

Whose Fault Is Our Temptation?

James 1:13-17

59-7

Open your Bible to James chapter 1, we are going to be looking at verses 13 through 18, James 1:13 through 18, if we do not cover all the ground tonight, we'll probably cover the remaining part next Sunday night when we will also be having a praise time and we'll somehow fit it all together for a wonderful evening, should the Lord lead us to carry on a little longer. Look at your Bible as I read to you verses 13 through 18. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he anyone. But everyone is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin and sin when it is complete bringeth forth death. Do not err by beloved brethren, or do not be deceived, every good and every perfect gift is from above and is coming down from the father of lights, with whom is no variation neither shifting shadow. Of his own will begot he us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." As we approach this text, let me have you look at verse 14, it begins with these words, but every man is tempted. All of us can give testimony to the truthfulness of that statement. Everyone is tempted. Temptation is the common experience of every human being. Non-Christian or Christian. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that temptations are common to man. One ancient writer said that even when we are saved, we must remember that our baptism did not drown our flesh. Temptation is common to every man. Every man is tempted. We all then face the battle of temptation and how we deal with it is a mark of the genuineness of our faith or the lack of truth saving faith. Just as how we face trials and respond to them in verses 2-12 was seen as a test of genuine faith so how we deal with temptation is also a test of genuine faith.

It is normal for unredeemed people not to accept the blame for their own sinfulness. When they are tempted and fall into sin, it is typical for them to put the blame somewhere else. Children come into the world refusing to take responsibility for their behavior. The first time you reprimand your little child for something, their initial reaction knee jerk response is to say, I didn't do it. It wasn't my fault, but you don't understand, accepting the full responsibility for weakness and temptation is not something that men do very well. Children shirk the guilt for their own wrong and they grow up to be adults who do pretty much the very same thing. In this passage, James is saying, how you respond to temptation and where you put the blame is another indicator of the genuineness of your saving faith or the lack of it. Now, in a sense the change from verses 12 to 13 is a quick change for James. He had been talking about trials. He had been using the same verb *peirazō* the same noun *peirasmos* meaning trials or tribulations. He had been using that very word to talk about trials that the Lord allows to come into our life to make us strong.

And he has just said that the person who endures those trials is blessed. Those trials, we learned are outward circumstances, which test our faith and produce spiritual growth. But those trials can also become temptations. And rather than being a means to spiritual growth can become a source of solicitation to evil. Every difficult thing that comes into my life either strengthens me because I obey God and stay confident in his care and trusting his power and so I grow or I am tempted to doubt

God, deny his word, disobey, do what is expedient and thus, I have fallen to the solicitation to do evil. The same word that means an enticement to evil is also used to speak of a trial. The difference is how you respond to it. If you respond to a trial with obedience, then you find it a means of spiritual growth. If you respond to a trial with disobedience, it has turned to a temptation and you have fallen prey to it. Every trial has the potential to become a temptation depending on our response. So, James makes this shift from trials, which lead to growth and blessing to temptations, which lead to sin and death. Every circumstance of life that we face then, provides us with a decision. In fact, it requires a decision. Will I preserve? Will I move ahead in faith in God by obedience to his word or will I listen to the voice that suggests the easy way out is disobedience and fall into sin.

Now, if I fall into sin, whose fault is it? Is it God's fault who brings the trials or allows them? Is it the fault of my circumstances? Is it the fault of my being created by God the way I am and I can't help it? Whose fault is it? If God brings the trials, then is he responsible when they become temptations? This issue of who is to blame in temptation for sin is the heart of this passage and it is an essential thing because it really is something as old as sin. Turn in your Bible to Genesis chapter 3. Genesis chapter 3, as we approach verse 11, Adam and Eve have already fallen into sin and they are confronted by God. And God speaks to Adam in verse 9 and says, where are you? And says, I heard your voice in the garden, I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. He never did that before, but he had participated in sin and he was afraid of facing an infinitely holy deity, so he was hiding. And God said to him in verse 11, who told you that you were naked? All of a sudden, you had a self-consciousness that you never had before. Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?

Listen to the man, all he had to say was what? Yes, I did that, but he said, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. Whose fault was it? Well, he suggests the woman, I mean, after all, he went to sleep one night and never had seen a woman in his life and woke up the next morning and was married to one. Didn't even know what a woman was. But the real issue here is he's not blaming Eve. This is the statement, the woman whom, what?

