

Sunday, October 8, 2023

## Our Folly Part 2

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James 1:12-15, 3:13-16, 4:1-5

Wisdom, Folly & In-between, James and Proverbs

Our Folly Part 1 Review.

Alien; scene of alien parasite bursting out of Chest

**Stand Against Sin**, James 1:12-15, 3:13-16, 4:1-5, pg. 1011 & 1012

-Read, pray.

In the Psalms, which are prayers through song, but prayers never-the-less, it says hundreds of times, "I will".

For example

I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. Psalm 9:2

I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you. Psalm 22:22

Christianity is not a passive religion. True, we surrender to God's will, we are dependent on his Spirit to lead us, To "let go and let God" is correct in this aspect, yet we have a will; a new, redeemed will by which we take a stand. We willfully stand on the Gospel, we willfully fight for our identity in Christ, we take action against the ills of this world, and we absolutely, positively **STAND AGAINST SIN!**

### Read James 1:12-13.

-The intriguing thing about vs. 12 with 13 is the root word for trial & tempt is the same. This includes James 1:2, in which we are to rejoice in such "testings/trials". Thus, the statement, "he himself 'tempts' (tests) no one" needs to be within the context of *how* one is tested; by evil. In other words, God does test us, but *how* he tests us is not towards, with or by evil. "The faith of the doubter in the face of trial is viewed here. This person's incomprehension of the wisdom of God leads him to view trials as a provocation to sin; therefore he sees trials as evil."<sup>1</sup>

The imperative is "let no one say when he tempted, he is tempted by God" In other words, "Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, 'God is trying to trip me up.' God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way." **MSG. We can never use God's work in our lives to justify sin. It's folly to do so. OR blame God for the evil we do or happens to us...**

### When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD. Proverbs 19:3

**Read Vs. 14-** The real problem is not God, but us; *lured and enticed by our own desire.*

Lured in the Greek implies being "dragged away".

Enticed means, 'to make sinning look attractive' or 'to make sin taste good' or 'to wave sin in front of a person's nose.'<sup>2</sup>

"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."  
Genesis 4:7

We must **STAND AGAINST SIN!**

Why? Because it leads to death!

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<sup>1</sup> New American Commentary, Richardson, K. A. (1997). *James* (Vol. 36, pp. 78–80).

<sup>2</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*.

**Read Vs. 15-** Sin leads to death every single time (*Romans 6:23, the wages of sin is death*). But what about the believer who has been set free from death? How does this apply?

The New American Commentary says this, *“What is always so difficult for the **believer**, for any sinner, is the truth about one’s own sin. No matter how extraordinarily destructive sin is discovered to be, the believer can never find a source of sin outside of himself.”*

But what about Satan and the demonic realm?

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 1 Timothy 4:1

The “devotion”, according to James starts within us. Our evil desires give the demonic a foothold. James says this in **James 4:7, Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

Use the redeemed will God has given you and **STAND AGAINST SIN!**

The New American Commentary goes on to say, *“Evil Desire is like a creature with a reproductive life of its own. Evil desire has become pregnant, and sin is now alive within the self. Again, unlike the external trials that come from God, this entire movement from temptation to sin is internal to the self. Temptation, self-induced by the power and appeal of desire, is now producing sin on the way to death. Unrestrained evil desire then engenders a process of three closely connected stages: temptation, sin, and death.*

*Here is the full portrayal of the self moving against itself in the divided mind and heart of believers, represented in the metaphor of two births. Desire gives birth to sin. Sin, the offspring of evil desire, grows up, matures, and is ready for fertilization and conception. Finally, sin gives birth to death. Evil desire is the alien opponent within the self. But once the self has acquiesced to desire, sin is its offspring, owned by the self.*

*The awful image of the parasite is suggested by this text. The parasite, (evil) desire, has found its hospitable environment. When sin has been birthed, the*

*new parasite, nurtured by the life of the self, is tightly intertwined with it. Sin engenders death. The full growth of sin issues in the slaying of the host. This juxtaposition of birth and death, with death arising from birth, is one of the most powerful statements about sin in the New Testament. The progression toward death is rather complex.*<sup>3</sup>

Alien scene.

Sin Brings death.

With much seductive speech she **persuades** him; with her smooth talk she **compels** him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that **it will cost him his life**. Proverbs 7:21-23

What's the solution to the this death that so easily lures, entices, persuades, compels us towards death.

Read vs. 12 again. Stood against the test...

**STAND AGAINST SIN!**

The fruit of NOT making this stand is evident!

Read James 3:13-16 & 4:1-5

-It's not just about you and your sin, it affects community.

