

## **Sermon Highlights...from the Audio Tape**

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**December 1, 2002:** "Yield your heart to God" by Reese Kauffman, President of Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc. Reading from James, Reese continues guiding us along a journey of "thinking about our hearts" and challenges us to, "yield our hearts completely and fully to God."

### ***Opening Prayer***

Our Father, this morning we are so grateful for your word. We know Lord that it's sharper than any two edged sword. It's a discerner of the thoughts and the intent of our heart. And I would pray right now Father that you would take your word and through your Spirit you would work in our hearts, and through each one of us Father that you would work in a personal and an individual way that we might that we might better effectively serve you with our lives. Speak to us this morning we pray Lord, and we ask this in the name Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ***Review of Last Week's Sermon***

Last week we began by asking, "What do you think of when you think of your heart? When you say, "I love you with all my heart", or if you say, "My heart is broken" what are you talking about?

We are talking about the inner core of our being. We have actions which are somewhat effected by the heart, but then we have words which come out of the heart. We have thoughts which are even deeper, but then you have motives behind the thoughts. And when you get down to the motives behind the thoughts, you are starting to get close to where the heart may be.

Last week we talked about King David, the man after God's own heart. In 1 Chronicles 28:9-20, He gave directions to his son Solomon for building the temple and challenged him to...

"Serve God with all of your heart, and with a willing mind. For God searches every heart and understands every motive behind every thought." And he said to his son, "you may have a problem here son, but if you will seek him you will find him. If you want to give your heart to God you can do it. If you seek him you will find him. And if you serve him will all your heart his power and resources will become available to you to finish the task God has called you to do." (Paraphrased by Reese Kauffman).

And as I said to you last week, that is one of the most encouraging things for me when I realized the potential of what could be done if I would really give my heart once and for all to God. Let him have it all, and see then what could happen in my life, because of his power and his resources which would be made available to me.

### ***How should we respond to trials?***

Today, I want us to continue our talk about the heart. Let's look today at what James, the half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, gave us about the heart in Chapter 1 of his New Testament book.

James begins with...

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials (Gr. peirasmos) of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

We as Christians are to consider trials as a very joyful thing. Why? Because we know that trials test our faith and through them we can become mature, and complete and lack nothing in our walk with God. Therefore since we know that the trial is going to bring us to that point we can be joyful about the trial.

These trials come in many forms. A trial is anything that disturbs your pattern, your peace, your plan, your strategy for life. All the sudden something interrupts it...that is what a trial is. It may last an hour or so, or considerably longer...days, weeks, months or even for a lifetime.

And then James says in verse 5, If any of you lack wisdom, if you don't understand how this trial is going to work in your life, if you're having a problem understanding this trial from God's vantage point, if you'll pray and ask God he will give you wisdom to see the trial as he sees it. And we are told that God will give us that wisdom willingly and freely. We can have wisdom to understand the trial.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. James 1:5-8 (NIV)

In verse 12, James says...

Blessed [or happy] is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 (NIV)

We are blessed because God is bringing us to perfection. God is using the trial, as an instrument that accomplishes things in our lives like nothing else. It brings you to maturity and completion...complete in Christ. That's why we rejoice when the trial comes, because we know it's going to make us what we ought to be.

Trials are something we should rejoice over. If we need help in rejoicing, we pray and ask God. He gives us wisdom and at the end of it all if we endure the trials we stand complete and mature before him and we receive the crown of life, which God has for us.

### ***What about temptations?***

Now, we come to verse 13 and James says...

When tempted (Gr. peirazo), no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; James 1:13 (NIV)

You will note that the Greek words peirasmos (trials) and peirazo (tempted) are both based on the same Greek word peira. However, James is shifting emphasis here in saying that

there is an inner solicitation for evil that comes toward that trial, which comes from our hearts. Because with the wrong inner reaction to testing, which God meant for our good, may become an occasion for sin.

Trials or temptations that enter a believers heart can either strengthen him, if he obeys God and remains under God's care, or it can be a solicitation for evil if he chooses to doubt God and disobey his Word.

Throughout the scriptures in general we are taught that God tries men...God tests men. For instance, Abram's faith was tested. Or Job was tested for his sincerity. During such trials Satan comes in with his temptations to do evil, but remember the evil temptations of the Devil can never effect the ultimate purposes of God. Jesus in the wilderness was tempted. Jesus said of Peter. Satan desires to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you. Time and time again Satan comes down to try what he can with temptations.

