

# Temptations and Trials

## Introduction

### James 1:12

1. An old gospel song says, “Tempted and tried, we’re oft made to wonder why it should be thus all the day long.”
2. We are, indeed, both tempted and tried in life — but these are two different things, and we need to understand the distinction.
3. If we are confused about “temptation,” the KJV can confuse us even more.
  - A. There we are told that “God did tempt Abraham” (Genesis 22:1) and then that “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (James 1:13).
  - B. We are to pray to God to “lead us not into temptation” (Matthew 6:13) and then told that we are to “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” (James 1:2).
4. The apparent contradiction in these passages clears up somewhat when we accurately distinguish between “temptations” and “trials.”
5. Let’s see if we can properly understand what makes a temptation different from a trial, and maintain the right attitude toward both.

## What Is “Temptation”?

### 1. A “temptation” is an enticement or allurements to sin.

**Genesis 3:1-6**

2 Peter 2:18-19 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, **they allure through the lusts of the flesh**, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; **for by whom a person is overcome**, by him also he is brought into bondage.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world--**the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**--is not of the Father but is of the world.

### 2. The devil is the ultimate source of all temptation — he is called “the tempter”

Matthew 4:3 Now when **the tempter** came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

1 Thessalonians 3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means **the tempter** had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

#### A. It is not a sin to be tempted — the sin is in yielding to temptation - Example: the Lord’s temptation

**Matthew 4:1-11**

#### B. However, there are some things God will not “allow”

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

### 3. In most cases, it would do us good to have a keener sense of the reality and danger of temptation in our own lives.

## What Are “Trials”?

1. A “trial” is a difficulty or hardship that tests our faith, whether initiated by God or allowed by Him.
  - A. Notice the following examples:
    - 1) **Genesis 22:1-2**
    - 2) **2 Corinthians 12:7**
    - 3) **Revelation 2:10**
    - 4) **Exodus 16:4**
    - 5) **Judges 2:20-23**
    - 6) **2 Chronicles 32:31**
2. Temptation and trial of faith are, of course, related.
  - A. The two often go hand in hand.
  - B. Satan’s temptations “try” our faith, and the various trials of life “tempt” us to give up and renounce the Lord.
3. But Satan is always the originator of temptation, whereas God sometimes originates trials that challenge us for our good  
**Deuteronomy 8:2-3**

## Our Attitude Toward Temptations

1. **We should not be impatient with the vulnerability of other people to temptations we think we have mastered, or overestimate our own ability to withstand temptation.**

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13**

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, **considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**

2. **We should beware of thinking that our own situation is worse than anyone else's and that others just do not "know what it is like"**

3. **We should assume personal responsibility for the choices we make in the face of temptation — it is not an accurate thing to say that "the devil made me do it"**

**James 1:12-15**

4. **We should not needlessly subject ourselves to temptation — there is a difference between courage and foolhardiness**

Matthew 6:13 And **do not lead us into temptation,** But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- A. **There are many admonitions to "flee".**

**1 Timothy 6:9-11**

- B. **We should always look for the "way of escape" and take it.**

- C. **We should learn to say NO.**

**Titus 2:11-12**

Proverbs 1:10 My son, if sinners entice you, **Do not consent.**

## Our Attitude Toward Trials

### 1. We should not be surprised that we have to suffer hardship.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

### 2. We should not see hardship as an undesirable thing.

A. Not all pain is bad, any more than all pleasure is good.

B. Few things are worse for us than the habitual avoidance of difficulty.

C. It is rising to meet the challenge of hardship that gives us courage, strength, character, and self-respect.

### 3. There is really no shortcut to strong faith or healthy self-respect.

### 4. We should “rejoice” in trials, knowing their spiritual result. **James 1:2-4**

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

### 5. We should meet trials in the strength of the Lord. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

## **Conclusion**

- 1. Whenever God allows us either to be tempted by Satan or to undergo some other trial of our faith;**
  - A. We can be confident that He has wisely judged that to be better for us than the alternative.**
- 2. We ought to meet both temptations and trials in the assurance that Jesus knows what we are experiencing.**

**Hebrews 2:14-18**  
**Hebrews 4:15-16**  
**Hebrews 5:7-8**
- 3. May we not blame God for our temptations, but resist them in His strength.**
- 4. May we not complain about our trials, but endure them with His help.**