-It affects your loyalty with God. (Ex. *You can't serve God and money*)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and **sin which clings so closely**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

**STAND AGAINST SIN!**

Communion

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<sup>3</sup> New American Commentary, Richardson, K. A. (1997). [James](#) (Vol. 36, pp. 78–80).

## Our Folly Part 2 Study Notes

James 1:12-15, 3:13-16, 4:1-5

### Our Work

**[12]** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under *trial*, for when he has stood the *test* he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

### Our Folly

**[13]** Let no one say when he is *tempted*, "I am being *tempted* by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **[14]** But each person is *tempted* when he is *lured* and *enticed* by his own *desire*. **[15]** Then *desire* when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:12-15

**[13]** Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. **[14]** But if you have bitter *jealousy* and *selfish ambition* in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. **[15]** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **[16]** For where *jealousy* and *selfish ambition* exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 3:13-16

**[1]** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your *passions* are at war within you? **[2]** You *desire* and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. **[3]** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your *passions*. **[4]** You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **[5]** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He *yearns jealously* over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? 4:1-5

Initial thoughts

**Vs. 12-** Adding to give context to **vs. 13.**

-The intriguing thing about vs. 12 with 13 is the root word for trial & tempt is the same. This includes James 1:2, in which we are to rejoice in such "testings/trials". Thus, the statement, "he himself 'tempts' (tests) no one" needs to be within the context of *how* one is tested; by evil. (See *Commentary #1 below*) In other words, God does test us, but *how* he tests us is not towards, with or by evil. "The faith of the doubter in the face of trial is viewed here. This person's incomprehension of the wisdom of God leads him to view trials as a provocation to sin; therefore he sees trials as evil."<sup>4</sup>

The imperative is "let no one say when he tempted, he is tempted by God" In other words, "Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, 'God is trying to trip me up.' God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way." **MSG. We can never use God's work in our lives to justify sin. It's folly to do so.**

**Vs. 14-** The real problem is not God, but us; *lured and enticed by our own desire.*

**Vs. 15-** Sin leads to death every single time. (Romans 6:23) But what about the believer who has been set free from death? How does this apply?

## Scripture Reference

Vs. 12 & 14, For the time is coming when people will not **endure** sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own **passions**, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

Vs. 14.

When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD. Proverbs 19:3

"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it." Genesis 4:7

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<sup>4 4</sup> New American Commentary, Richardson, K. A. (1997). [James](#) (Vol. 36, pp. 78–80).

Vs. 14 & 15. With much seductive speech she *persuades* him; with her smooth talk she *compels* him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that *it will cost him his life*. Proverbs 7:21-23

### Translations

Vs. 14, The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. James 1:14

### Greek<sup>5</sup>

Trial/ Tempt: to try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing—'to test, to examine, to put to the test, examination, testing.'

πειράζωα: ἑαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει 'put yourselves to the test as to whether you are in the faith (or not)' 2 Cor 13:5; προσελθόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ Σαδδουκαῖοι πειράζοντες ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν σημεῖον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπιδείξαι αὐτοῖς 'the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked if he would show them a sign from heaven' Mt 16:1.

πειρασμόςα: μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη 'don't be surprised at the painful testing you are experiencing' 1 Pe 4:12; ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις ἐκπειράζωα: οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον τὸν θεὸν σου 'you shall not put the Lord your God to the test' Lk 4:12; νομικὸς τις ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων αὐτὸν 'an expert in the Law stood up to test him' Lk 10:25. It is also possible to understand πειράζω and ἐκπειράζω in Mt 16:1 and Lk 10:25 as meaning 'to try to trap' (see 27.31). See also 88.308.

Lured: (figurative extensions of meaning of ἀποσπάω 'to pull out, to drag,' 15.214, and ἐξέλκω 'to pull, to draw out,' not occurring in the NT) to cause a change of belief so as to correspond more with the beliefs of the person or factor causing the change—'to draw away, to lead away, to lure away to.'

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<sup>5</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#).

ἀποσπάωβ: τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν 'in order to draw away disciples after them' Ac 20:30.11

ἐξέλκω: πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος 'but a person is tempted when he is drawn away and trapped by his own desires' Jas 1:14.

Enticed: to lure or entice someone to sin (compare δέλεαρ 'bait,' not occurring in the NT)—'to lead astray, to lure into sin.' ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος 'a person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires' Jas 1:14. δελεάζω may often be translated as 'to make sinning look attractive' or 'to make sin taste good' or 'to wave sin in front of a person's nose.'

Desire: to greatly desire to do or have something—'to long for, to desire very much.'

