"FAITH WITH BOOTS ON"
Big Idea . . . Part 3: Resisting Temptation (James 1:13-18)

INTRO: James writes to believers scattered from persecution and facing many difficulties. He instructs his readers in the skills needed to successfully face their challenges and to mature in their walk with Christ. Handling life's troubles was first skill to develop (1:2-12). In 1:13-18, James explains the important skill of resisting temptation.

EXPLANATION – The same Greek word is used for trial (vv. 2-12) and *temptation* (vv. 13ff). Difference is – trials are allowed by God and designed to draw us closer to Him and promote growth in Christlikeness. *Temptations* come from the enemy and are designed to draw us away from God through disobedience and sin. Difference in origin and intent. See chart . . . If I respond wrong, a trial can become a temptation.

Temptation is our oldest problem. It started in the Garden with Adam and Eve and lives on today. The greatest challenge we face as believers is temptation – because to fail to face it successfully is to commit sin. When I say "temptation," what comes to your mind? Probably varies (greed, lust, lie, etc.). Whatever came to your mind, this lesson is about how to resist it. Four (4) insights from James on resisting temptation:

I. EXPECT IT (v. 13) – Temptation is inevitable, so expect it. Verse 13 says "when" not if. Verse 14 says, "each one *is* tempted." Temptation like trouble is *inevitable*. Temptation *is* not sin or Jesus sinned because He was tempted time and again (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15). We only sin when we give in. Temptation is *common* to all (1 Cor. 10:13). I'm tempted, you're tempted, we're all tempted. Temptation just proves we're human, not evil. Don't be shocked, frustrated or discouraged when it comes – be realistic about it. Watch out for it (Matt. 26:41). We never get too old, mature, or spiritual. Swindoll . . .

II. OWN IT (vv. 13b-14) – Accept responsibility. Don't blame others, Satan, esp. God, for your problems (Gen. 3:12-13). *God is never to blame when I am tempted to sin.* We live in a society of irresponsibility. We blame society, government, heredity, parents, spouse, devil, even God. I make choices. I cause my own problems. I choose to yield and sin. I must stop making excuses or blaming others. I must know and avoid my danger zones (Rom. 13:14).

III. UNDERSTAND IT (vv. 14-15) – Don't get deceived, be ready for it and have your guard up. Temptation rarely warns in advance. We're most vulnerable when we least expect it. How can I be ready and prepared? By understanding how it works. Satan has always used the same progression (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan uses four steps to do us in:

A. *DESIRE* (v. 14 "By his own evil desire . . .") – all temptation starts internally. It begins with natural desires of the flesh – even legitimate ones. Not sin yet.

B. *DECEPTION* (v. 14 "dragged away and enticed") – These are sporting terms used in hunting and fishing. The enemy entices us with hidden bait that lures our desires. Satan sets a trap with tailor-made bait to entice us. It looks good and inviting but so deceptive if it's to work. My flesh, this world, Satan's demons all dropping bait. Sin yet?

C. *DISOBEDIENCE* (v. 15 "after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin") – when desire takes deceptive bait, disobedience and sin are conceived and born. What began internally in the mind, now becomes action. Sin now occurred.

D. *DEATH* (v. 15 "sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death") – James just notes a general biblical truth found in Romans 6:23. Enemy wants to destroy us (1 Pet. 5:8). The opposite of crown of living. Process looks like this . . .

Note: Where did it all begin? In my mind with my desires. It is at this point temptation must be dealt with (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

IV. PREPARE FOR IT (vv. 16-18) –1 DON'T & 3 DO'S

A. (v. 16) *Don't be deceived*. Expect it. Know *your* pattern. Avoid tempting places and people. Be alert. Don't get caught off-guard. Know when, where, with whom.

B. (v. 17) *Do call on God*. Shoot up a prayer. Remember His GOODNESS! What He gives is good. How He gives is also good. He constantly gives. His goodness never changes. Questioning the goodness of God will make us victims to sin. Trusting in His goodness will give us victory over sin. He has the way out if you'll take it (1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:14-16; 2 Pet. 2:9).

C. (v. 18) *Do use the Word*. Second birth is essential. What was Jesus' answer to temptation? Use the Word. Look at Eph. 6:17b . . . use His Word precisely and specifically. God has in many instances given specifics on avoiding certain temptations: flee immorality, . . .

D. (mine) *Do stay accountable*. Someone needs to know where you're most vulnerable. Sharing your weaknesses has benefits: helps you gain control, empowers you, endears you, provides you with support.

CONC: What is your most vulnerable area? Where is your hot spot? God knows it, so does your enemy. Avoid tempting people and situations. Use all available resources (friends, prayer, Word). Perfect this skill. It will prevent a lot of guilt and heartache.