

JAMES PART 2 – “IMITATION TEMPTATIONS”

KNOW: WE WERE CREATED TO LOVE GOD FIRST. A CHEAP SUBSTITUTE WILL NOT SATISFY.

DO: REPLACE OUR SUBSTITUTES ONE BY ONE WITH THE GOD WHO SATISFIES SO WE ARE NOT TEMPTED TO SETTLE FOR LESS.

INTRO. LAST WK. WE STARTED THE GREAT BOOK OF JAMES AND TALKED ABOUT TRIALS – CAN TEST STRENGTHEN US LIKE A BIRD OR A BUTTERFLY TESTS ITS WINGS. GOD CAN DEVELOP PERSEVERANCE IF WE SEEK WISDOM FROM HIM THAT COMES OUT OF TRIALS. JAMES WRITES SO WE WON'T GIVE UP AND FALL BACK INTO OLD LIFE STYLE OF SEPARATION FROM GOD.

ENDED W. JAMES 1:12. Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO PERSEVERES – CROWN OF LIFE – BETTER LIFE HERE AND LIFE TO COME

WHICH LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO *LOVE HIM*. LAST WEEK THE TESTING OF TRIALS. TODAY THE TESTING OF TEMPTATION.

Loving God first = the key to overcoming temptation and fulfilling God's purpose for us.

*****LIKE IF THE TOP BUTTON ON YOUR SHIRT IS NOT ON RIGHT, IT WILL THROW EVERYTHING ELSE OFF. BUT IF RIGHT, EVERYTHING ELSE LINES UP.**

****LAST WEEK WE SAID THAT TRIALS AND DISAPPOINTMENT CAN TRY AND *STEAL AWAY OUR FAITH* IF WE DON'T TURN TO GOD FOR HIS WISDOM IN THEM.**

TEMPTATIONS WILL TRY AND *LURE US AWAY*.

- I. **JAMES 1:13-18. When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown,**

gives birth to death.16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

A. WE SAID LOVING GOD FIRST WILL HELP US OVERCOME DESTRUCTIVE TEMPTATIONS, BUT IT IS HARD TO LOVE SOMEONE YOU BLAME. IT IS SO EASY FOR US TO BLAME GOD OR SOMEONE ELSE WHEN WE FALL.

***ADAM BLAMED EVE, THEN GOD.**

GENESIS 3:12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

****WE MIGHT SAY SOMETHING SIMILAR – "WELL IF GOD HADN'T GIVEN ME THIS SEX DRIVE AND PUT SUCH A STRONG DESIRE IN ME, I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD AN AFFAIR THAT HURT MY FAMILY". IF I WASN'T SO LONELY AND GOD WOULD HAVE BLESSED ME WITH A BETTER PARTNER, I WOULDN'T HAVE TURNED TO PORN. IF WASN'T**

BORN WITH THIS PREDISPOSITION FOR BECOMING AN ALCOHOLIC, ETC.

JAMES ANSWERS BY SAYING GOD DOESN'T TEMPT ANYONE WITH EVIL AND WE ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT WE DO WITH OUR DESIRES OR LUSTS.

PAUL - GOD IS THE ONE WHO IS FAITHFUL *TO HELP* US WHEN TEMPTED:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13. No temptation[a] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[b] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, [c] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

I AM GOING TO SPRINKLE IN “EASTER EGGS” ALONG WITH SCRIPTURE YOU CAN PUT TO MEMORY THROUGHOUT THE MESSAGE TODAY TO HELP YOU FIND THOSE WAYS OF ESCAPE. WE WILL PUT ON THE SCREEN RATHER THAN LIST ALL AT ONCE, SO BE READY TO WRITE THEM DOWN. . .

B. JAMES – WE GET TEMPTED WHEN WE ARE DRAGGED AWAY BY OUR OWN DESIRES THAT WE FEED AND ENTERTAIN.

***SOMETIMES WE CAN ALLOW EVEN A GOOD GIFT GOD HAS GIVEN US TO BECOME AN IDOL THAT SEEKS CONTROL OVER US. (THE WAY YOU CAN TELL AN IDOL IN YOUR LIFE IS BY WHAT YOU TURN TO FOR HOPE AND COMFORT *INSTEAD OF GOD* WHEN THINGS GET DIFFICULT.)**