ἐπιθυμέω: ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δὲ ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν 'we desire very much that each one of you demonstrate the same eagerness' He 6:11; ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι ὅτε ἐπιθυμήσετε μίαν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἰδεῖν 'the time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man' Lk 17:22.

ἐπιθυμία: αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμῖαι εἰσπορευόμεναι συμπνίγουσιν τὸν λόγον 'desires for other things will come and choke out the message' Mk 4:19; ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν 'I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you' Lk 22:15.

Selfish Ambition: a feeling of resentfulness based upon jealousy and implying rivalry—'selfish ambition, rivalry, resentfulness.' τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ 'others are selfishly ambitious and reject what is right' Ro 2:8; οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν 'others proclaim Christ out of a feeling of rivalry' Php 1:17. For another interpretation of ἐριθεία in Php 1:17, see 39.7.

The meaning of 'rivalry' may be expressed as 'wanting to be better than someone else' or 'wanting to make people think they are better.' The meaning of 'selfish ambition' may be rendered as 'what they do is just to make themselves look bigger' or 'what they do is just for themselves.'



Passion: desire for physical pleasure, often sexual—‘desire, passion, desire for pleasure.’ ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν ‘from the desires for pleasure that battle within you’ Jas 4:1.

## Commentary

#1. The ambiguity of what is meant here by “tempt” stems from use of the related word *peirasmos* (“trial”) in v. 2, where the context does not entail an incitement to sin. The faith of the doubter in the face of trial is viewed here. This person’s incomprehension of the wisdom of God leads him to view trials as a provocation to sin; therefore he sees trials as evil. What he has failed to understand is the truth about himself. This is why the phrase “no one should say” is an important signal for interpreting the problem James now addressed. This kind of signal appears again with the problem of faith and works in 2:18. The lack of wisdom and of undivided trust in God results in a terribly distorted view of one’s relationship with God. Trials come not for the ill of God’s own but for their good. Such a lack of appreciation of the place of trials in the history of God’s covenant people is desperately in need of warning and correction.

James strongly denied that God is the origin of temptation, for “God cannot be tempted [lit. he is “without temptation”] by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.” This aphorism places together references to God’s personal character or disposition and to his activity. No evil can have its way with God.<sup>65</sup> He is immune to any of its provocations.<sup>66</sup> There can be nothing evil about that which concerns God. Therefore there can be nothing evil about his ways with his people. It is a flat error to regard any testing as a temptation to sin. No doubt, in a world of sinners who often succumb to the temptation to aggrandize the self, many believers feel inclined to misinterpret their trials as God-given opportunities for sin.

Temptation to sin is the operation of evil forces and the devil. In this case the believer himself is the source of temptation. There is already something within the self by which any temptation can arise. Just comprehending this is difficult for the believer who is lacking wisdom. The Gospel account of Jesus’ provocation by Peter and the terrifying retort “Get behind me Satan!” starkly illumine the source of temptation. Peter, whose assertion that Jesus not allow

himself to be attacked, was regarded by Jesus as an evil tempter. But then Jesus added a clarifying and stunning statement: “You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (Matt 16:22–23; Mark 8:32–33).

The interchangeable “Satan” and “men” as opponents of God is arresting. The thoughts and actions of men become satanic or demonic in their rank opposition to the trials of Jesus as the means of the saving purposes of God. This human opposition to God is quite apart from any demonic possession. The appearance of “stumbling block” in Matt 16:23 also is significant. God acts as a cause of stumbling toward no one. But because of the spiritually degrading effects of sin, people often regard him, and his Son, as the cause of stumbling: “Happy is the man who finds no cause for stumbling over me.” The world stumbles over the gifts of God because it is at enmity with him (cf. Jas 4:4) and reverses the truth of God’s intent because its own ways are a refusal of God’s ways.<sup>67</sup> How easy it is to stumble over the divine intent of trials! Trouble and temptation are indistinguishable to the double-minded believer whose loyalty to God is already compromised with evil motives. There is no room for any accusation that God causes temptation<sup>6,68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> ἀπειράστος: “not subject, without temptation” to evil. This word appears only here in the NT, but cf. Matt 4:7; Heb 12:8; 1 Pet 1:15; 2 Pet 2:14 for examples.

<sup>66</sup> The sentiment stated in *Const. Ap.* II, 8, 2, “an untempted man is untried,” expresses well the meaning of trials in James. A close connection exists between temptation and its purpose within God’s permissive will. The untemptability of God is the rationale for the conclusion that he tempts no one. Believers should be “imitators of God” (Eph 5:1) and so “in regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults” (1 Cor 15:22).