You gave me. Whose fault was it? God's fault. You could have picked any woman you want, why did you pick her? Why did you make a woman who would do that. By the way, Adam is not the only one who has spoken to God in those terms. Notice verse 13, and the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done. And the woman said, I did it. No, she said, the serpent, beguiled me and I did eat. I'm a victim just like my husband, of something you created. I was in this wonderful garden and all of a sudden a snake showed up. I didn't make that snake. I didn't make that snake to talk. The blame is placed on God. And it's been so ever since. God made me, God made me with my sinfulness. God made me with my circumstances. God put me in the situation I'm in in marriage. God gave me my surroundings. God's created the scene. It's not my fault. In Isaiah 63:17 you hear this strange statement. Oh Lord, why hast those made us to err from the ways and hardened our heart from they fear. What a terrible thing to blame God for your sin. But that is the tendency of fallen flesh, to shirk responsibility for our behavior and even go so far as to blame God.

We are all tempted. We will all sin and frequently we will blame God by blaming our circumstances blaming our weakness, blaming our propensities, blaming our surroundings, blaming our friends, blaming our relatives, blaming our family, blaming our economic condition or whatever. And so verse 13, James says, let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted by God. That is an exhortation that forbids anyone ever blaming God.

Robert Burns, the famous Scottish poet wrote, "Thou knowest thou hast formed me with passions wild and strong and listening to their witching voice has often lead me wrong." And Robert Burns has articulated what people have believed throughout the centuries that God made us with wild and strong passions and therefore, what else could he expect but susceptibility to temptation. Even the Jews among the rabbis of ancient times believed this. They called man's evil impulse, *yetzar hara* and they said the *yetzar hara* is man's evil impulse as opposed to good impulse and the Jews reasoned them, some of them that because God had created everything and because he created man, he must also have created *yetzar hara* if he made everything, he must have made that. So, we get rabbinic sayings like this, God said, it repents me that I created the evil tendency in man, for had I not done so, he would not have rebelled against me. I created the evil tendency. I created the law as a means of healing, if you occupy yourself with the law, you will not fall into the power of it. God placed the good tendency on the man's right hand and the evil on his left, so sad the rabbis.

It is a strange, but it is an ancient belief that God is responsible for our temptation and our sin. James absolutely forbids such a thought. In fact, he implies that someone who really knows God has a meekness and a brokenness about his own culpability for sin and wouldn't think of blaming God. As a continual act, although occasionally we may make such illusions. Now, notice again in verse 13, that you have a present passive participle. Let no man say, when he is being tempted, while in the process of fighting the battle, while in the process of being tempted, let no one excuse himself, take himself off the hook, by saying, God is doing this. When you are in the path of continued temptation, and you are nearing the brink of yielding, don't you make the excuse that I am tempted of God. Let no man say that. You could almost put quotes around the phrase, I am tempted of God as he is using it as if it were a quote from a person in that very situation. Now, I want to show you something very interesting in the choice of prepositions in this verse, the little word of in English has only one spelling and one meaning of, but in Greek there are two words that can be translated of. One is *apo* and the other is *upo*. They are very important words. A-p-o and u-p-o. Apo means remote. Remoteness, distance, an indirect relationship. Upo means direct agency, the one who actually is doing it. Here the choice is Apo, remote and what he is saying is, let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. Not that God is there directly tempting me, but that remotely he is the real cause of this problem. That at a distance, God is the one who created me this way, who created my circumstance, put me in this environment, caused all these things to happen, he is really responsible. It is not usual for someone to say, God is actually soliciting me to do evil, but it is common for people to say, it is God who created me in the situation and therefore, he is ultimately responsible for what I do. Most men don't go as far as to see God as the direct tempter, but they do feel God is indirectly to blame. Apo, by permitting the situation and the possibility of failure. So this would say, don't you ever say that God is not only not the near agency of temptation, but he's not even the remote agency of temptation don't ever say that. Don't ever look at yourself as a poor victim of God's providence or God's creation or God's allowance of something to take place. This isn't blaming Satan, this isn't blaming demons or the world or men, but God that James forbids. Proverbs 19:3 says, the foolishness of man perverts his way and his heart frets against the Lord.

Philo said, when the mind has sinned and removed itself far from virtue, it lays the blame on divine causes, he's right. Escaping responsibility for sin is a favorite human pastime and any time you put the blame anywhere else, it maybe that you are ultimately making God responsible who created everything. Some people have even gone so far as to say God is to blame in temptation and if you don't think so, then remember Matthew 6:13 where the disciple's prayer says, lead us not into temptation. I read one writer this week who said, we have to plead with God to lead us not into temptation because if we don't ask him not to do it, he will do it.

James has no place for such foolish fatalism. Like the poor man who blames his poverty when he becomes a thief and steals and thinks himself justified in stealing because he was poor and he blames his circumstances. Like the drunk who goes out and wrecks his car and kills somebody in the process and blames his wife for an unhappy union, an unhappy marriage, or blames his business for driving him to drink or blames pressure and feels excused from any real guilt.

