



The Purpose of Temptations
James 1:9-18 // January 27, 2019 // Willowdale Jennersville

Sermon Summary: The line between a trial and a temptation can be thin. We can face a hard thing in life (trial) and we can either grow from that trial *or* we can go a different direction. In James 1:2-8, we learned that we can consider it pure joy when we face trials because they can help create us into the people God created and Jesus saved us to be. We could face that same hard spot and decide to go a different direction. Instead of turning to God we turn *from* Him. We let temptation win and when that happens not only do we not grow stronger, we actually grow further away from God.

The Purpose of Temptations that we see in the text today are as follows. First, temptation causes us to *Forget our Position in Christ*. Second, temptation causes us to *Pass the Blame* onto others and even on God. Lastly, we see that temptation ultimately *Leads us to Death*. For some of us, this might feel pretty familiar. The good news is that this isn't the end of the story.

James tells us in 1:16 that we shouldn't be deceived. Temptation, which leads to sin, is ultimately a deception to get us off track. What do we do in these times? We remember the God who is a good-gift-giving, creator of the universe who does not change. We also remember that this same God sent His Son Jesus to offer us new life through Him. When we are faced with temptation we must remember to turn our eyes to God and remember His goodness and the new birth we have through Jesus. It puts everything else into perspective.

Discussion Guide:

1. Read through James 1:9-18. As you look at verses 9-11, why do you think it is difficult for the humble (poor) believers to take pride in their "high position" and for the rich believers to take pride in their humiliation? How is that backwards from the perception of our world?
2. Look at verse 12. What images come to mind when James mentions the "Crown of Life"? How does someone receive that life? How can temptations cause us to forget that crown?
3. As we pair this series with the "Aim of Disciple" characteristics from a few months ago, why is it important to be Biblically Formed, Prayerfully Submitted, and Morally Discerning when facing temptation? What happens if we remove any one of these things?
4. The first thing temptation does is cause us to Forget our Position in Christ. How would you describe your position in Christ? Why is it so important to hold on to that particular identity when facing temptation?
5. Temptation also causes us to Pass the Blame. What does that do to our relationships around us?
6. Temptation ultimately Leads us to Death. While it may not be an actual physical death, how would you describe this death? Why do you think James calls this a "deception" in 1:16?
7. Focus in on verse 17: What are some of the good gifts you have received from God? Why is it important for us to remember that God is the creator of the universe when we are tempted? What is the significance of the fact that God does not change like the shifting shadows?
8. Why do you think that James starts talking about how good God is rather than giving a how-to list to avoid temptation?