

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF SIN

James 1:13-16

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of understanding sin – understanding the holiness of God – His moral purity within the Godhead

NT – the Greek word that is usually translated as sin comes from a word that means ‘to miss the mark’

- background - Greco-Roman archery contests
- idea that there is some target that God sets that we miss, that we fall short of

OT – Hebrew words that are translated to words for sin

- ‘transgression’ – idea of drawing a line in the sand that God says we shouldn’t cross and we do cross it
- another word has the idea of a crooked, distorted – a perversion – of the upright perfect, pure will of God

Origin of sin – we understand that God created everything perfectly. Sometime after that Lucifer fell. Then Adam and Eve fell as well.

What James does, in the wisdom of his very practical epistle, his exhortation draws it down to our everyday thinking and makes it applicable to our everyday lives. James lets us know the source of sin we need to be concerned with is

- not Satan (“The Devil made me do it.”)
- not our environment (raised in that neighborhood, exposed to that...)
- not our parents
- not a disease or disorder

James answers this clearly, leaving no room for doubt, that the source of sin we need to be concerned with is our hearts, it is within ourselves.

Read James 1: 13-16

Proposition: 3 Truths about Sin:

1. The **Origin** of Sin
2. The **Consequences** of Sin
3. The **Guard** against Sin

So That: We would have victory over sin – that we would understand the source of sin and the solution to sin.

1st Truth...

I. The Origin of Sin 1:13-14

Point – Where sin doesn't come from (v. 13) and where sin does come from (v. 14).

A. Where Sin Doesn't Come from 1:13

Point – Don't you dare blame God.

- God **tests** for strength.
- God NEVER **tempts** to sin.

Proof – **1:13** – “**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.**”

The Greek word translated here as **tempted** is the same Greek word that we saw back in v. 2 translated as “trials.”

The idea is that this word can be understood two different ways depending upon the context

- neutral sense – ‘testing’ - as in **v.2**
- idea of sinful temptation - as in **v. 13**

What is the difference?

- inner enticement (delight and consent) to do evil

There is a distinction...a VERY BIG distinction between being tested and failing the test by giving in to the sinful desire.

Temptation becomes sin in 3 stages:

1. suggestion of sin
2. beginning seed of delight
3. consent to commit the sin

“by God” – subtle nature of blasphemous charge. Someone may not be bold enough to directly blame God, but indirectly, in a deceptive, roundabout way one might

- hide behind companions
- heredity
- environment
- disease or disorder

Illustration: I’m not a thief, I’m a kleptomaniac

Illustration: I’m not a drunkard, I’m an alcoholic.

- this is a simple effort to escape personal responsibility

Illustration: Adam in Garden of Eden – **Genesis 3:12**

→ blameshifting!

Illustration: Eve in Garden of Eden - **Genesis 3:13**

→ blameshifting!

Illustration: Jimmy Swaggart – Oral Roberts cast all the demons out and they went scurrying up the aisle → besides bizarre bad theology – “the devil made me do it”

→ blameshifting!

James leaves no room for anyone to harbor such an excuse

“Let no one say” – not a single individual, however severe your trial or testing

- every time we assign blame for our sin on anything other than our self, we are blaming God.

<p>Pressure is from God Stress is our sinful response to it.</p>
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James continues to the most fundamental foundation for any theology, for any practice, for any victory, for any growth in life and that is Theology Proper, the very Nature of God.

“for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone”

“for” – *gar* – connects – reason why the command He just gave

- in this case, he gives command 1st, then the reason why
- moves from the imperative → to the indicative

God never tempts to evil because He is incapable of evil

- God is omnipotent, all powerful
- what this means is that God has the ability to do everything that is in perfect harmony and consistency with his perfect, divine nature
- God cannot sin
- God cannot tempt by evil because God is the absolute antithesis to evil

Numbers 23:19 – “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

- God is completely unstained and unstainable by evil

James uses the right theology of the right understanding of God so that we will have a right thinking which leads to right behavior.

“the stainless purity of His character lies our security. If saints give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness, struggling men may take courage also, since God’s purity is not against us, but for us in our conflict with evil.” – Carpenter

God tests you with a desire that you succeed, that you grow, that you obey His command in **1:2**

God **tests** for strength.
God **NEVER tempts** to sin.

James moves from emphatic denial to the emphatic affirmation

Source IS NOT God!