So it is that men blame God for making their inner passions. Men blame God for creating their circumstances. Again, Robert Burns the Scottish poet said that he was and I quote, "By passions driven. But yet the light that led astray was really light from heaven." Again, articulating what men have felt for years and that is that they are really not responsible for the way they are that's just the way they are made. James says this is intolerable, God is not responsible for temptation. You cannot say that and if he is not responsible for temptation, he cannot be responsible either, for what, for sin that results from it.

Now to support that exhortation in verse 13, James gives us five proofs, five proofs, this is just so rich. And I want you to grab this because this is very, very practical. There are five proofs that God is not responsible for temptation and therefore sin. Number one, the nature of evil. The nature of evil. Verse 13 says, let no one say when he is being tempted, I am tempted by God who is the indirect cause, here is why, for God, for God, literally in the Greek text it says, is inexperienced with evil, neither tempts he any man. Now listen to this. This is news. Because the pagan gods and the pagan deities of religious history are always liable to temptation. Do you ever read Greek mythology. Do you ever read about the deities of ancient Asia? Do you ever read about any of the ethnological studies, which show the religions of men? You will find that the deities and the gods of paganism are always liable to temptation to evil and they themselves are frequently seen as sinning and tempting others to sin and the reason is because all the false gods, mark this, are the creation of the minds of fallen men or the minds of fallen demons and having been spun out of fallenness, they manifest the same corruption and the same wickedness from which they come.

Their character is corrupt because their creators are corrupt and no stream can rise higher than its source. But God, it says cannot be tempted with evil, the word is used only here in the New Testament, *apeirastos* it means, he is not experienced in evil. He has no experience of evil. He has no capacity for evil. He has no vulnerability to evil. And by the way the word evil is neuter, plural. Without an article, just a general evil of any kind. The whole realm of evil with all its base on holy immoral nature has absolutely no way that it can penetrate the nature of God. All evil repulses God. It can find no place in his holy character so the nature of evil is infinitely apart from the holiness of God. In Leviticus 19:2 it says, "The Lord is holy." In Leviticus 20:26, the Lord is holy. In Isaiah 6, Holy, holy, holy. 1 Peter 1:16, the Lord is holy. Holiness cannot be penetrated by sin. So the nature of evil then sets us apart from God. He can be solicited with an evil intent. I believe Satan, in Job 1 came before God to try to get God to lose faith in his own ability to maintain righteous character in one of his true saints, namely Job.

I believe Revelation 12:10 says that Satan is always the accuser of the brethren. He goes to God to tempt God to violate his covenant with his people because of their many sins. In Romans 8, it tells us that the implication there is that there is someone there wanting to condemn us wanting to lay a charge to God's elect, but no one can do it because Christ has justified us already before God. But I believe that Satan at any time and place that he has access would want to come against God but God has absolutely no vulnerability because the nature of evil is totally foreign to his nature.

He is impregnable to the onslaught of evil. His holiness is eternally unmixed. In fact, in Habakkuk you remember what it says in verse 13 of chapter 1. Thou art of purer eyes than to even behold evil and cannot look on iniquity. Too pure to behold evil. Too pure to look on iniquity. God is a holy God. The nature of evil then makes it impossible for God to ever be tempted successfully or to ever tempt someone else, for to tempt someone else would indicate that he had a delight in seeing someone else do evil, but he who knows no evil cannot delight in evil.

2 Samuel 24 brings an interesting point, I probably need to allude to it, it says this just so you don't find it and get curious. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he incited David against them to say go number Israel and Judah. Now David committed a sin, the sin of numbering the people, instead of trusting God, he was going to trust in the might of his people. And it says, the anger of the lord was kindled against Israel and he incited David and that seems to say, he himself tempted David to that sin. This is the only place in the Bible where any such thought is introduced, but by God's Holy Spirit, we have a comparative passage in 1 Chronicles 21.

This parallels that passage and what it says is this, and Satan stood up against Israel and enticed David to number Israel. The accurate aspect of that temptation as to who the tempter was is in 1 Chronicles 21:1 and it says Satan did it. The broader picture that Samuel points out is that God allowed it to happen because David had the choice to respond or not to respond to the enticement of Satan. God does not tempt to evil. That is explicitly said here and when you go to 2 Samuel 24 and it appears that he did, you merely go to 1 Chronicles 21, it says Satan did it. What the writer of Samuel is saying is that it was within the allowance of God for the fulfilling of God's judgment if David, in fact, chose to do evil.

