

YOU MADE ME DO IT!

James 1:13-18

How do we respond when the pressure rises?

We face pressure—at work; at home; making ends meet.

Many face illness or surgery—sick children; dying family.

Hard times expose nature of our faith

James shows how God's people ought to live in times of discouragement & pressure.

Living faith produces fruit, in hard times!

1. Living faith endures pressure—with joy 2-12

2. Living faith conquers temptation 13-27

When we suffer—when pressure rises

—we focus on ourselves & our problems.

We forget about God's love

We forget about other people

We defend ourselves; & abandon others.

Threat: when wrong's done to me, *I'm* tempted to sin!"

That's how a trial becomes temptation!

What God intends for our good, leads to temptation

Temptation James has in mind comes in response to rising pressure: anger; revenge; self-defense;

We blame **anything or anyone but ourselves**

We blame our spouse (*Adam blames Eve!*)

We blame circumstances! (*What do you expect?!!*)

We blame Satan (*"Devil made me do it!"*)

We even **blame God**. Ultimately, **it's God's fault!**

We say: "I'm really mad at God about this!"

So **HE's to blame for our sin when we get angry!**

James' readers facing hard times.

In affliction they murmur & complain.

Like Israel in wilderness; **LIKE US!**

People say: "**God sent problems, He should understand**"

"What do you expect?" "After all, I'm only human!"

James returns to our presuppositions

to correct our thinking.

Temptation does not come from God 13 "When tempted, no one should say, "God's tempting me."

For God can't be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone"

While it's true that God allows pressure,...

Pressure is for our good.

Pressure's not excuse for our bad attitude.

God has nothing to do with temptation to do wrong.

If we respond wrongly to what God sends *for our good*, who's at fault?!!

So where does temptation come from? => 14-15 "Each one's tempted when, by his own evil desire, he's dragged away & enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; & sin, when it's full-grown, gives birth to death"

Temptation comes from our desires 14-15

We bring evil into picture due to our desires.

**Neither God, nor the affliction, nor Satan,
is responsible for our attitude.**

Suffering gives us opportunity.

Satan tempts us. Sin attracts us.

But WE make our decision based on our desires

We're "drawn away"—enticed—like trolling with fishing lure. Movement of lure draws fish from its hideaway.

He follows lure, lurches for jig & swallows it whole!

When temptation comes, **we're** drawn away from what keeps us safe; throw caution to the wind & grab a bite!

When we face hard times & complain, we blame God!

But the truth is, *I'M THE SOURCE!*

Pogo: *"We have met the enemy and they is us!"*

MY DESIRES => SIN => DEATH

Not talking about eternal condemnation

He's talking to suffering saints under pressure.

If we allow it to fester inside us—bitterness—will **KILL** us!

That's not God's plan! It's not true that HE's to blame!

We are! OUR desire leads to sin; eventually **KILLS** us!

[It doesn't have to be like that, because,...]

Good gifts come from God 16-18 *"Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷Every good & perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not changed like shifting shadows. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."*

God is the source of **GOOD** things!

God uses pressure for our **GOOD!**

We don't see God's good purpose in suffering

At times we all think that God is not good...

when tragedy strikes people we love, when we're fired, or face divorce, or evil triumphs over godly people.

However bad things *seem*, God **IS** good!

God is source of GOOD gifts;

Nothing evil comes from Him.

What God is doing is part of His plan to perfect us, to make us all He wants us to be!

We receive good & perfect gifts from Him.

He's *always* source of light—no shadow in Him

He never changes! *We can count on Him!*

He didn't suddenly goof this time.

***"We're not important enough for God
to make His first mistake in us!"***

God has given us life, by His Word, so we might be examples of what He wants all creation to look like.

Interesting word play:

14 Our desire "bears its child" => sin => death

18 God gives birth to us => fruit => new kind of life

We're first fruits, so people can see God's good plan & follow us. That's God's purpose in our affliction.

God's goal is **fruit-bearing**—that we might represent

the "pick of the crop"—the choice, lush, fruit.

God never changes. He's faithful. He never fails.

He never stops providing all we need

God has given us new life.

Every *good* gift. Every *perfect* gift. New birth

Joe Bayly wrote for *Eternity* mag. for 20 yrs. During those years he told of death of 3 of their children. In last column he wanted to show God's grace in his 4 living children.

He concludes: "Mary Lou & I are aware this represents the grace of God. For ourselves & our children the road hasn't ended. God has shown consistent faithfulness.

"God IS good! He's worthy of all trust & all glory!"

That's what hard times *should* lead us to!

"God IS good! He's worthy of all trust & all glory!"

We can't blame God for our failure to respond rightly!

We can't pin that on Him—it won't stick!

"God IS good! He's worthy of all trust & all glory!"

CHOICE IS OURS:

Pressure + Faith => Endurance => Maturity

Pressure - Faith => Sin => Death

Which will we choose?

Trust God & grow to perfection? (His Good Gift!)

Doubt God—pursue our desire—which leads to death?

When we understand God's GOOD purpose

We can trust God in the dark! ...Hang in there!

We can rejoice, even when bombarded by affliction!