

# Temptation Not to Be Desired

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Temptation to Be Desired (Jas.1:2).

Temptation Not to Be Desired (Mt. 6:13).

The original Greek word that has been translated into the English word “temptation” is SGD 3986, which describes a number of different situations as follows:

- 1) Trouble
- 2) Adversity
- 3) Affliction
- 4) An Experiment
- 5) Attempt
- 6) Trial
- 7) Proving
- 8) Test
- 9) Means of verifying Fidelity, Integrity, Virtue, Constancy

In one of the scriptures used in the heading of this study, it is claimed that temptation is something to be desired. However, this is not what the text states. Instead, it is admonishing those who are going through difficult trials to think deeply about important lessons they can learn as a result of their experience,

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (endurance). <sup>4</sup>But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect (spiritually mature) and complete, lacking nothing (Jas. 1:2-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Going through difficult trials is one of the ways God’s people grow in character, and become more profitable servants,

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen (2Pet. 3:18).

People can bring trials upon themselves by breaking God’s law (i.e. cause and effect), while other trials occur as a result of “time and chance” (Eccl. 9:11; cf. 1Pet. 5:9). However, God does not state that either of these situations is desirous. Regarding the former, the prophet Jeremiah asked God to refrain from correcting him in anger if he sinned,

O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps (i.e. in the right way of living). <sup>24</sup>O Lord, correct me, but with justice; not in Your anger lest You bring me to nothing (Jer. 10:23-24; Ed. note in parenthesis).

To summarize so far, James 1:2 does not state that it is desirous to suffer through trials. However, this scripture explains that experiencing trials can contribute to the development of godly character, providing a person's attitude is right (cf. Job 2:10).

The last scripture presented as a contradiction to James 1:2 is Matthew 6:13, which is a very brief summary of a much larger subject. That subject is the desire to grow spiritually without having to endure severe trials. King David asked many times for the help he would need to obey God, and avoid the consequences of sin,

Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. <sup>5</sup>Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day (Ps. 25:4-5).

Teach me Your way, O Lord, and **lead me in a smooth path**, because of my enemies (Ps. 27:11; emphasis added).

Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart (give me singleness of heart) to fear Your name (have deep respect for God) (Ps. 86:11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

**Remove from me the way of lying** (cf. Jn. 8:44), and grant me (the correct understanding of) Your law (Ps. 119:29; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

**Before I was afflicted** (experienced trials) **I went astray** (cf. Jas. 1:2), but now I keep Your word (Ps. 119:67; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. **Lead me in the land of uprightness** (Ps. 143:10; emphasis added).

Therefore, the summary quote in Matthew 6:13a is a request that God help mankind to change and obey Him without having to experience severe trials. Unfortunately, when people harden their attitudes toward God and refuse to change their sinful conduct, God can allow them to experience difficult trials in order to become more teachable and willingly obedient to His commands (Mt. 4:4). The apostle Paul mentioned this principle when he was commenting about one of the brethren who refused to repent of a sin that he was committing,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you (Corinthian church), and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife (step-mother)! <sup>2</sup>And you are puffed up (arrogant), and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you (i.e. dis-fellowshipped)(1Cor. 5:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (1Cor. 5:5; cf. Mat. 6:13b).

So no contradiction exists between James 1:2 and Matthew 6:13. Instead, James 1:2 is commenting on the fact that trials can help God's people grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, while Matthew 6:13 expresses the human desire to change one's attitude and/or sinful conduct in the hope they can avoid severe trials and the hardships associated with them.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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