Matthew 4 says the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. Again, somebody says, well, didn't God, by the spirit lead him out to temptation? No, he led him out to be tested and since he passed all the tests, none of them were really temptations because they never led to what? To sin. And through those tests, he was proven to be the son of God. The angels came and ministered to him. You say, well what about Matthew 6:13, lead us not into temptation. That again has to do with trials.

And that is the cry of the heart of a saint who is saying, Oh God, as I pray, do not lead me into any trial that is more than I can bear. Lord, lead us not into the kind of trials that would cause us to be tempted because they are more than we can handle. And the lord will answer that prayer, because 1 Corinthians says, there shall no trial, or temptation overtake you but such as is common to man, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted, what? Above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

Lead us not into the power of some trial that is beyond us. That is the prayer of Matthew 6. So the truth of James stands. God tempts no one. He allows temptation to go on and men like David can make a choice but God does not tempt. He allows us to be tested, even as he allowed Christ to be tested, but never more than we are able to bear and always giving the resource for victor if we choose that resource.

And when we cry lead us not into trial or temptation we are simply saying, God, we ask you to do what you've promised to do and never give us more than we can bear. So the nature of evil says that

God cannot be tempted. He can't even experience evil, therefore he can't tempt anybody else. As I said, in order to tempt someone else, he would have to delight himself in temptation and sin which he is incapable of, his delight is only in that which is pure and holy.

So the nature of God, James says, tells us or the nature of evil tells us that God cannot be the source of temptation and sin for evil is contradictory to his nature. Secondly, the nature of man. The nature of man, not only what evil is, but what man is. Look at verse 14. This is so interesting. But every man, is tempted, or literally *hekastos*, every one or each one, but each one, each individual is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. But, is the first word. Here is the fact that is essential, temptation doesn't come from God, but every man, each one of us, no exceptions, all individuals, there is no one outside of this purview, everybody, is tempted that's a present tense, going through the repeated experience of temptation, when he is dragged away and enticed, mark this, underline it, by his own what? Lust. Dragged away or enticed are two interesting words. Both of them are participles. The first one comes from hunting. And it is used of luring an animal into a trap. A trap is baited and the animal is lured into the trap. The verb itself *helkō* (-mai) means to be drawn by an inward power, an inward power. It means to be lead, to be compelled to be impelled, to be lured into a trap. To be baited and caught. It's a hunting term. The second term, enticed is a fishing term. That word means, literally, to capture or catch and its literal use was to catch a fish with bait. To bait a hook and catch. In 2 Peter 2:14 and 18, it is translated to allure or to beguile.

Deleazomenos, it means to entice to catch a fish with bait. The problem is this, every person is tempted when the hook is baited or the trap is baited and we are lured away, compelled away, dragged away, beguiled away by our own what? Lust. These terms, see the one being tempted is being lured, deceptively and then hooked and trapped in sin. Just think about that imagery, the reason that animals are baited and trapped, and fish are baited and trapped is because the bait looks good. It looks attractive. It looks inviting and all they see is the bait. And instead of the anticipated pleasure when they grab the bait, comes the pain of capture and death, so it is with temptation. It dangles out there and it promises a tasty indulgence. It promises a satisfying morsel. It promises greater pleasure, fun, reward, and it lures the suckered victim into its trap and hook into a deadly way. Now, what does that?

What does that? Whose fault is that? What pulls us so strongly to the bait? Is it God? No. Is it Satan? No, Satan baits the hook and the world baits the hook and demons bait the hook and men bait the hook and a lot of folks bait the hook, but what pulls us to the hook. What pulls us to the trap, what is it? Lust, and that's the nature of man. Our fallenness has as a part of its entity, desire for evil. Would you notice that it doesn't say, he's drawn away of lust but of his own lust. Very emphatic. His own, emphasizes that we are not talking about some generic term only that everyone possess commonly with everyone else in just the same way, but each individual, *hekostas*, each individual has his own particular bent of lust, which is really the thing that lures him to the bait. And is it not true that one person's passion is another person's repulsion? Sure it is. I see people who are literally, by their lust, driven into homosexuality. That absolutely repulses me. You can bait that hook all you want in front of me, and you'll see me go the other direction. We all have a certain I wouldn't want to use the word character, but we all have certain characteristics of our lust which make some baited traps and baited hooks more alluring to us than others. And that's why he is individualizing this by saying his own lust. Now this refers to the inclination of the soul to enjoy or acquire something.