What James is saying in this passage is that he is not denying that God tries men, because God does try men. But he is denying that God tries men with evil intent. God's trial is never meant for evil.

For example, a loving parent sends his child to school. The child sends the child to school for good. Now is it possible that when the child goes through school the child can make wrong choices and get into big trouble and have all kinds of evil come into his life because of having gone to school. The answer is yes, if the child makes those choices. But the parent's purpose was good...sending the child to school even though evil can come from that if wrong choices are made.

James is realizing as he writes this portion of scripture that through many hard trials, many people are prone to think unfairly about God, or are inclined to blame God for their failures and become bitter toward God. You've run into people like that...you may have been there yourself...where you have a problem, or trial, and you become bitter toward God. And that is what James is referring to.

James categorically forbids the claim that temptations come from God. No man, not a single individual, however severe his testing can claim when sin comes into his life that it came from temptation that God gave. God brings trials, but God does not bring temptation to lead us to sin.

Notice in verse 13 that "God is tempting me." Is in quotation marks. This is because James had heard people say this. What the person quoted is essentially saying, is that God is behind the situation that produced the temptation, therefore, my sin truly can be blamed back upon God.

When you think about it, that's what Adam's response was to God in the Garden of Eden when confronted by God about his disobedience. "The woman that thou gave me, the women that thou put in the garden with me...she gave me fruit to eat therefore I eat the fruit that's true, but it's really your fault for putting the women here."

Adam passed the blame right back to God. Isn't that the same way it's done today in so many of our lives. Many people in the world today, blame their problems on their heritage, or their environment, or evil companions, or they might say, "The Devil made me do it."

We do anything we can, and everything we can do to escape personal responsibility for our sins. What James is saying here is God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone with evil. See God has a holy nature. His very nature is holy. There is nothing in him for sin to appeal to.

When God looks upon sin, no matter how appealing it may be to us, to God it is like a can of smelly rotten fishing worms on a hot day. James tells us that we are tempted not by God, but by our own evil desires that drag us away and entice us.

But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.  
James 1:14 (NIV)

The term being "dragged away and enticed" is referring to a lure of bait that draws a fish to the bait. And when the fish takes that lure it's a tragic effect, because he gets caught.

You see, we have a wicked heart, and we see the can of worms, more like a warm Crispy Cream donut and hot coffee on a cold morning. We smell the hot coffee and donuts and it looks so good and so appealing, but to God it's rotting fishing worms.

Because of the nature of our hearts, we have a capacity for sin. We even have a desire for sin. And sin does not force itself on the unwilling, but it is chosen because of its attractiveness. Sin is attractive because of our hearts. And therefore we are attracted to sin.

For example, in Mark 7:19 Jesus responded to those questioning the eating of certain foods, that...

Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'"

After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" Mark 7:15-23 (NIV)

You see we have a wicked heart, that goes way back to original sin, that came into our lives from Adam, and that original heart has an attractiveness toward that can of worms. We see the worms as those Crispy Cream donuts and we want them. God sees them for what they are. We're attracted to it. And, that's what draws us to it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says...

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

The key to this is that every time we are attracted to the worms, they look so appealing to me, even though they do not to God. I have a nature that wants them and I see a sin that I want to be attracted to. It can be some thoughts, it can be words that I want to speak, it can be actions that I want to do, or whatever it might be. I see them and I'm attracted to them. And here is what happens. The Lord says, there will never be a temptation from the world or from the Devil, or from your heart that you have to accept. With every temptation there is always a way to escape.

Jeremiah tells us in chapter 17 verse 9-10...

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." Jeremiah 17:9-10 (NIV)

If we could see sin as God sees it we would run from it. Unfortunately we have a heart that wants it.

James, describes what happens when we yield to the natural desires of our old nature when he says...

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15 (NIV)

The desire when its conceived it reaches out and has this desire from the heart and it gives birth to sin. And sin when it is fully grown gives birth to death...the destruction of what happens to our lives. Every time we submit to it, sins becomes that actual mother of death.

It kind of works this way. Each of us are tempted in our own ways. Not two of us are exactly alike and the temptations come differently because the heart is different. But each are tempted in his own way. Man is confronted with the allurements of temptation. He sees only the attractiveness of the desired object. His will, the will we have, our minds our will, we sanction the performance of sin. Then the tragic consequences, the result of sin, take place. We go after the bait, the lure, that draws us away.

