**James 1:13-15**

**Introduction**

We do we sin? We know what sin is and we know the cost that Jesus paid for us to have eternal life. We have been adequately warned about it. It is not because of lack of knowledge or information that we sin. So, what causes us to sin?

Andy Griffith example of Otis Campbell

The book of James does not have much of an introduction. He begins the book by talking about the good that trials produce and how God is making us into a better Christian. Then in 1:13-15 he talks about who is not to blame for our sin and we is to blame for our sin. He presents temptation as something certain that all will face so we must know how to respond to it.

**1. God is not to blame (1:13)**

We will encounter “various trials” (1:2) and God allows us to undergo testing (Abraham; Gen 22:1), but God does not put stumbling blocks in our way to lead us into sin. God is not tempted and does not tempt others.

Need to understand who God is…

* Gives generously (1:5)
* God is not looking to trip us up (1:13)
* Giver of gifts (1:17)

**2. We are to blame**

The problem lies with us. It is interesting that James does not mention the devil here. James knows the devil (4:7) and the demons are active (2:19) in the world but that is not the reason that we sin. We sin because we are carried away by our own lusts. To put it bluntly: ***we sin because we want to***. List whatever sin you want, but it is engaged in because of a certain desire on our part. Adam and Eve know the Lord’s instructions but chose to disobey (Gen. 3). They knew God’s command but they did what they wanted to do.

ADD STAINT AUGUSTINE example of the pairs.

***Notice, language that is used to describe engaging in sin is the language of pregnancy and birth***

* Lust has conceived
* Gives birth to sin
* Sin grows up and brings death

***This results in a number of lessons***

a) Sin does not begin over night

A Child does not get conceived, born, and grown all in a night. All of this is a process. Sin has to grow and mature inside of us. Often, as at the start of pregnancy, it is not evident to any outside of the mother but becomes more visible and evident with time. Sin can be hidden and obscured for a season often leading to us deceiving ourselves. All the while it is growing and increasing in strength inside of us.

b) Our desires are not something to be indulged

We hear all the time how we are just supposed to be us. If it feels good, do it. We just need to do what we are supposed to do.

Sin has distorted us and given unjust and unholy desires. To follow and yield to these desires will result in birth that leads to death. But God has called us to be reborn (1:18; Jn 3:5).

c) The longer sin grows the more it will control us

J.C. Ryle: “Habits are like trees, are strengthened by age. A boy may bend an oak when it is a sapling—a hundred men cannot root it up, when it is full-grown tree.”

We often think of our sin as small while others sin is a really big deal. But we have deceived ourselves. We think of sin as a hitchhiker that we pick up and will let off at the right moment, but it is more like a cancer that eats away at us growing stronger each time we feed it yet unaware that it is devouring our major organs.

These are problems in the people James is addressing:

* Their lusts are leading to bad desires (4:2)
* Tongues
* Partiality
* Making plans without considering God (4:13-17)

**How do we fight back?**

a) Let us be re-born by God’s wisdom and word (1:5, 18; 3:13-18)

b) Instead of asking does this make me happy ask does this make me holy?

c) Let our faith be shown by actions; grow in good deeds

d) Draw near to God and let Him cleanse you (4:8; resist the devil in 4:7)

e) Be singularly focused on God not double minded (1:8; 4:8)

f) Allow trials to produce positive fruit in us so we endure (1:2-12; 5:7-12)

g) Fight temptation and sin with confession and prayer (4:13-20)