The word lust is *epithumia*, the core word is *thumos* the preposition is added to it. It means the desire of the soul. It's the strong passion of the soul. And the problem in our sinning is not God. The problem is not even the devil, the problem is not even demons. The problem is not even the world or

wicked men, listen. The word, wicked men, demons and the devil all surrounded Jesus Christ throughout his entire life and yet, he never sinned because there was never in him any *epithumia* there was no lust. There was no pull. Nothing put on the hook attracted him in any way. You see, the problem was not the tempter without, Flip Wilson notwithstanding, the devil doesn't make you do it. The problem is not the tempter without the problem is the traitor within. That's the problem. Our temptability is because of the nature of man and his own peculiar desires and each person's soul has its own patterns of fleshly desire, as a result of his environment and his upbringing and his personal choices. So, what makes it so stupid when people cut off parts of the body. The issue is that in the nature of man, there is a propensity to desire things that satisfy and if lured to those things outside the will of God, there is the capacity to bite the hook.

By the way, you will notice that it says, when he is drawn away of his own lust, here *hupo* is used. The real enticement is lust. The near and direct agent and responsible cause for sin is lust. Pogo said, we have met the enemy and the enemy is us. That's right, that's profound. The enemy is us. Look at Romans 7 for a moment and let me refresh your mind with a passage that we have studied in the past, Romans 7. Paul will tell you here where the problem lies. Beginning in verse 15. That which I do, I don't understand. He's talking as a believer. What I would do, that I don't do. What I hate, that I do. Does that sound familiar? Sure. If then I do that which I do not, then I consent to the law that it is good. In other words, there are things that I know are right and wrong and I know what they are and I want to do right and I want to not do wrong, so the law is good. The law is giving me the right signals, by all this evil desire, he says in verse 17, is no more I, it's not the real I, it's not that regenerated me, it is sin that dwells where, in me. See, the problem he says, my temptability is related to my indwelling sin, which is related to my flesh, he will say that in verse 18. I know that in me, that is in my flesh. In my flesh, he says, down in verse 23, there is a principle in my members, by bodily parts, warring against the law of my mind and trying to bring me into the captivity of the law of sin. I see myself as a wretched man, verse 25, serving the law of sin with my flesh. Now there is the problem. The problem is that even though we have been redeemed and even though we have received a new nature and even though we are created in Christ Jesus, we still have an enemy within. And it is passion. It is that longing to be satisfied with something which in and of itself maybe a good thing. In fact, most all lust is simply God's good gift twisted and perverted. God, for example, gives us the blessing of sleep and some people lust after it until they become lazy, indolent sluggards. God has given us the benefit of clothing to cover our bodies and keep us warm and for some people it becomes an absolutely consuming lust. Where they are so enamored with the satisfaction they get by having people see what they wear that it literally controls their budget and their life. It is wonderful that God has given us the gift of shelter from the elements, the wonderful reality of privacy and the ability to conduct our affairs in some kind of covert place with those we love, and yet for some people they want to be pampered and cared for in a manner that is far beyond human necessity and becomes a fetish. There is nothing wrong with thirst, God has given us that as a desire, which leads us to do things beneficial to our body, but some people drink themselves into the gutter. There is nothing wrong with food, but some people become gluttonous. There is nothing wrong with our needs supplied, but it's easy to pervert your needs and get way beyond what they really are. Even sex is given by God as a wonderful glorious gift, but when perverted and sought for beyond the will of God becomes the baited hook to trap the person who is driven by lust for those things.

We don't need Satan. We don't need demons. We don't even need the world. All we need is the resident passion of the flesh and it will move out toward the baited hooks. And as I said, usually, the root passion is the perversion of a God given gift something gone awry. So God is not responsible for our being tempted and our sin. The nature of evil tells us that because it has no part in the nature of

God. Secondly, the nature of man tells us where the problem is. It's in us. Lust is the culprit. Now, James takes us to a third thought expanding that second one.

The third proof that God is not the source of sin is the nature of lust. Having identified lust in the nature of man, he now goes on to discuss it in verses 15 and 16 in very, very practical and helpful terms. And this is what I want you to focus on. This is really the heart of the message for our own life. James shifts metaphors away from hunting and fishing to childbirth as he comes to verse 15 and discusses the nature of lust.

Then, he says, when lust has conceived and he sees lust here as a mother conceiving. It will bring forth a child. The child is sin and sin when it comes forth it doesn't do anything, but produce what? Death. This is so very, very helpful. Listen carefully. Most people think of sin as a solitary act or a series of acts or behaviors. God is saying here that sin is not an act, sin is the result of a process. Okay? It is the result of a process. It starts with, and I'll give you some D's so you can write them down and remember them. It starts with desire, *epithumia* or lust. And may I just help you with your little outline, write the word desire and then right opposite, write the word emotion. Desire is related to emotion. It begins with a feeling. It begins with that feeling of wanting to be satisfied. Wanting to acquire something to satisfy you. Something new, something that's been dangled in front of your face, you saw it in the jewelry store, you saw it in the car lot. You saw it in the mall or whatever. Or there's a house and you keep driving by it all the time. And it's strictly emotion. It does something to you. It makes you feel a longing. That's where it all starts. Sin begins with a desire.