The Bible teaches that we are free to choose, but not free to choose the consequences of our choice, for those are determined by the eternal purposes and the law of God.

In Galatians 6:7, Paul says...

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:7-8 (KJV)

Think about that if you will. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Listen, you can't put God off, and say, "Lord I'll be back a little later. Just give me a moment, give me a little space." You can't do that with God, who is always crying out to you and drawing you in the right direction. You cannot do that. We think we can. We think we can get away with it. You know what happens in our minds, is that we think just one time. Just let me do it this one time. I won't do it again. Just a little bit. It's so attractive. Just one bit. Let me go smell it a little bit at least. And we go toward the temptation.

But the Lord says, "Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If he sows to the flesh, he shall reap corruption.

Last week, we looked at David as he said to his son Solomon, "Give God the motives of your heart. Give him a willing mind. Serve him with everything you have. And if you will seek him you will find him.

### ***Yield your heart completely and fully to God***

Yield your heart completely and fully to God. Let God have the motives behind the heart. Not all the time trying to fight the actions and the words and the thoughts that go below and beyond all that down to the heart itself and yield the heart directly to God himself and allow God to have it.

James asks in Chapter 4:1-3

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:1-3 (NIV)

Here again, James is pointing out the fact that what causes problems in your life Don't they come from those desires that battle down deep in your heart? The answer is Yes. You want something, you don't get it. You're all frustrated. You're all excited.

When's the last time you got upset over anything? When's the last time you got angry? When's the last time you got excited about something, that you shouldn't have been excited about? When did this last time happen to you? Don't they come from the desires that battle within you? The answer again is Yes.

And then again the text, you have not because you've asked not.

My question to you this morning is when is the last time you've taken the motives of your heart before God. Oh we pray about the actions. We pray about the words. We even talk about the thoughts once in a while. But how about the motives...get down to the core of the heart. When was the last time you took your heart before God and asked God to make your heart clean and search your heart and to know your heart and make it everything it needs to be?

James says in verse 8 of Chapter 4...

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

David said in 1 Chronicles 28:9, son [Solomon]...

If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. 1 Chronicles 28:9b (NIV)

In Hebrews, Chapter 4 it says the word of God is living. It's alive. It's sharper than any two edged sword. It's a discerner of the thoughts and the intent of the heart.

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13 (NIV)

So here's a solution this morning to the problem. Sin is attractive to us only because we have a wicked heart. Sin is attracted to us only because we have a sin nature. It is not attractive to God. He sees it for what it is. We see it for what we want. We push aside the consequences. We say we want it.

To the believer most times we know that it is wrong. We know that there are consequences. And we have to make ourselves temporarily insane. If you want to put it that way. We look at the sin and say, Oh I want it and we forget all about the fact that God will not be mocked. We forget all about the fact that there are consequences to our actions. We forget all about that and we say, I want it and I want to go for it. Lord get away from me right now. I want what I want, and we go for the sin.

### ***Be in the word and allow the word to be in you***

Here's the key. If you'll allow yourself to be in the word of God and you allow the word of God to be in your life what happens. When the word of God is in your life you see the worms for what they are. If you haven't been in the word of God the worms look like the donuts every time. But if you spend time in the word of God the word of God shows you what sin really is. You see the results. You can't sell yourself on it as easily, because you see from the word of God the results of what sin actually is in your life. You see that sin for what it can be.

### ***Pray for your personal spiritual needs***

Another key is prayer. We cry out to God about our hearts. We take our hearts before God and we say, Oh God, search my heart and know my heart.

Do you pray for your personal spiritual needs? Do you, after you spend time in the word of God, take your personal spiritual needs before God and ask him for help and for guidance and for direction in your life? That is the key to victory over the heart.

The heart can only be seen as seen through the word of God. The victory can only be had as we cry out to God and ask God for help and to give us victory over the sin that comes at us every time.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7 (KJV)

### ***Closing***

Dear people, be in the word of God. Let it search your hearts. Let it show you sin for what it is. Let it show you life for what it is, and then when that is completed, take your heart before God. If you seek him you will find him. You have not, James said, because you've never taken your heart before God and asked God to guide and direct you. God will show you life for what it is. God will show you the results for what they can be. And God's will is always good, acceptable and perfect.