Source IS Man!

- not Satan
- not sickness
- not circumstance

B. Where Sin Does Come from 1:14

Point – We, and we alone, are to blame for our sin. Period.

Proof – **1:14** – “**But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.**”

“**carried away**” – *hapax* – lured away – where the metaphor is taken from hunting and fishing.

- a violent sense of dragging away

“**entice**” – *to bait, catch by a bait*: Xenophon

Carried away and enticed – both passive – we become helpless to our lust when it is

- unrestrained
- not dealing with it
- ➔ the fish isn't really doing anything, he is merely being carried away

Illustration: My friend, an Italian from South Philadelphia, was showing me his fish bait. He was describing how he would buy this certain bait, let it ferment and rot for 3-5 years, and then use it successfully to fish because the fish loved the “stinky bait”. To the fish, this is good stuff!

- the bait is too attractive to resist
- it looks good and smells good, appealing strongly to their senses

Illustration: I used to go trout fishing on the Deschutes River in Oregon. Sometimes, when we would catch a trout, the fish would barely be hooked in the lip. The hook would be easy to remove. Other times, we would have to clean the trout to retrieve the hook because the hook was so deeply imbedded in the gullet. In either case, the result to the fish was the same → CAUGHT! DOA!

In the same way, that is what the enticement of sin can do to us.

Understand this – temptation is never simply a problem with the object desired – the problem is our own appetite. James is describing a completely internalized process.

- our ultimate battle is not with the devil
- our ultimate battle is with our self

“**each one**” → sin is an individual matter → personal responsibility

- something’s wrong... and that “something” is in the heart.

The Problem: In the Heart...

Solomon – **Prov 19:3** – “The foolishness of man subverts his way, And his heart rages against the LORD”

Mark 7:21-23 – “from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,²² deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness.²³ “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

- If we aren’t winning the battle on the inside, then we are losing the war

Lust – typically we think of sexual lust

What James is describing here is:

- unrestrained desire
- “over-desire”
- a controlling, ruling desire in our heart

We are not happy, not content, if we don't get what we want.
Willing to disobey God to get what we want when we want it.

- I will Sin to get it.
- I will Sin to keep it.

→ ALL SIN IS RELATED TO LUST

How do you know if what is in your heart is neutral **desire** or sinful **lust**???

Practical Test:

How do you respond when you don't get what you want?

Desire → if our desire for God is greater than our desire for “something”

Lust → if our desire for “something is our desire for God

- I. When your desire for “something” is greater than your desire for God:

What happens when you **don't get** your desire?

- † You are not content
- † You are willing to disobey God to get your desire

What happens when you **do get** your desire?

- † You serve it rather than God
- † Your desire controls you, rules you → LUST!

- II. When your desire for God is greater than your desire for “something”:

What happens when you **don't get** your desire?

- † You are content
- † You say, “God knows the best for me”

What happens when you **do get** your desire?

- † You acknowledge God as giver
- † You could give it up and honor/glorify God

‡ You are thankful

This is the origin of sin....where it comes from. (1st Truth)

2nd Truth...

II. The Consequences of Sin 1:15

Point – simply put – Death

Proof – **1:15** – “**Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**”

“**lust**” is the mother of “**sin**.” Then in the next stage, “**sin**” is the mother of “**death**.” James moves from fishing illustration to birth illustration – procreation. “**lust**” is like a creature with a reproductive life of its own.

Don’t think of human birth here but to get a better image of the ugliness of sin, think of some parasite.

Illustration: flesh-eating bacteria just sinks in and the parasites reproduce

“**and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death**”

Lust → Sin

Sin → Death

Gen 2:17 – “**for in the day you eat from it, you will surely die.**”

- God couldn’t make a more emphatic statement of the absolute consequence of sin

“**accomplished**” – when the sin is full-grown, when it is mature, it becomes a fixed habit that determines one’s character

Illustration: The consuming, self-destructive nature of sin is like the technique used by Eskimos to kill wolves. First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze.

Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed in a block of frozen blood.

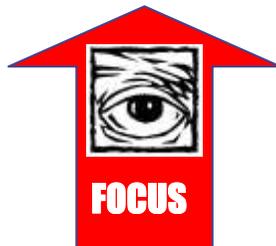
Next the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the blade on his own tongue, nor does he realize that his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his own blood. He just craves more and more until he drops dead in the snow.