Second d is deception. And write alongside the word deception write the word mind. What happens is, you start with the desire in your emotion and then it comes to a deception in your mind because you begin to justify and rationalize the right that you have for that which you desire. Right? This is just the inevitable pattern. Now, that's what we found in verse 14, being drawn away and enticed. The hook is baited, the trap is baited. It deceives the intellect. The intellect looks and says, I have a right to that. That looks good. That will satisfy me. That will meet my need. That will quath my desire.

And so what starts with desire in the emotion moves to deception in the mind and you really believe you have a right to it. You believe that it's there and it's beautiful. You believe it's fulfilling. You believe it will give you what you want. And so you move out and what happens? Lust conceives. Let's call this the third d, design. Now the concept of how you are going to pull the sin off begins to form. This occurs in the will. You have gone from the emotions to the mind, now your will is active and your toying with your mind. What your mind has already concluded, your will is forming into a design.

When lust has conceived. Then the design begins to form. By the way, the word conceived, *sullabousa* literally means to become pregnant. When lust as it were, is seduced by the prostitution of that baited hook, it becomes pregnant. And the design is conceived, if you will, in the womb of a person's soul. Emotion, desire, something satisfying, but wrong. It then moves to the mind and convinces itself that it has every right to it. And having convinced itself of that, it then conceives the sin itself. The sin being conceived. And then we have the fourth d, disobedience. The act occurs. It brings forth sin.

Any child that is born is born of that same process. First, there is a desire between a man and a woman. That desire for a child is then actuated in their mind. They decide to do that, they make up their mind, that they want to do that. They then conceive that child. They then later give birth to that

child. And so it is with sin, it is conceived as a desire initially in the emotion. It is then justified in the mind, it is conceived in the will and brought about in the behavior. That's the sequence. The word it brings forth sin, you see it there? Is *tiktō* it means to give birth and it occurs in the behavior so next to disobedience write behavior, the actual act from the emotion to the mind to the will to the behavior. The emotions lead the mind to rationalize, the rationalize mind leads the will to plan, and now the baby is born and the deed is done and it all began with the desire. Now let me tell you something very practical. At what point then in our lives do we deal with sin? Out here at the level of behavior? No, way back at the level of what? Of desire. It is the person who is able to control their emotional responses that is going to deal effectively with sin. Or the person who, if feeling those emotional responses, has a mind that is sanctified and when it gets from the emotions to the mind it is halted at that point. If it makes it to the will and something is conceived, it will be born. A child conceived is a child born. That child has got to come out. And so, in dealing with sin in our lives, we don't just deal with the end of the line effectively, we've got to go way back to the beginning. If the emotions are allowed to be exposed to the baited hook, you've got problems. And you know, everything in our evil society will work on your emotions. All the dramatic things, all the movies and television and books and music and clothing and all the alluring sights and sounds and things that attract our attention are all designed to first to capture the emotion. There is all a façade that is intended to allure us. Even advertising on television just boggles my mind. I watch how they sell a car and you have no idea about the mechanics of the car, which is nothing more than a piece of machinery. Nothing. Except some goofy kind of dramatics and wild crazy music. And space age things flying all over everywhere. And what does that have to do with the car? Has absolutely nothing to do with the car, but it has everything to do with your what? Your emotions. Your emotions, that's where it all begins. That's where it all begins.

A woman puts on perfume and leaves a trail. That is not for your intellect. We need to guard at the level of emotion and secondly at the level of mind and so the mind is to be brought into captivity to Christ. Isn't that a great truth? Brining everything in the mind, into captivity to Christ. An unprotected, uncontrolled, unyielded mind is going to be filled with evil images, so I have to control my emotions. I have to control my mind because that's where the thing gets started.

So, I want to be sure that my emotions are given over to the things of God. You know what's a wonderful blessing in that regard? Is good Christian music, because I love music and everybody does and music is basically emotional more than cognitive, a lot of it is cognitive, but the bulk of it is emotional, and isn't it wonderful that we have the privilege in these days in these times to get the emotional enjoyment and have the singing soul and the feelings that we get through music that honors God and isn't it wonderful when little kids growing up learn all that good Christian music so that their emotional responses and their joys and their sorrows can be set to music that is basically music glorifying God rather than music of the world?

