desires us to live a life with no inadequacies.
 - ii) God wants to bless us and make us rich.
- c) No matter how big and dark the clouds may look that are following you today, God wants to bless you; and standing in the shadows, you will find Jesus.
- d) Sometimes we tend not to take God at His Word and count it all joy, and we complain.
 - i) We need to remember that temptations are universal, and they come suddenly.
 - ii) Temptations or trials may be sent by God to cause us to stand or sent by Satan to cause us to stumble, but God is over it all.
 - iii) God will always make a way to escape.
- e) You can count it all joy today if you have a personal relationship with the Savior.
- f) Place your trust in Jesus today.

- g) Call upon Jesus. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16