

AUGUST 2, 2026

THE LETTER OF *James*

Conquering Temptation

JAMES 1:13-16

“Know your enemy” is one of history’s most famous military principles. Sun Tzu wrote, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.” James understood that Christians are engaged in a spiritual battle every day. Peter reminds us that “our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). If we are going to grow into mature believers, we must understand how temptation works. Spiritual maturity requires an understanding of trials and temptations. They are both common experiences for all believers (1:2,13). Trials come from God to develop us. Temptation come from Satan to destroy us. But God can use both to mature us. In our text today, we learn the powerful truth: ***you are personally responsible for your sin, but victory is possible when we understand its source, recognize its process, and rely on God’s grace.***

A Word of Clarity (1:13-14)

- The distinction between trials and temptation
- The connection between trials and temptation
- The clarification of personal responsibility

A Word of Understanding (1:14-15)

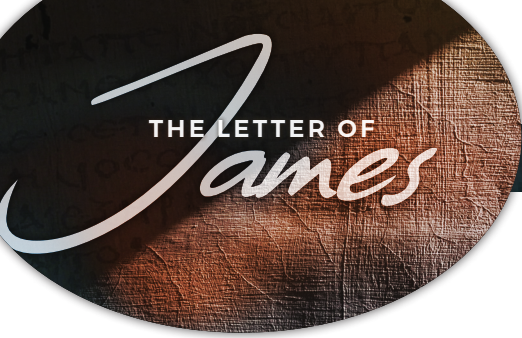
In James 1:14-15, there are three distinct metaphors to describe the progression of sin: hunting/trapping, human conception and childbirth, and agriculture. These illustrate how temptation takes root within a person’s own heart and eventually leads to spiritual ruin. Temptation is not sin. Every person gets tempted. God promises a way out from temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). The process of temptation is very clearly explained in verses 14-15.

Step by step how temptation works in your life:

- **Desire** (v. 14) lust- desire, to boil over
Unfortunately, this word always has sexual overtones in today's world. Actually, the word referred to any strong desire outside God's will. It might be desire for fame, position, power, wealth, or illicit sexual relations. Lust refers to our personal but uncontrollable desire we all possess because of our fallen sinful nature (Romans 5:12).
- **Deception** (v. 14) – “drawn away” and “enticed” terms coming from sporting, hunting and fishing terms. Drawn away – to set a trap, entice – to bait a hook.
- **Decision** – (v. 15) - you make a choice “when lust has conceived” (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- **Delivery** (v.15) - “gives birth to sin”
- **Development** (v.15) – “sin, when it is full grown”
The meaning: The word translated as “full-grown” (*apoteleo*) is an agricultural term for a crop reaching complete maturity or a plant ripening to its final state.
- **Death** (v.15) – “and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”
Romans 6:23 (NASB95) “For the wages of sin is death” - The wages of sin is always some kind of death.

A Word of Warning (1:16) “Do not be deceived”

James closes this section with a pastoral warning. Notice he doesn't say, “Do not be tempted.” He says, “Do not be deceived.” Temptation always begins with a lie. James is reminding believers that the greatest battlefield is not the circumstances around us but the thoughts within us. If Satan can deceive your thinking, he can influence your choices. That is why Scripture repeatedly calls us to renew our minds with God's truth (Romans 12:2).



Take Away:

How do we conquer temptation? (from James 1:13–16)

1. Accept responsibility for your sin.
2. Recognize temptation early.
3. Take God's way of escape.
4. Feed your love for Christ.

Temptation begins with deception, but victory comes through truth, responsibility, and dependence on Christ.