



Consider God's Goodness

James 1:17-18

James 1:17–18 (NKJV)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.



We Need To Beware Of The Enemy's Tricks

- One of the enemy's tricks is to convince us that our Father is holding out on us, that He does not love us and care for us.
- When Satan approached Eve, he suggested that if God loved her, He would permit her to eat of the forbidden tree.
- When Satan tempted Jesus, he raised the question of hunger.
“If Your Father loves You, why are You hungry?”



The Goodness Of God Is An Excellent Barrier

- The goodness of God is an excellent barrier against yielding to temptation. Since God is good, we do not need any other person (including Satan) to meet our needs.
- It is better to be hungry in the will of God than full outside the will of God. Once we start to doubt God's goodness, we will be attracted to Satan's offers; and the natural desires within will reach out for his bait.



The Goodness Of God Is An Excellent Barrier

- Moses warned Israel not to forget God's goodness when they began to enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land.



Deuteronomy 6:10–15 (NKJV)

10 “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,

11 houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—

12 then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.



13 You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you

15 (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

We Need This Warning Today



James Presented Four Facts About The Goodness Of God.

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God Gives Only Good Gifts

- Everything good in this world comes from God. If it did not come from God, it is not good.

Genesis 1:31 (NKJV)

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



God Gives Only Good Gifts

- If it comes from God, it must be good, even if we do not see the goodness in it immediately.
- Paul's thorn in the flesh was given to him by God, and it seemed to be a strange gift, yet it became a tremendous blessing to him (2 Cor. 12:1–10). We will focus on verses 7-10.



2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (NKJV)

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



The Way God Gives Is Good

James 1:17 (NRSV)

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

- It is possible for someone to give us a gift in a manner that is less than loving.



The Way God Gives Is Good

- The value of a gift can be diminished by the way it is given to us.
- But when God gives us a blessing, He does it in a loving, gracious manner. What He gives and how He gives are both good.



He Gives Constantly

- “Comes down” is a present participle: “it keeps on coming down.”
- God does not give occasionally; He gives continuously.

Lamentations 3:22–24 (NKJV)

22 Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!”

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He Gives Constantly

- Even when we do not see His gifts, He is sending them. How do we know this? Because He tells us so, and we believe His Word.

Psalm 37:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

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God Does Not Change

- There are no shadows with the Father of Lights. God can't change.
- He cannot change for the worse because He is holy; He cannot change for the better because He is already perfect.



God Does Not Change

Numbers 23:19 (NKJV)

“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

Malachi 3:6 (NKJV)

“For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.”



God Does Not Change

- The light of the sun varies as the earth changes, but the sun itself is still shining. If shadows come between the Father and us, He did not cause them.

Isaiah 55:7 (NKJV)

Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

- He is the unchanging God. This means that we should never question His love or doubt His goodness when difficulties come or temptations appear.

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If We Would Just Remember His Goodness, Because He Does Not Change.

If King David had remembered the goodness of the Lord, he would not have taken Bathsheba and committed those terrible sins. At least this is what Nathan the prophet told the king.

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2 Samuel 12:7–8 (NKJV)

7 Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

8 I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Note the repetition of the word give in this brief statement. God had been good to David, yet David forgot God’s goodness and took the bait.



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- The first barrier against temptation is a negative one: the judgment of God.
- This second barrier is positive: the goodness of God. A fear of God is a healthy attitude, but the love of God must balance it.
- We can obey Him because He may chasten us, or we can obey Him because He has already been so generous to us and because we love Him for it.



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- It was this positive attitude that helped to keep Joseph from sinning when he was tempted by his master's wife (*Gen. 39:7ff*). “Behold, with me around, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?” (*Gen. 39:8–9, NASB*) Joseph knew that all these blessings had come from God. It was the goodness of God, through the hands of his employer, that restrained him in the hour of temptation.

NASB New American Standard Bible



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There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- God's gifts are always better than Satan's bargains. Satan never gives any gifts, because you end up paying for them dearly.

Proverbs 10:22 (NKJV)

The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- Achan forgot the warning of God and the goodness of God, saw the forbidden wealth, coveted it, and took it.
- He became rich, but the sorrow that followed turned his riches into poverty (Josh. 7).



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- The next time you are tempted, meditate on the goodness of God in your life.
- If you think you need something, wait on the Lord to provide it.
- Never toy with the devil's bait.



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

- David was tempted to kill King Saul and hasten his own coronation, but he resisted the temptation and waited for God's time.



There Are Barriers Against Temptation

1 Samuel 24:5–7 (NKJV)

5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

6 And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."

7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.



Consider God's Divine Nature Within

(James 1:18)

- In the first barrier, God says, “Look ahead and beware of judgment.”
- In the second barrier, He says, “Look around and see how good I have been to you.”



Consider God's Divine Nature Within

(James 1:18)

- But with this third barrier, God says, “Look within and realize that you have been born from above and possess the divine nature.”

James 1:18 (NKJV)

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.



Consider God's Divine Nature Within

(James 1:18)

James used birth as a picture of desire leading to sin and death (James 1:15). He also used it to explain how we can enjoy victory over temptation and sin.

- The Apostle John used a similar approach.



Consider God's Divine Nature Within

(James 1:18)

1 John 3:9 (NKJV)

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

- “His seed” refers to the divine life and nature within the believer.

Note: *The characteristics of this birth.*



It Is Divine

- Nicodemus thought he had to reenter his mother's womb to be born again, but he was wrong.
- This birth is not of the flesh: it is from above (John 3:1–7).
- It is the work of God. Just as we did not generate our own human birth, we cannot generate our own spiritual birth. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, it was God who performed the miracle.



It Is Gracious

- We did not earn it or deserve it; God gave us spiritual birth because of His own grace and will.

John 1:12–13 (NKJV)

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

No one can be born again because of his relatives, his resolutions, or his religion. The new birth is the work of God.

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It Is Through God's Word

- Just as human birth requires two parents, so divine birth has two parents: the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

John 3:6 (NKJV)

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)

having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

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It Is Through God's Word

- The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring about the miracle of the new birth.

Since the Word of God is “living and powerful” (Heb. 4:12) it can generate life in the heart of the sinner who trusts Christ; and that life is God's life.



It Is The Finest Birth Possible

- We are “a kind of firstfruits of His creatures,” James wrote to Jewish believers, and the word firstfruits would be meaningful to them.
- The Old Testament Jews brought the firstfruits to the Lord as the expression of their devotion and obedience.

Proverbs 3:9 (NKJV)

Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;



It Is The Finest Birth Possible

- Of all the creatures God has in this universe, children of God are the very highest and the finest!
- We share God's nature.
- For this reason, it is beneath our dignity to accept Satan's bait or to desire sinful things. A higher birth must mean a higher life.



It Is The Finest Birth Possible

- By granting us a new birth, God declares that He cannot accept the old birth.
- Throughout the Bible, God rejects the firstborn and accepts the second born.
- He accepted Abel, not Cain; Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau.
- He rejects your first birth (*no matter how noble it might have been in the eyes of men*), and He announces that you need a second birth.



- It is this experience of the new birth that helps us overcome temptation.
- Of course, this new nature must be fed the Word of God daily, that it might be strong to fight the battle.
- Just as the Holy Spirit used the Word of God to give you spiritual birth, He uses the Word to give you spiritual strength.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”



- No matter what excuses we make, we have no one to blame for sin but ourselves.
- Our own desires lead us into temptation and sin. God is not to blame. But God has erected these three barriers to keep us from sin.

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