There are ways that we deal with our emotions. You cannot expose your emotions continually to things, which lure you away from the things of God. You can't do that without paying a dear price, and the mind, it's very simple. You need the mind of Christ. You need a renewed mind. You need a mind that is set on things above and not on things on the earth. You need a mind that is saturated in the word of Christ dwelling in it richly. You need a mind, Paul says in Romans 12:2 that is transformed and not conformed to the world. You need to, can I put it simply? Love the lord your God with all your mind. What's in your mind? What's in your mind? If your mind feeds on the word of God then you are going to stop sin way back. If your emotions are under control of the spirit of God and your feelings have been brought captive to him, you are going to stop sin back where it starts. If you

let your emotions go, and expose them to everything the world is throwing out and you let your mind be an open door for everything to fly in and out and it's not cultivated and plowed deeply with the word of God, then you will conceive sin and you will bring forth a child. And may I add what he does add in verse 15. And when sin is completed, *apokueō* means to cease to be pregnant. When sin does give birth, it's a synonym to *tiktei* the other verb used. It brings forth sin and when sin is brought forth, all it brings is what, is death. When sin is born, it is born a murderer. What a picture. What a picture. The emotion and out of the emotion comes the decision and out of the decision comes the conception of the will and then the behavior and the imagery of the bearing of a child is so beautiful till it comes to the end when the child is born and the child turns out to be a killer.

Sin is a killer. The wages of sin is what? Death. Spiritual death, separating the soul from God. Physical death, separating the soul from the body, eternal death, separating the soul and body from God. And he's not here particularly talking about Christians or non-Christians, he's just saying, all sin ever produces is death. Even for a believer, it can be physical death. As 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 John 5:16 demonstrate, all kinds of death flows out of sin, so the idea that you are bringing some satisfying behavior to life is lie, all you bring is sin and all sin brings is death. And so he says in verse 16, stop being led astray my beloved brethren. Stop being deceived. It's again, that word that we get the word planet from, as if something is wandering off.

Know where the trouble is he's saying, don't be deceived. Stop blaming God and start blaming yourself and start looking within and don't go blindly through life just accepting what is and then blaming God, realize that you have within you an enemy and that enemy is your own fallenness. And your own lust and that enemy must be dealt with. You cannot expose your emotion to everything that lures you. You cannot let your mind become captive to those things. You have to know where the problem is, not be deceived about it. Go back there and deal with it at that level. Stop it at the start. Fill your mind with the things of God so that they can never mate with your feelings and conceive sin in your will. If your emotions are controlled, or if your mind is controlled either one, leaves the other without a mate to conceive sin. The nature of evil, the nature of man and the nature of lust eliminate the fact that God could ever tempt us to sin and then a direct proof the nature of God. Verse 17, look at this. This is so marvelous, the nature of God. Here is the heart of the text, just grab this. No one can blame God for sin because every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. I mean, the only things that come down from him are what? Are good. And perfect. We possess a nature that gives rise to sin. God does not. The nature of God is such that it only produces good. This is a twofold thing, on the negative side, what it's saying is God could never produce sin, on the positive side, get this, what it's saying is God is going to pour out good, good, good, good, good, good, good and more good, why in the world are you going after baited hooks to be satisfied when God is pouring out everything you could ever use for all your satisfaction. The negative side, God could never produce evil. He's good. The positive side, he produces unending and unbounded good that makes a person a fool who would be tempted to be lured away to some baited hook or baited trap when all the goodness of God is available by his grace.

Our flesh is a well of foul water when we think about what it does. And why would we ever drink from that when we can come to the well, to the fountain of life himself. God gives us every good and perfect gift. Would you notice the two everys? Every, every, all inclusive. All inclusive. Every every. Would you notice the two gifts. Gift, gift, one is *dosis*, it means the act of giving. One is *dōrēma* it means the gift given. Every act of giving and every gift given in the act of giving is good and perfect. Good means good, there is no comparative for it. It isn't good, gooder, goodest, it's just good. It's complete. It lacks nothing. It's all sufficient. It's perfect. Comprehensive. Every every good gift, every,

every good gift giving by God is perfect, beneficial. Absolutely complete. No wonder Jesus said in Matthew, ask and it shall be what? Given unto you. Seek and you shall find, oh, what a wonderful passage and if you really do seek something, if you do seek something in your soul that is right and good, and you ask God, don't you think he'll give it to you? If you then being evil, he says, know how to give good gifts to your children. If you fathers who are fallen know how to be good to the children you love, how much more shall your father who is in heaven give good things to them that what? That ask him. And in Luke 11:13, it says, he'll give them his Holy Spirit. How stupid to run off for baited hooks and baited traps, lured off by your lust when God has so much to give. Unending supply. Every, every good and perfect gift is his to give. Some lady saw the sea for the first time in her life and she said to her friend, how wonderful to see something there is enough of. And when you are looking at the blessing of God, you are seeing something there is enough of. Back to verse 17, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and is coming down. It's all from above. It's all flowing down. How foolish to grab the luring bait of sin. How stupid to climb into the trap when every good and perfect gift is coming down like rain out of heaven upon us. Satan tried to tell Eve that God was holding out on her. God isn't letting you have the best, you better grab that satisfaction, you better grab that best. God has kept the best from you. She bought that lie and the child was conceived and born and the child was death.