<sup>67</sup> The reference to evil and its source is extremely important, for the temptation to sin is strictly a case of “being dragged into sin.” This sense of dragging or luring into sin is central in the next verse. The cause of temptation also is much like Paul’s expression “inventors of evil” (KJV), referring to those who teach their evil to others (Rom 1:30–32). Cargal’s helpful schema contrasts the positive knowledge of the nature of temptation rather than the negative knowledge of the double-minded (*Restoring the Diaspora*, 78). The steps that follow from the misapprehension of being tempted by God have dire consequences for faith.

<sup>68</sup> Is Jesus’ petition in his great prayer—“lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt 6:13)—at odds with our text? Paul possibly was thinking of this saying of the Lord when he wrote: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Cor 10:13). The temptation

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<sup>6</sup> New American Commentary, Richardson, K. A. (1997). [James](#) (Vol. 36, pp. 78–80).

aspect of trials is a dimension of the permissive will of God. Escape from sinning and the determination to endure are the actual intent of God in all trials-become-temptations.

Vs. 15, The self-tempting process is inseparably tied<sup>74</sup> to the doing of sin itself.<sup>75</sup> Desire conceives its offspring, sin. James used the metaphor of conception for describing the development from temptation to sin. What is always so difficult for the believer, for any sinner, is the truth about one's own sin. No matter how extraordinarily destructive sin is discovered to be, the believer can never find a source of sin outside of himself. *Evil* Desire is like a creature with a reproductive life of its own. *Evil* desire has become pregnant, and sin is now alive within the self. Again, unlike the external trials that come from God, this entire movement from temptation to sin is internal to the self. Temptation, self-induced by the power and appeal of desire, is now producing sin on the way to death.<sup>76</sup> Unrestrained evil desire then engenders a process of three closely connected stages: temptation, sin, and death.

Here is the full portrayal of the self moving against itself in the divided mind and heart of believers, represented in the metaphor of two births. Desire gives birth<sup>77</sup> to sin. Sin,<sup>78</sup> the offspring of desire, grows up, matures, and is ready for fertilization and conception. Finally, sin gives birth to death.<sup>79</sup> *Evil* desire is the alien opponent within the self. But once the self has acquiesced to desire, sin is its offspring, owned by the self.

The awful image of the parasite is suggested by this text. The parasite, (*evil*) desire, has found its hospitable environment. When sin has been birthed, the new parasite, nurtured by the life of the self, is tightly intertwined with it. Sin engenders death. The full growth of sin issues in the slaying of the host. This juxtaposition of birth and death, with death arising from birth, is one of the most powerful statements about sin in the New Testament. The progression toward death is rather complex.

- Temptation to sin is not a divine activity but an evil one.
- Temptation begins with the potential of the believer's own desire to satisfy self or God.
- Evil desire is a powerful attraction.
- Temptation is effected within the self.
- Sin lives within the self.
- Sin in the self grows to maturity.
- Sin slays the host—the self.

<sup>74</sup> The connection between desire and sin is also made in such texts as 4 Macc 1:25–26; Philo, *On Husbandry* 22–25.

<sup>75</sup> συλλαμβάνω: “conceive”; cf. 3:6; 4:7; Ps 7:14; *T. Ben.* 7; *T. Reub.* 3, commenting on Gen 6:2ff.

<sup>76</sup> ἀποτελέω: “come to maturity,” here “complete.” The NIV translates “when it is full-grown.” In this sense sin itself is completely ready to reproduce.

<sup>77</sup> τίκτω: “give birth to,” “bear”; cf. Matt 1:21; John 16:21; Rev 12:4.

<sup>78</sup> In the singular “sin” becomes the personification of the dynamics of sin; cf. 2:9, 22; 4:17; John 1:29; 16:8; Rom 5:12–13; 1 Cor 15:56. James used the plural to indicate specific sins (5:15–16, 20); see also Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4. Interestingly, Philo, in *Leg. All.* and *De Prof.*, argues that desire is passive until reason or the mind takes hold of it. The mind then becomes the vehicle of the power of desire.

<sup>79</sup> ἀποκεύω: “give birth”; in the metaphorical sense it means “engender,” “bring into being,” “produce.” Note how this verb is used to express God’s activity in 1:18; cf. Matt 7:13f.; Rom 6:21–23; *Barn* 18.1. Sin and death are often closely related in Scripture; cf. John 8:21; Rom 5:12, 21; 1 Cor 15:56; Eph 2:1.

Richardson, K. A. (1997). [\*James\*](#) (Vol. 36, pp. 82–83). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.