

Scripture: James 1:12-25

Notes: Temptation is deception brought by Satan or by desires of the flesh originating in our minds. All of us struggle with temptations. **From the Keswick victorious life curriculum:** *To the believer in Jesus Christ temptation is not a sin, but a call to battle, and we should view it as just that. In the past we have attempted all kinds of strategies to overcome temptations. We have been told to try harder or call someone when tempted. To be perfectly frank, when I want to sin, the last thing that I am going to do is call someone to talk me out of it. There is a better way. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life.* We have just celebrated the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection means believers live in victory. The same power that allowed Jesus to raise from the dead is available to help us with temptations.

I. Temptation is not a sin in itself. 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. Notice the verse says blessed is the man that endureth temptation. We are never going to be blessed through sin. We can't control our first thought. Many Christians believe they have sinned when they think about doing something evil.

1. Jesus was tempted but did not sin. Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus understood the Devil was trying to deceive Him. If temptation were a sin Jesus would have been guilty of sin. The Devil used the same tactics on Jesus he uses on us; the temptations include the Lust of the flesh (physical appetite), lust of the eyes (personal gain), and the pride of life. (power or glory). **1 John 2:15-16** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. We all know how Jesus answered the tempter; He quoted the Bible. Jesus taught us that we do not have to fall.

2. We cannot avoid temptation.

a. There is no place to go to escape from temptation because the potential for Satanic attack is everywhere and we take our minds with us opening the desires of the flesh. Satan is not omnipresent but he is highly organized. His access to our thoughts is not totally clear but he does know us well enough to trigger sinful desires in our minds. Many people think changing scenery will eliminate temptation. That won't work because you take the same person with you; you.

II. God has a purpose for allowing temptation. (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.

1. God directly tempts no one but God allows temptations. 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: Some folks blame God for creating them with the desire to commit specific sins.

2. Temptation is an opportunity to earn a crown. I know it says blessed is the man that endures temptation. The way to overcome temptation is to walk in the Spirit. We do that by abiding in Christ and overcoming the temptation through Jesus power. The Crown of Life is mentioned twice in the scriptures. The other is **Revelation 2:10** Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. That is often referred to as the Martyrs crown; so are they different. I don't think so. Notice "faithful unto death". That says they love Jesus all their lives. In James 1:12 it is for the person who endures the trial but let's face it. As believers in this world we will have trials and tribulation.

Our natural inclination is to complain or just give up on God. This crown is for the person who loves Jesus at the end. **Job 1:22-23** And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. ²² In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. When we truly love the Lord at the end of the day or at the end of our lives and say blessed is the name of the Lord it means we still love Him. God rewards us with the Crown of Life.

3. God allows temptation to help us conform to the image of Jesus. We may ask why would God allow us to be tempted. **Again from the Keswick curriculum:** *God allows us to face temptation so that we can see the idols of our hearts. Temptation can be overcome when we allow God to change our hearts by casting out the idols.* We conform to the image of Jesus when obstacles which get in the way of our constant contact with him are removed. **Hebrews 12:1-2** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* God's purpose in the trial is to help us identify weights which we have. This can be anything that keeps our minds occupied on things other than Christ. Family, sports, drugs, money, civic groups are just a few examples. Can we have those things in our lives; maybe we can but we can't allow them to come between us and Christ. If we do we will be stuck in a spiritual holding pattern or worse we can begin to conform to the world. The second part of that is God allows us to be tempted so we can identify specific sins we struggle with.

a. We can't escape temptation but we can resist it by saying no. There are some tools that will help.

1. We are to remove and avoid the sin we are drawn to **Romans 6:6;11** *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.....Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Because of Calvary I am free from the bondage of sin. I now have a choice but I must make that choice. I have all the power to resist temptation. **2 Corinthians 3:17** *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* That tells me I have the Holy Spirit as my source of strength and power. But I am better off not getting myself in situations where I might succumb to a sin I struggle with. **Romans 13:14** *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* God's help is needed in making the right choice.

2. Draw and stay close to Jesus. **1 Peter 5:8-9a** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* Be alert because the enemy is relentless. These verses also suggest that we help each other with our temptations. **James 4:7-8a** *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* Submit is a daily surrender of my will; resist is a conscience decision to say no; drawing nigh accomplished through prayer, reading the Bible, Christian music, attending church or any other activity which makes you aware of Jesus presence. It's Jesus presence using the power of the Holy Spirit which gives us victory over temptation.