The child was death. And I remember I was thinking of it just this afternoon, 2 Samuel 12, David's terrible sin with Bathsheba. Listen to what the word of God says, Nathan of course, approaches David. Nathan says to him, verse 7, David, you are the man, you are the sinner, you did it. You are the adulterer, you are the murder, and here is what the lord has to say to you, David, I anointed you king over Israel. I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house, your master's wives into your bosom, I gave you the house of Israel. I gave you the house of Judah. And if that would have been too little, I would have more over given unto you such and such things. David, why would you grab that which is forbidden when I would have given you anything, anything. Every good, every perfect thing is going to be his joy to give to us.

They come down from him, notice he is called the father of lights, that is a great statement. That was an ancient Jewish way of referring to God as creator. The lights they have in mind are the sun, moon and the stars. He is the father of the lights. The celestial bodies. You say, why is he choosing that title. Because, it fits his illustration. He is the father of lights, but with him there is no variation and no shifting shadow. Very graphic. Very graphic. He is the one who created all the stellar bodies. He created all of them, but he's not like them. They vary. They change. They dim. They brighten. They bring light. They cast shadow. There are here in the daytime and gone at night, here at night, gone in the daytime. Their benefit to us comes and goes. God isn't like that. God's brilliant bright light of glory and light of goodness and light of grace is no varying thing. It is not, and he uses the term *parallagē* we get parallax from. And it doesn't pass from one condition to another. It doesn't have shadows. It never goes dark. 1 John 1:5, in him is no what? Darkness at all. Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I change not." There are no days when he stops giving spiritual gifts. There are no days when he stops giving spiritual light. The flow of good things from God never varies, never stops. David, David, I would have given you such and such things. I mean let's put it straight folks, a fat fish takes no bait. You got that? And if you are cashing in on your divine resources what in the world would you want with that baited hook. Fill up on divine gifts, come thou fount of every blessing. Tune my heart to sing thy grace. Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. The streams of mercy never cease, nothing can eclipse God's goodness, nothing can stop his benevolence. Nothing can interrupt the flow of his heavenly light. Don't take the devils bait. Don't conceive and give birth to a deadly child that could spell your own death. God gives all good and only good. Who is responsible for sin? You are. That's right, you are and one final proof and I'll just mention it because I want to go into it in

detail in our next message.

One final proof, the nature of regeneration. Look at this verse 18, we're going to take it into detail next week. "Of his own will, begot he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Get this, God couldn't have tempted us to sin. God doesn't want us to sin because God regenerated us to make us like himself. The nature of regeneration precludes God ever leading us into sin. He gave us new life. Lust begets death, but God begets life. God doesn't tempt us to do evil, he recreates us to do good.

And become his own first fruits, his own beloved possession. Who is to blame in your sin? You better know because you got to deal with it. Augustine, great saint of God had lived with a prostitute before his conversion. After he was wonderfully saved, he was walking down the street and this prostitute saw him. She shouted his name and he kept walking. He saw her, but kept his eyes straightforward and walked. She continued crying after him and ran after him. And finally, she said, Augustine, it is I. To which he replied, I know, but it is no longer I. That's right, he begot us again to be a new creation of his own possession. And we have in us that new creation that allows us to overcome evil if we use the means of grace, the weapons of our warfare, which are not fleshly, prayer, the study of the word of God, a disciplined mind. The strength of spiritual accountability to stop sin at the point where it starts. Well, I took more time than perhaps I should have, but so important. Let's pray.

Father, what a practical, what a basic, basic truth we have learned tonight. Thank you for the victory we see in our own lives that you give us by your spirit that show us that we have a conquerable flesh. Thank you that if we walk in the spirit. We will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Thank you that if we have the mind of Christ, that if our mind is filled with the richness of our word, our behavior is controlled. Oh God, we thank you for the wonderful hopefulness we find in the work of the spirit. We acknowledge our fallness, we acknowledge our temptability, but we also celebrate the victory available in the power of the blessed spirit. To one whose emotions and mind are controlled by that self-same spirit and by the word of God. To that end, we pray for each person here, for Jesus sake, amen.

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