In the same way, when we allow ourselves to entertain that bait, that enticing sin, even if it just hooks us a little, we are carried away and caught up in the fever, leading to the point of even death itself!

So, what is the answer??

Application: Focus → When your focus is shifted from REALITY to your EXPECTATIONS (LUSTS)

EXPECTATIONS (LUSTS)



REALITY

Malcolm Muggeridge, English journalist and author, soldier and spy during World War II – *“History will see advertising as one of the real evil things of our time. It is stimulating people constantly to want things, want this, want that.”*

Expectations:

- ✠ “I expect my wife to...”
- ✠ “I expect my husband to...”
- ✠ “I really expect my job to be different than this.”
- ✠ “I expect _____”

The result of a Focus on the difference between Reality and Expectations is the **fruit of unmet expectations**:

- frustration
- anger
- bitterness
- depression
- discontentment
- discouragement

God doesn't leave us there....

The origin of sin....the consequences of sin....

3rd Truth...

III. The Guard against Sin 1:16

Point – we are moving from the source of sin to the solution to sin

Proof – **1:16** – “**Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**”

“**my beloved brethren**” – 1st of 3 occurrences (**1:19; 2:5**)

→ James' pastoral affection is a step up from “my brethren” in **1:2**

“**deceived**” – to be led astray, to cause to wander

- ‘to twist people’s thoughts,’
- ‘to cause what is false to seem like what is true,’
- ‘to make a lie appear true,’
- ‘to cover the eyes with lies.’

God uses it to describes evil men – 2 Tim 3:13 – “evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

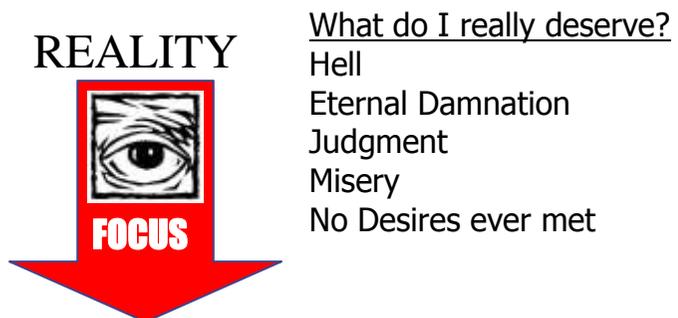
God uses it to describe our life before conversion when Paul writes to Titus: Tit 3:3 – “we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”

- James is saying don’t behave like pagans – deceiving and being deceived
- don’t think like that
- don’t act like that
- don’t speak like that
- that is what you were like before you were saved

Application: At what point do we deal with sin? Do we really expect the wolf to stop licking the blade in the middle of it’s feverish gorging? No!

Not at the point of behavior--for that’s too late--but at the point of desire.

Once the lust captures your will, birth is inevitable. If you expose yourself to the baited hook, you may find yourself getting hooked unless you take immediate action.



WHAT I REALLY DESERVE

(James 1:15; Romans 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 1)

There is great reward associated with a focus on the difference between what we really deserve and our Reality in Christ!

- gratitude!!!
- thanksgiving
- contentment
- satisfaction

CONCLUSION

You must guard your mind, emotions, and wills. An unprotected, uncontrolled, and unyielded mind is going to be filled with evil desires that will result in evil deeds. So you must control how you respond to the tempting bait you encounter.

The solution to, the victory over sin:

- right expectations → none!
- guarded desires
- guarded mind ...

Stop blaming other people, circumstances, or Satan for your temptations and sins. Above all, do not blame God. Realize that your enemy—your lusts, your weaknesses, your rationalizations, and your sins—are within and have to be dealt with from within.

8 Ways to Have Victory over Sin

1. Focus on Christ
 - sanctify Christ first in your hearts
2. Pray without ceasing
 - specific, dedicated times to pray daily
 - **1 Thess 5:17**
3. Renew the mind
 - immerse yourself in scripture
 - treasure His word in your heart
 - **Ps 119:9,11**
4. Embrace God's discipline
 - recognize that God is a loving Father
5. Believe God's promises

- **Hebrews 2:14-15**
- 6. Practice self-control
 - discipline yourself to the purpose of godliness
- 7. Abstain from sin
 - stop it...period.
 - **Eph 4:28**
- 8. Make no provision for sin
 - cut it off at the pass – at the early stage

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