

The Basics of Christianity

Temptation and Sin

James 1:12-15

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James 1:12-15 (NASB95)

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INTRODUCTION:

We are continuing in a new sermon series "The Basics of Christianity". Previously, we have learned about "The Purpose of Life" and "Christ and Creation". This morning we are going to talk about SIN. We will discover what SIN is, according to the Bible, what causes us to sin, and how we can get sin out of our life.

Many people will ask, "How do I know what actions are sinful and what actions are not?"

That is a good question. The answer lies in the Word of God, the Bible. The Bible was written by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We refer to it as the "Inspired Word of God". It is our manual on how to find God in your life and how to serve Him. When you spend time reading God's Word, it becomes very clear that this was not written by mortal man. It stays relevant and true throughout the ages. Many prophecies have been made and hundreds, even thousands of years later, these prophecies are fulfilled. There are some prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled, and you can rest assured they will be completed in God's timing as well.

So, let's look at the Bible to see how it describes sin and how we can identify sin when it presents itself to us.

All Stand and Read Scripture

James 1:12-15 (NASB95)

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Prayer

BODY:

I. What is Sin?

James 1:15 (NASB95)

¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

The original translation means "to miss the mark" of God's holy standard of righteousness.

The truth is, we all sin. The Bible makes this apparent in Scriptures... such as Romans 3:23.

Romans 3:23 (NASB95)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Sin came into the world when the serpent, Satan, tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and they disobeyed God by eating of the Tree of Good and Evil in the 3rd chapter of Genesis.

Genesis 3:1-6 (NASB95)

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" ² The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Satan told Eve, "You surely will not die!"

But Adam and Eve DID die, not physically, but spiritually. They were created righteous after the image of God, but now due to sin they had become unrighteous. Before their sin they did not know good from evil. The scriptures tell us the where there is no law there is no sin so they lived righteously before God. But now they knew that their disobedience was sin and this caused them to become unrighteous. If we are unrighteous we are not of God. So Satan became their master.

Satan continued, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Knowing good from evil sounded like a good thing, but it did not work out so well. Satan is the father of lies and he will use half-truths to lead you away into sin. The essence of the problem stemmed from the human desire to **be like God**. That was Satan's problem. He decided that he wanted to become god. All sin, therefore, has its roots in idolatry—the attempt to put something or someone in the place of the Creator. Most often, that someone is one's own self and Satan was a created angel belonging to God.

As a result of Adam's fall, sin entered the world. Adam, the first man of the human race, caused every man after him to be born into a sinful state or fallen condition. All humans have adopted this sin nature through Adam's original act of disobedience.

Many sins are spelled out plainly in the Bible. For example, the Ten Commandments give us a clear picture of God's laws. They offer basic rules of behavior for spiritual and moral living. Many other verses in the Bible present direct examples of sin...

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB95)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We must trust that what God says is sin is something that we, as Christians, no longer desire to do.

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever had a pet dog that you watched carefully to ensure that it did not run in the street.

From the dog's perspective, he may be thinking, "This master of mine is overbearing. I just want to enjoy running on the asphalt. I have done it many times and there is nothing wrong with it."

BUT, the dog is not aware of the danger of a passing car. **You** know what the consequences might be if it continuously keeps darting into the street. Sooner or later a car will be passing by and run over it.

The same is true with God's directive concerning sin. We may not understand **WHY** certain "rules" are laid out for us. We may not understand the danger of the "**PASSING CAR**" in our sin but God does!

Satan will make sin as desirable, alluring, appealing, tantalizing, or inviting as he can. We must do the very best that we can to avoid committing it. Nothing in this world is worth living eternity separated from God.

1 John 3:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

II. What Causes Us to Sin?

James 1:13-14 (NASB95)

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

We are born with a basic understanding of good and evil. We also read God's Word to understand what He expects from us.

These verses teach us several things about temptation and sin.

