

“Spiritual Maturity”
~Enduring the testing of our faith~
James 1:13-18

The testing of our faith helps us to mature, helps to bring us to spiritual maturity if we are obedient.

*** We need to understand that every test should cause us to grow closer to the Lord.

Spiritual perseverance is cultivated through the testing of our faith. Every one of us will be tested, this is certain, and we are to consider it all joy when we go through trials.

James 1:2-4

It is during the testing of your faith or during the temptations that, that “comfortable brand of Christianity” will fall apart; they will fall to the temptation, they will run from the test instead of enduring it, instead of learning from it, instead of growing closer to the Lord.

Temptation affects all of us, all believers as well as non-believers. We all can fall; be careful to think that “I can’t fall. I’ve overcome that problem.”

1 Corinthians 10:12 – “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”

God tests us to bring out our worth, our best, and Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us. But we cannot credit Satan with every temptation that comes our way. That’s giving him way too much credit.

James 1:12-13

“**Tempted**” ~ is to be enticed; or attempt to entice someone to do something that is wrong.

Mark 14:38

- 1. The temptation carries us away or entices us – Verses 13-14**
- 2. Do not be deceived; it leads us into disobedience – Verses 15-16**
- 3. Overcoming temptations – Verses 17-18**

1. The temptation carries us away or entices us – Verses 13-14:

v. 13

“Let no one say when he is tempted,” ~ Now, we can be tempted by the test or in the test. We can understand it this way as well, tested by the temptation.

When temptation comes a-knocking, when it is enticing us, what no one can say is – **“I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”**

*** God will never give us a test that we cannot pass.

Genesis 3:12-13

It is so easy to justify our actions. But understand that God doesn't want you to fail the test. It is His desire that we mature, and in that maturity, we run, run from sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13

God is Holy ~ His nature is Holy. In His Holiness, is absence of evil, evil cannot reside or exist in Him. This is how He cannot be tempted or tempt anyone. It is impossible.

Temptation is an invitation, an allure to do evil. It is not sin to be tempted. How one responds to that temptation will determine if one sins or not.
~ To fall into sin; is because one voluntarily makes a decision to sin.
~ It is sin to surrender to temptation; it is to give way to that temptation.

v. 14

“carried away and enticed” ~ these words are in terms of hunting. They permit us to understand and see a picture of a hunter or fisherman using bait to allure, to attract their victim.

New Living Translation (NLT):

“¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.”

What we see here is a process in which one falls into sin, or how sin is born in us.

It is during the test, the testing that:

- A. The desire, the lustful desire that is inside of us is stirred up.
- B. The temptation, or the deception is the bait by which one is allured and/or seduced.
- C. Disobedient, by taking the bait, we fail the test, we go against what God said or had for us, so we sin.
- D. Death, disobedience brings us to death, physical death or spiritual death, we are separated from God.

Today there is so much temptation around us. But remember that we cannot fault anyone if we fall prey to it. If we fall, it is our fault because we have given in to the flesh and its desires instead of following what God has said.

2. Do not be deceived; it leads us into disobedience – Verses 15-16:

v. 15

“Then when lust” ~ lust is the bad desires that lead us to sin. Given over to lust is when sin is born. We see that it is no longer an emotion, now one is moved by the will. My will, it is what I want to do.

The mature Christian chooses not to sin and not divide the body of Christ, which is the church. This is choosing to do the right thing; this is being obedient to God. But you have freedom to choose to be obedient or disobedient. My question is: Are you moved or ruled by emotions?

Those that act on their feelings and emotions hurt themselves and many others.

*** It is the mature Christian that lives and walks in obedience to God’s will.

v. 16

Stop playing with temptation! You are going to fall prey to sin!

God’s love for us is so immense that He doesn’t want us to be deceived. He wants us to pass the test and to mature through it.

3. Overcoming temptations – Verses 17-18:

v. 17

“Every good thing given” ~ God only gives that which is good. If it is good, it comes from God. So, if it is not good, it isn't of God.

“and every perfect gift” ~ every perfect gift is of God; **“is from above,”**
~ He knows exactly what we need.

Understand this – it is when we take our eyes off of Him that we begin to look to something else. That something else is the bait that is set before us. Before we know it, we are deceived, seduced because we have taken the bait. We then fall to sin.

v. 18

Romans 8:22-23

1 Peter 1:23 – “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.”

Application:

1. It starts by knowing God personally. It is in believing the Gospel that one can be saved.
2. We need to surrender and submit to God. Recognize that temptation is not from God. It is from His enemy or it simply comes from within us.
3. Be obedient to the Lord and do not be moved by feelings or emotions. But by the truth and the wisdom that God gives us. If you don't have wisdom all you have to do is ask for it.
4. Temptation will always be around us; we cannot get rid of it. But what we can do is keep our eyes fixed on God, the giver of every good and perfect gift.