- 1. WE NEED FOOD, BUT IF BECOMES OUR COMFORT CAN CAUSE ALL KINDS OF HEALTH PROBLEMS.**
- 2. LOVE IS GOOD, BUT WE CAN EVEN IDOLIZE AND ABUSE THAT AND RATIONALIZE ALMOST ANYTHING WITH IT. *IF WE DON'T LOVE GOD FIRST, WE ARE EXPECTING OTHERS TO BE GOD TO US.* TOM CRUISE: "YOU COMPLETE ME". THERE'S NO WAY ANOTHER HUMAN BEING CAN *COMPLETE YOU COMPLETELY.***
- 3. SEXUAL PLEASURE – BIBLE TEACHES GOD GAVE SEX AS A GIFT AND EXPRESSION OF LOVE AND INTIMACY BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE – A BOND TO KEEP THEM CLOSER THAN ANYBODY ELSE ON EARTH. BUT WHEN WE USE**

IT RECREATIONALLY AND WE TURN TO IT FOR HOPE AND COMFORT WITH ANOTHER OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE, IT CAN REPLACE OUR LOVE FOR GOD. AS A RESULT, NONE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS WORK OUT THE WAY THEY WERE MEANT TO.

SEX = THE MOST SEARCHED FOR WORD ON THE INTERNET BETWEEN 9AM – 5 PM. (MANY AT WORK SEEKING AS AN ESCAPE)

***AMERICANS YEARLY SPEND MORE ON PORN THAN ON MUSIC OF ALL STYLES PUT TOGETHER.**

RIGHTNOW MEDIA – “GODS AT WAR” KYLE IDLEMAN – SEVERAL STORIES AND INSIGHTS USED – WATCH THE WHOLE THING AT HOME. 20 MIN. SO POWERFUL! SUBSCRIPTION.

****YOUNG WOMAN NAMED SHANNON – ABUSED AS A CHILD. LATER IN LIFE BEGAN TO FEEL THAT SHE WAS A MISTAKE OF GOD TRAPPED IN**

THE WRONG BODY. BEGAN TO SEXUALIZE HER NEED FOR LOVE AND PROTECTION WITH BEING IN RELATIONSHIP WITH BOYS. WHEN THAT DIDN'T SATISFY, SHE BEGAIN TO FANTASIZE WITH PORNOGRAPHY OVER GIRLS AND BEGAN TO ACT OUT WITH OTHER WOMEN. SHE SAYS IT WAS ALL ABOUT SEEKING THE LOVE AND INTIMACY SHE WAS MISSING.

*****BUT STILL THE CONNECTION SHE SOUGHT WAS OUT OF REACH.**

****WHEN OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS MISSING, WE TRY TO FILL THE EMPTINESS WITH A SUBSTITUTE THAT ULTIMATELY DISAPPOINTS. . .**

*****LIKE TRYING TO QUENCH OUR THIRST WITH SALT WATER – ONLY TO LEAVE US THIRSTY AGAIN.**

***BUT ONE OF THE REASONS YOU DON'T WANT TO BLAME GOD = HE IS THE ONE WHO KEEPS FIGHTING *FOR* US AND PURSUING US BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE DEATH SIN (SEPARATION) BRINGS.**

A. JAMES 1:15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

A. EXAMPLES

1. KING DAVID – BORED, LONELY WHEN OTHERS WENT OFF TO WAR AND HE STAYS, COVETS BATHSHEBA WHO IS BATHING ON THE ROOF TOP BELOW.

- HE SEES, ENTERTAINS HIS DESIRE – SIN CONCEIVES – HE ACTS OUT HIS FANTASIES

- BUT HE PAYS DEARLY – SO DOES HER HUSBAND URIAH – IN THIS CASE SIN LITERALLY BRINGS FORTH DEATH.

- PROPHET NATHAN EXPOSES HIS SIN. DAVID HAS SHAMED HIS KINGDOM AND REPUTATION, LOSES GOD’S FAVOR, AND THE BABY THEY CONCEIVE DIES. IT ALL EFFECTS ANOTHER SON ABSOLOM AND HIS DEATH, AND EVEN NEXT GEN. WITH SOLOMON – THE WISEST MAN, BUT HIS HEART LURED AWAY

**THROUGH HIS MANY WIVES AND
CONCUBINES LIKE HIS FATHER.**

****BUT STILL GOD HEARS DAVID'S PRAYERS OF
REPENTANCE AND DOESN'T GIVE UP ON HIM. (PS.
51) THOUGH THE STRENGTH OF HIS KINGDOM AND
FAMILY ARE NEVER THE SAME.**

****WITH AFFAIRS YOUR FAMILY MAY FORGIVE, BUT
THEY NEVER FORGET. THAT IS ONE REASON THEY
ARE SOMETHING TO BE AVOIDED!**

*****WHY **We need to be clear/sober minded so we can
pray.** (REMEMBER 1 PETER?) SO WE WON'T GET
CAUGHT OFF GAURD IN A WEAK MOMENT LIKE
DAVID DID.**

