

The Determinant Distance  
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From James 1:12-18. THE DETERMINANT DISTANCE, PART 1

#1. Resistance to temptation is not a practical impossibility. Shunning temptation is the daily business of

- persevering "under trial" (v. 12),
- seeking to be "approved" by the Lord (v. 12),
- ever grasping after "the crown of life" (v. 12),
- trusting in what the Lord has "promised" (v. 12),
- pursuing the "love" of God above the love of self (v. 12).

This therefore means that resistance to and the shunning of, temptation becomes the Christian way of life. Such a way of life displaces, overrules, and if necessary, countermands what is called "lifestyle."

#2. There is a way of life that in effect becomes the receptacle of or the terminus of the blessings of God. "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (v. 17.) Those "good things" and "perfect gifts" constitute the supernatural conditioning of circumstance.

#3. We set aside precisely that which our flesh wants us to do, in favor of mastering temptation, for only one reason. The Reason: Because we trust the One in whom "there is no variation or shifting shadow." Not one of us will shun temptation if we have not full confidence in the Word of God.

#4. Resisting temptation is our obligation. One must respect that fact. This is a personal matter.

Our God is "the Father of lights" (v. 17.) Daily resisting temptation is a personal burst of eternal light in our corner of this dark world.

From James 1:12-18. THE DETERMINANT DISTANCE, PART 2

#1. Temptation is not a matter of magnitude. It is a matter of personal corruption: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and

He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" (v. 13, 14.)

#2. James uses the birth analogy. "Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (v. 15.)

- There is CONCEPTION, a time at which the idea is first thought or considered.
- There is FORM: It is pre-concrete but the sin and its final shape is maturing though still in the unseen.
- There is BIRTH, at which point the sin appears in its material form. The act is done.
- And there is THE AFTERMATH: Something dies.

#3. Here is the fulcrum: Everything starts with abstractions. It all starts with ideas. Bad ideas! And then it moves to the concrete where sin, finally matured, is performed.

#4. Each of us crosses the gulf between abstraction --> and --> concretes. But how we cross it is the difference between life and death. For this reason, this distance may be comprehended as the *determinant distance*.

#5. This means that the temptation is not "out there." Rather, the temptation is in the working of one's own mind. The flesh, the body is purely the instrument of the mind-- not the other way around.

From James 1:12-18. THE DETERMINANT DISTANCE, PART 3

#1. The determinant distance between abstractions --> and --> concretes will take one of two forms.

- It will be crossed by personal corruption, which is really the essence of deception;
- Or it will be crossed by the love of God v. 12. James admonishes, saying, "Do not be deceived, my brethren" (v. 16.)

#2. The relation between abstractions and concretes is determinant regarding what a person is capable of being.

#3. The Lord has expectations of each of us in this matter: "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (v. 22). Saying one thing and doing another is a kind of delusion. "The Word" is to be done.

Question: How? Answer: By crossing the distance between The Word of God --> and --> the World of Human Circumstance. Put another way, we must cross the determinant distance between the mind of God and the human mind.

#4. All of this brings with it immediate results. "In the exercise of His will, He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures" (v. 18.) Is there anything that would not greatly and immediately benefit from the insertion of this development into it? The first fruits offered were an acknowledgement of all that God had done for His people (Deuteronomy 26:1-5).

#5. We are to be that. Overruling temptation, which is "in the exercise of His will," is the price we bear to become "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 1.)