

Sermon or Lesson: James 1:13 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: God's Role In Our Exposure To Temptations

INTRO: In the content of James chapter 1 so far, the topic and discussion has focused on being tested. An inherent component of being tested is the presence of temptations. Temptations come every day in life, in a variety of different ways. Have you ever stopped to question or determine what role God plays in the generation and promotion of temptations? Moreover, have you ever thought that God was tempting you?

Let's see what this passage in James has to say about that.

READ: James 1:13

[Lesson Question: What is being "tempted"?)

SECTION POINT: Being "tempted" involves being in a test in which we are exposed to an opportunity or a choice that has a sinful component.

- - The context here suggests being enticed, or encouraged, or convinced, or seduced, or deceived, and etc. to take an action of evil or sinfulness (anything contrary to God).
 - - Part of the dynamic is not if temptation comes, but "when" it comes.
 - - From experience and observation, there always seems to be at least one temptation to do sin in every test.
 - - It stands to reason then that likewise there always is a corresponding opportunity to do right in every test - this is why it is a "test of our faith" (v.3).
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[Lesson Question: Do you think that God ever tempts us? If so, when and how?]

SECTION POINT: A natural but erroneous conclusion we may draw is that "God is tempting us".

This erroneous thinking can be generated probably by:

- - spiritual immaturity or lack of training in Bible doctrine;
 - - being in desperate, overwhelming, or exhausting situations;
 - - being bombarded by temptations that we are vulnerable to;
 - - being guilty of sin and needing someone else to blame it on.
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[Lesson Question: Why does God not tempt anyone? And if God brings or allows "trials of many kinds" (v.2) to come into our life, then by default is He essentially bringing or allowing temptations as well?]

SECTION POINT: Verse 13 clearly states that God does not tempt anyone, so then various elements within situations can generate temptations.

- - Enticing people to sin would be contrary to and counter-productive to what God promotes, which is to abstain completely from sin. (see 1 Peter 1:16)
 - - Logically, things or beings other than God do the tempting. (see James 1:14-15)
 - - God does allow, or ordain, or even place us in environments or situations in which temptations will come our way; e.g. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Jesus in the desert for 40 days.
 - - But God Himself does not tempt anyone to evil or sin.
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[Lesson Question: Why can God not be tempted by evil?]

SECTION POINT: Furthermore, verse 13 clearly states that God cannot be tempted by evil, so then He and His actions are always absolutely holy.

- - God “is” (Strong’s #2076) “not tempted” nor “temptable” (Strong’s #0551) by evil, and is “incapable of being tempted by evil” (v.13, AMP).

God is not and cannot be tempted by evil because:

- - of His absolute holiness, which is to an absolute extreme, to perfection;
 - - of His power and other divine attributes, such as righteousness, goodness, sovereignty, holiness, and etc. that are also to an absolute extreme, to perfection;
 - - He is incorruptible - His nature and character are steadfast and unchanging. (v.17; cf. Psalm 111:7-8)
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BIG IDEA: God never promotes or tempts people to sin. Instead, God always promotes or encourages people to holiness and righteousness.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Your taking the attitude that God is tempting you does not foster your spiritual growth.
 - - God wants to teach you important life lessons and build your character when you are facing temptations, just like He does when you are going through life trials. (vv.3-4)
 - - When you encounter temptations, are you choosing holiness and righteousness so that you will learn life lessons and build spiritual character, as God intends?
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[Additional Lesson Questions (optional, if time allows):

- - What kind of outcomes would we expect if, while facing temptation, we take the attitude that God is tempting us?
- - What spiritual life lessons have you learned because of your having encountered temptations?

- - What long-term character qualities has God built in you because of your having encountered temptations?

- - An intriguing related theological conundrum to ponder: If God is “incapable of being tempted by evil” (v.13, *AMP*) but Jesus, who is God in the flesh, was tempted by the devil for 40 days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11), then was Jesus authentically being tempted and was He somehow capable of actually giving into those temptations (see Hebrews 4:14-15)? Or was it perhaps all some kind of enactment of formality because in reality He is not capable of sinning or of even being tempted? (Note: You can fry a few brain cells thinking about this theological conundrum!)]

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