Clear thinking = BIG picture thinking

**FOR GUYS: WHEN WE SEE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN,
REAL OR IN THE MEDIA, THERE IS A CHEMICAL
REACTION AND OUR BRAINS TURN TO MUSH FOR A
MOMENT. JUDGEMENT AND BIG PICTURE THINKING
CAN GET CLOUDED.**

****ILLUS. MY NEPHEW WHEN 2 COLLEGE GIRLS
CAME INTO HOME DEPOT AND ASKED IF HE COULD
CUT WOOD FOR THEM.**

****THAT'S WHY WITH CERTAIN KINDS OF TEMPTATION. . .**

We need to flee it and refocus. AND JUST NOT BE AROUND IT SO WE CAN THINK STRAIGHT.

2. CONTRAST DAVID W. JOSEPH IN BOOK OF GENESIS.

- **POTIPHAR'S WIFE – DAY IN AND DAY OUT - SHE HOUNDS HIM. ONE DAY WHEN HE IS WORKING FOR HIS MASTER SHE CATCHES HIM ALONE IN THE HOUSE – GRABS HIM BY THE COAT – “COME TO BED WITH ME” – HE HAS TO RUN, LEAVING HIS COAT BEHIND. HE HAS TO GET AWAY SO HE CAN MAKE THE RIGHT CLEAR-MINDED DECISION.**

2 TIMOTHY 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

We also need accountability when we can't think clearly.

WHEN HER HUSBAND GETS HOME, SHE HAS HIS COAT AS EVIDENCE AND LIES, SAYING HE TRIED TO RAPE HER. HER HUSBAND PUTS HIM IN PRISON.

***JOSEPH STILL GOES THROUGH TRIALS BY DOING RIGHT, BUT THEY MAKE HIM STRONGER WITH PERSEVERANCE AND STRENGTHENS HIM AS A LEADER – COMPLETELY DIFFERENT END RESULT THAN DAVID. GOD BLESSES JOSEPH AND HE GAINS RESPECT OF EVERYONE HE COMES IN CONTACT WITH BECAUSE OF HIS INTEGRITY AND RISES TO BE PRIME MINISTER OF EGYPT DURING A FAMINE! GOD BLESSES AND RESTORES HIS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIS BROS. AND FUTURE GENERATIONS BECAUSE JOSEPH SAW THE BIG PIC.**

Joseph focused on acting out God's ways vs acting out his temptation. When tempted we must redirect our thinking.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.; 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets

itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE. WE GRAB THAT THOUGHT, EXCHANGE IT FOR SCRIPTURE AS WE REFOCUS AND TURN SATAN'S WEAPON AGAINST HIM. THEN INSTEAD OF BEING DEFEATED AGAIN, GOD IS GLORIFIED INSTEAD! IF OUR MINDS ARE FULL OF TRASH FROM WHAT WE WATCH, IT IS NATURAL TO CAVE IN TO WHAT WE HAVE THOUGHT SO MUCH ABOUT. WE ALSO PROVIDE THE ENEMY WITH MORE TO USE AGAINST US LATER!

***WAS JOSEPH BETTER OFF THAN IF HE HAD CAVED IN? IF HE HAD, POTIPHAR WOULD HAVE CUT OFF HIS HEAD! (SIN WOULD BRING FORTH DEATH).**

III. TURNING THINGS AROUND – JAMES 4:7. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (eventually he will flee in that area)

A. Bounce your eyes for 6 weeks. (Lusting = Coveting what you don't have). Memorize 2 Timothy 2:22 or James 4:7

B. SHANNON – GIRL IN STORY IN BEGINNING

- **SAID WHAT MADE DIFF. FOR HER = A TEACHER WHO REACHED OUT. EARNED HER TRUST. SHE WAS ABLE TO SHARE HER INNER CONFLICTS AND LEARNED THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHO WE ARE AND OUR BEHAVIOR.**

- **GOD DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES. SHE NOW SAYS, IF GOD HAD WANTED HER TO BE A DIFFERENT GENDER, SHE WOULD BE ONE. SHE PRAYED AND SOUGHT GOD FIRST IN EVERY AREA OF HER LIFE, INCLUDING HER DEEPEST STRUGGLE, AND SAYS GOD SPOKE TO HER IN PRAYER: "SHANNON YOU ARE MY DAUGHTER AND YOU HAVE BEEN MADE CLEAN IN MY EYES. I DON'T MAKE MISTAKES." SHE NOW KNOWS SHE WAS MADE BY AN AMAZING CREATOR WHO MADE HER FOR A PURPOSE SHE DOESN'T WANT TO MISS!**

