

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 43 (October 22-28, 2017)

For the next few weeks, we will explore Scriptures that deal with temptations. All Christians are exposed to them daily. There are no exceptions!

Sunday, October 22 (read Hebrews 4:14-16)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

We are not alone in our struggles against sin. The perfect Son of God has been tempted in every category of sin, just as we have; yet He remains sinless (v. 15). In Tuesday's devotion, we will see that **God** cannot be tempted to sin (James 1:13), so Jesus had to take on a human body so that He could experience temptation. Jesus' death and resurrection opens the door for us to approach the Father in His name "with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Many Christians do not take advantage of this wonderful promise; instead, they think that Jesus will not understand their struggles; however, the printed verse above refutes that thought. Every day, set a time to talk with Him, and then keep the lines of communication open all day long. He wants to hear from you!

Monday, October 23 (read 1 Corinthians 10:11-13)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Not only has **Jesus** experienced every category of temptation (yesterday's devotion), but **everyone** who has ever lived has also experienced them (v. 13). In today's text, we are reminded that the Israelites failed constantly during their exodus from Egypt; therefore, they are an example, not only of the temptations, but also of God's judgment (v. 11). Satan loves to attack you when you feel that you have conquered all trials (v. 12). The good news is that God is stronger than Satan; therefore, His power is stronger than any temptation you will ever have (1 John 4:4). He stands willing and able to assist you anytime you call out to Him for help. Oftentimes, however, you may be enjoying the temptation too much to call out to Him, but when the consequences of that sin become painful and you cry out to Him, He will show you a way of escape (v. 13). You can't excuse your sin by saying, "The devil made me do it."

Tuesday, October 24 (read James 1:12-15)

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire he is dragged away and enticed. (James 1:13-14)

God will sometimes **test** us to see how strong our faith is (Genesis 22:1), but He will never **tempt** us to sin (v. 13). This text presents a spiritual dilemma. We know that Jesus is God (John 1:1-5, 14) who cannot be tempted to sin, but we have learned that Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we have been, yet He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). How do we reconcile those two seemingly opposing passages? Great question! Jesus had to be fully human through the seed of the Virgin Mary so that He could experience temptation, but He remained fully God through the Holy Spirit. That's why the virgin birth is so important! It's the only way by which God could have purchased the debt of sin that we have created. We will continue with this passage in tomorrow's devotion.

Wednesday, October 25 (reread James 1:12-15)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

One of the crowns that God offers to those who love Him and obey His commands (John 14:15-17) is the **crown of life**. Those who overcome trials, tests and temptations will be awarded this crown that we will then lay at the feet of Jesus (Revelation 4:9-11). As we saw in yesterday's devotion, God will never tempt anyone to sin. It is our own evil desires (lusts) that stem from our old sin nature that knocks over the first of three dominoes (lust, sin, death). All sin begins with lust—wanting something that is not ours. When our desire grows, it gives way to sin. That's why the pornography industry takes in billions of dollars each year. The appeal to our sinful nature leads to fulfillment. Without the intervention of Jesus, it would result in death (v. 15). Thank Him today for taking your last strike on what otherwise would have resulted in "Three Strikes to Hell." (My baseball sermon)

Thursday, October 26 (read James 4:4)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

Calvary and the empty tomb defeated Satan, but he is not the only enemy a Christian will face. We have to deal with the **world** and the **flesh** (sin nature) as well as the **devil**. Today's passage reminds us that those who accept the politically correct worldview become enemies of God and the Biblically correct worldview. The former appeals to the sin nature and ridicules those who oppose their agenda. They refer to Bible believers as haters, placing evangelical ministries on the government hate list. You must stand firm against all the attacks on Christianity and on the Bible. God has placed us here to be the salt and light in a tasteless and dark society.

Friday, October 27 (read James 4:4-8)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

The world teaches us to fight for our rights, but the Bible has a totally different perspective. That's why the two worldviews are so diametrically opposed. The sinful human nature within us is jealous and envious of others (v. 5), while the Spirit of God within us leads to humility (v. 6). We will look closely at the sin nature in the coming weeks, but for now, we are told to submit to God and to resist the devil (v. 7). In our own strength, we are helpless, but when we are born again, we are washed in the blood of Jesus, the One who purifies our hearts (v. 8). Even the Apostle Paul states that he puts no confidence in the flesh (sin nature, see Philippians 3:3). How much more should we trust in God and His Word instead of being led astray by the teachings of this world?

Saturday, October 28 (read 1 John 2:15-17)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

This passage is similar to the one we have looked at from James for the past two days. I love today's text, however, because it defines the lusts that are part of the politically correct worldview. The world changes all the rules and laws to accommodate the sin nature while the Bible changes the person to mold him/her into the image of God. The world threatens Bible believers with prison time for what they call "hate speech," but the real haters are those who approve of lifestyles that are not conducive to the kingdom of God. I hope you have chosen to follow God's Word, because only those who do so will be welcomed into eternity (v. 17).