

One of the challenges of living the Christian life is dealing with temptation. This is especially true for new Christians who find it frustrating to know that their sins have been forgiven...only to immediately find themselves bombarded by temptation to continue in their past sins.

James 1:16: "Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "deceived" or in the Greek, "planasthe" meaning "mislead".
- **Literal Interpretation:** So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. In our text, we find guidance for dealing with temptation:

I. THE PROMISE (v. 12)

- A. **THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION WILL BE "BLESSED"...**
The Greek word for "blessed" is "**makarios**" which means "happy, blessed"
- B. **FOR AFTER HE HAS BEEN "PROVED" HE WILL RECEIVE "THE CROWN OF LIFE"...**
The promise is that of "eternal life" given by Him Who cannot lie (**Titus 1:2**) to "demonstrate" (prove) their love for God by their endurance of the temptation

II. THE CAUTION (vv. 13, 16-18)

- A. **LET NO ONE SAY THEY ARE TEMPTED BY GOD! (v. 13)**
God cannot be blamed for temptation for He is HOLY, therefore He cannot be tempted by evil nor can tempt anyone with evil.
- B. **SO DON'T BE DECEIVED INTO SUCH THINKING (vv. 16-18)**
There is no blame shifting temptation upon God who created us as a 'first fruits' (the "cream of the crop") of all His creatures.

III. THE UNDERSTANDING (14-15)

- A. **HOW SIN DEVELOPS...**
The **first stage** is TEMPTATION (**v. 14**) which involves:
 - LUST - a strong desire for something
 - ENTICEMENT - an opportunity and encouragement to satisfy the desirePut into a mathematical formula: **Temptation = Desire + Opportunity**
The **second stage** in the development of sin is SIN ITSELF (**v. 15**)
 - Temptation leads to sin only when you yield and ACT upon it
 - Sin therefore requires the added step of ACTIONPutting it again in mathematical terms: **Sin = Desire + Opportunity + Action**
The **final stage** is the consequence of unforgiven sin: DEATH (**v. 15**)
 - This refers to separation from God, which is the "wages of sin" – **Romans 6:23**
 - Ultimately such "death" involves eternal punishment – **Revelation 21:8**

Equation: **Desire + Opportunity + Action + No Forgiveness = Punishment!**

B. HOW TO OVERCOME SIN...

1. CHANGE OUR "DESIRES"

- Part of Christian growth is to change our desires – **Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:24**

2. TURN TO THE WORD

- Notice that the WORD OF GOD has always been instrumental in helping people overcome sin – **Ps. 119:11; Mt. 4:3-19**
- As we read of God's love, longsuffering and mercy, we desire to serve Him – **Psalms 116:12-14**
- As we read of sin and its damnable consequences, we come to hate it! – **Ps. 119:104**

3. LIMIT OUR "OPPORTUNITIES"

Remember, we are tempted only when there is BOTH desire and opportunity, so while we work on changing our desires, we should limit the opportunities to fulfill wrongful desires (**Psalms 101:3-4; Job 31:1**)

4. EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL

Remember, it becomes sin when we yield to ACTION in fulfilling our sinful desires. If we can control ourselves so as to not yield, then we can overcome sin!

- Self-control is an aspect of the "fruit of the Spirit" – **Ga 5:22-23**
- The Spirit is God's instrumental agent by which He imparts strength to us – **Ephesians 3:16**
- It is certainly proper to pray for it, as Paul did on behalf of the Ephesians
- But equally important, to act upon it, trusting that you are not alone as you do God's will – **Philippians 2:12-13**

5. OBTAIN "FORGIVENESS"

Remember that sin is victorious when it results in punishment, but if we obtain forgiveness through the blood of Christ, we can avoid that punishment and thereby still overcome sin! – **1 John 2:1-2**

- Yes, Christ is truly the "propitiation" for our sins!
 - By His blood, we were forgiven of past sins – **1 John 1:7**
 - By His blood, we can be forgiven of present sins when we REPENT, PRAY, and CONFESS our sins to God – **1 John 1:9**

Review

- God helps us to "control our desires" by providing His WORD to renew our minds
- God helps us to "limit the opportunities" through His PROVIDENCE as we pray
- God helps us to "exercise self-control" over our actions through His SPIRIT strengthening the inner man
- God helps us to "obtain forgiveness" through THE BLOOD OF HIS SON as we repent and pray

➤ **Conclusion:** Will I confess and accept God's forgiveness and look to Him as my ever-present help?