- **THAT TEACHER SHOWED HER THE LOVE OF CHRIST. WE DON'T SHOW LOVE JUST BY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO DO WHAT THEY FEEL, BUT BY HELPING PEOPLE PUT GOD FIRST. OTHERWISE IT MAY ONLY IMPRISON THEM FURTHER.**

***ARTICLE FROM AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PEDIATRICS ON THIS WITH LATEST FINDINGS IF INTERESTED. WILL POST ON CHURCH FACEBOOK. GOOD ARTICLE IF YOUR "CONFUSED ABOUT GENDER CONFUSION".**

CONCLUSION:

If we don't love God first, we will be tempted to pursue other false gods that cannot satisfy.

***ISRAEL TRADED THE GLORY OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THEIR LIVES WHILE MOSES WAS UP ON THE MOUNTAIN FOR A GOLDEN IMAGE OF AN OX THAT EATS GRASS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE PERSEVERANCE TO WAIT FOR GOD'S BEST. IT WAS NOT A FAIR TRADE.**

****JAMES 1:17-18 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.**

INTERESTING VERSE TO SUM UP. ASTRONOMICAL TERMS – NO WAXING OR WANING LIKE THE MOON. HIS LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS PERSEVERE. HIS GIFTS ARE THE BEST!

***ILLUS. LITTLE GIRL SAW A PEARL NECKLACE IN THE STORE THAT SHE WAS REALLY DRAWN TO. IT WAS FAKE AND COST ABOUT \$10.00, BUT SHE WORKED AND SAVED UP HER MONEY. SHE FINALLY BOUGHT IT AND WORE IT EVERYWHERE.**

AFTER SOME TIME AT BEDTIME ONE NIGHT WHEN SHE DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE THEM OFF, HER DAD ASKED, "WOULD YOU TRUST ME WITH YOUR PEARLS?" SHE SAID, "I WOULD TRUST YOU WITH MY DOLL."

FEW WEEKS LATER – WOULD YOU TRUST ME WITH YOUR PEARLS? SHE SAID, "I WOULD TRUST YOU WITH MY STUFFED BEAR, BUT NOT MY PEARLS."

FEW WEEKS LATER – TRUST ME WITH YOUR PEARLS? FINALLY, “YES DADDY I WILL TRUST YOU WITH MY PEARLS.” HE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR THIS, SO HE TOOK OUT A CASE WITH A REAL PEARL NECKLACE AND GAVE THEM TO HIS DAUGHTER. SHE WAS THRILLED!

***HE WAS WAITING FOR HER TO LET GO OF THE IMITATION SO HE COULD GIVE HER THE REAL THING. GOD DOES THE SAME WITH US. HE IS WAITING FOR US TO GIVE UP OUR CHEAP IMITATIONS SO HE CAN BLESS US WITH HIS BEST GIFTS AND HIS VERY PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES!**

****ARE YOU HOLDING BACK AND TRADING THE SATISFACTION OF KNOWING CHRIST FOR THE TEMPORARY PLEASURE OF SEX, FOOD, LOVE, OR MONEY OR SOME OTHER *TEMPTATION* FOR AN *IMITATION*? IT’S TIME TO LET GO AND EMBRACE CHRIST W. BOTH ARMS AS THE ONLY ONE WHO SAVES AND CAN TRULY SATISFY.**

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE PROMISED, “NEVER AGAIN”, ONLY FOR OUR FALSE IDOL TO RETURN LATER? GO BACK TO JAMES 4:7. NOTICE BEGINNING OF VERSE 8. IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT

WHAT NEEDS TO BE REMOVED, BUT ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE REPLACED BY THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.

BAPTISMS TODAY ARE ALL ABOUT THIS.

WHEN GOD BECOMES YOUR GREATEST PLEASURE, HOPE AND COMFORT, THEN YOU WILL FIND WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SEEKING ALL ALONG. **PS. 37:4**

4 Take delight in the Lord,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

PRAY/INVITATION. BAPTISMS AFTER CHURCH FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO FOLLOW CHRIST W. THEIR WHOLE HEART. WE ARE READY FOR YOU.

TAKE OUT PHONES AND DOWNLOAD "YOU VERSION BIBLE" APP. GO TO "PLANS" and try 5 Day challenge - "FINDING YOUR WAY BACK TO GOD" by DAVE AND JON FERGUSEN.

NICK COMES NOW WITH OUR TIME OF COMMUNION