



**Sermon Series: Dealing with Temptation**

**To be used with Session 1: The Source of Temptation**

**Sermon Title Possibilities: The Evaluation of Temptation**

**Scripture: James 1:13-18**

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study “Dealing with Temptation” this sermon teaches us how to identify and overcome temptation when it comes. We learn where it comes from, what it produces, and how to properly deal with it. We cannot responsibly address the temptation in our lives until we correctly assess the temptation in our lives.

**Introduction:** The late Dr. David Larry Boyle Sr. shared a story about a little boy who made his widowed father an ashtray. It was a school Christmas gift project. The teacher gave the students clay and told them to mold their parents some gifts for Christmas. Since the little boy’s mother died, his father sat around in the evening smoking a tobacco pipe. So, he thought he would make him an ashtray. He molded it, stuck it in the incubator for several hours, then he painted it and put it back in the incubator. After two days he had a shiny new big blue ashtray. On Christmas, he presented it to his father. But while walking with an arm full of gifts, the heel on his cowboy boot broke and he dropped the paper-wrapped ashtray. When he opened the paper, the ashtray was shattered into pieces. The boy wept as he looked at his broken handmade gift. One of his older sisters put her hand on his shoulder and told him, “Pick up the pieces and do the best you can with what you have.” That’s what some of us need to do when dealing with the things we’ve broken by succumbing to temptation. Let’s pick up the pieces and do the best we can with what we have.

### **1. We Must Abandon Our Excuses (v. 13)**

James made it clear that we should not blame God, nor say like Flip Wilson, “The devil made me do it.” We must abandon the notion that we are victims of our circumstances, or that God wired us with our weaknesses so that we cannot avoid the sins we commit. James declared that God cannot be tempted to sin, and neither does He tempt us to sin. The fact is, God is holy and He has the power and willingness to help us grow in holiness. Moses and Peter declared that the Lord is holy (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:15-17). Peter also teaches us that He has endowed us with the potential to grow in holiness (2 Pet. 1:3-8).

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## **2. We Must Acknowledge Our Enticements (v. 14)**

The text teaches us that we are lured by our own lusts. We are drawn away by our own desires. We are pulled by our own passions. It turns out that my greatest enemy is the one in-a-me—that is, what is inside of me is what drives me towards temptation and away from the things of God. So, it is not our parents; it is our passions. It is not our surroundings; it is our sinful hearts. It is not our infernal foe—the devil; it is our internal foe—the flesh that causes us to be tempted. We are born in sin (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:12) and we are bent toward sin (Rom. 7:18-21). We must come to grips with the fact that the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. Paul taught that the old man always wants to fulfill the desires of his flesh and his mind (Eph. 2:3).

## **3. We Must Avoid Our Erosion (v. 15)**

Our internal lusts give birth to sin and our personal sin brings death. Sin kills our fellowship with God and with other Christians. The more we sin, the farther we move away from God. Sin kills our ability to hear clearly from God. You see, we must walk close enough to God and clean enough before God, in order to hear clearly from God. Sin kills our desire to please the Lord. When we focus on satisfying our flesh, we cannot focus on satisfying our heavenly Father. Beware of sin. Sin promises pleasure, but it brings pain. Sin promises freedom, but it brings bondage. Sin promises satisfaction, but it brings unfulfillment.

## **4. We Must Advance in Our Excellence (vv. 16-18)**

James reminds his readers and us about our relationship, our resources, and our regeneration. We must understand that we are “dearly loved” children of God. He will never tempt us nor cause us to sin. That is the benefit of being in a relationship with Him. We must also understand that the truly good things in life come from Him. Those are the resources we get from our unchanging God. Then finally, we must realize that we have been born again, made anew, and revolutionized on the inside. That is the regeneration we experienced when we heard and believed the gospel.

**Conclusion:** Although we were born in sin, and because of the fall we are bent towards sin, but we do not have to be bound by sin. Jesus said that whoever He sets free shall be free indeed (John 8:31-36). Temptation is common to the human experience, but God will always give His children a way of escaping temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

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*Memphis. He and his wife Dr. Tarra R. Taylor have one son—Reginald D. Taylor II—and two grandchildren Micah and Yara.*