First, God does not tempt us to sin, in fact, 1 Cor. 10:13 explains that God provides us with a way out of temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB95)

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

When you are tempted, don't blame God. God does not tempt you. We fall into sin due to our own desires. We must desire God and His will most. God allows us to be tempted in order to refine our faith and to help us grow in our dependence upon Him.

Second, temptation in and of itself is not sin. Jesus was tempted, however, He was without sin. Temptation only becomes sin when we give into the temptation. Temptation leading to sin is a process.

Adam and Eve provide a perfect illustration on how temptation can lead to sin.

ILLUSTRATION:

A. Temptation starts with a harmless thought or desire that entices us to do something that we are not supposed to do.

Genesis 3:1-8 (NASB95)

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

That was the temptation.

B. Next the initial thought is then entertained and explored. We contemplate committing the sin.

6 the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise,

The Christian should weigh this temptation against scripture. Will this action be found righteous before God? Will I be showing love toward man?

C. After entertaining the thought, we commit the act of sin to fulfill our cravings and desires.

she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

After we commit sin, Satan wants us to feel so guilty that we alienate ourselves from God. And when we alienate ourselves from God, it will produce spiritual death--the type of spiritual death James talked about.

Remember verse 15?

James 1:15 (NASB95)

¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Just like Adam and Eve, our sin creates a spiritual death. It separates us from the righteousness of God. Sin kills us. **WE DO SURELY DIE!**

If we will not engage in the spiritual battle to avoid sin, we are told that we will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

If we are going to conquer temptation we must **stop** the temptation from going past the **first stage**. We are all going to have tempting thoughts and desires, however, we must not entertain those thoughts. If we do, then chances are we will commit the sin.

When we are tempted, we need to determine if according to scripture, will this action be **found righteous before God?** God has promised that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our control.

III. How Can We Get Rid of Sin in Our Lives?

The simple answer: **WE** can't! As James says in our text this morning...

James 1:12 (NASB95)

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

We have already established that we are all sinners.

Romans 3:23 (NASB95)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

SO, if sin separates us from God and condemns us to spiritual death, how do we get free from its curse? THERE IS GOOD NEWS! Fortunately, God provided a solution through his Son, Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 (NASB95)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God knew the sinful state of man. We were sinners and there was NOTHING that we could do to free ourselves of our sin. So He sent Jesus to earth in the form of a man to die on the cross as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

1 Peter 2:24 (NASB95)

²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

When Christ died on the cross, He made it possible for us to be redeemed and made righteous again before God.

Definition: Redemption is the act of buying something back, or paying a price to return something to your possession.

In other words, redemption means Jesus Christ, through his sacrificial death, paid the price for our sins. This caused believers to be set free from the slavery of sin and to make us, once again, righteous or sinless before God.

CONCLUSION:

1 John 3:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Remember when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and learned good and evil, Satan became their master? This is your state if you continue to live in sin. Are you living for God? Do you have the attitude of not desiring to sin against God?

Or are you in need of Christ making you righteous before God?

This requires that you "die" to worldly ways, and start a new life in Christ. Paul wrote it out very plainly for us as we are studying it in our Bible Study.

Romans 6:3-7 (NASB95)

³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

Christ's death on the cross will only benefit **you** if you allow Him into your life!

If you have a persistent sin in your life and you already know what God wants you to do about it from your knowledge of God's Word, I encourage you to act on it now. Don't leave thinking I have got to consider it some more. Trust in God's wisdom and righteousness.

If you do not know the how to handle the problem, keep asking, seeking, believing, and trusting in the Lord. God says He will give you the wisdom. This may require that you spend some time in God's Word or that you discuss it with fellow Christians.

Today is your day of opportunity. You may not have this opportunity again. Life is uncertain. There is no guarantee that you will be alive tomorrow. Christ has promised that He is coming again. When He comes or when you die, your window of opportunity will be gone forever. Put your faith in Christ for your salvation and obey His commands.

The Family of God.