

God Is Good

James 1:1-18 I saw a bumper sticker that said “Good God; Bad Devil.” This is a statement most Christians should understand, but often we give God credit for doing bad things in our lives. We have to recognize that God is not evil, neither can He tempt us with evil. Whatever God does or allows in our lives will always be good. The author of sickness, confusion, disease, misery and strife is the devil. James makes it very clear in his letter that God cannot tempt us with evil. Only the devil tempts us with evil. James says, “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (vv. 16-17, KJV).

If we are seeking to walk with the Lord daily, we can rest assured that whatever He allows in our life will ultimately be for our good. God allowed Satan to tempt Job, but at the end of the testing Job had everything restored to him double over what the enemy stole. Paul tells us that all things work for the good of those that love the Lord and are called according to His purpose. If we are rebellious against God and refuse our call in life, we cannot expect for everything to work for the good even though we are saved.

I loved the illustration a Bible teacher gave about life. She shared that God creates our lives as a homemaker makes a cake. First the homemaker collects all the ingredients in the recipe: Baking soda, which has a salty taste; salt; flour, which has no taste at all; eggs, which are tasteless; milk, etc. are all added at different times. The cake is stirred and finally baked. Only after the cake is baked are we able to taste these blended flavors and enjoy the results. Throughout our lives we will experience the bitter with the sweet, the flavorful and the flavorless, but if our hearts are determined to serve the Lord, the end result will be good. None of us

like to think about being put into a hot oven, but we all will experience fiery trials. Peter even said for us not to be surprised when this happens.

Our reading today says the man who endures temptation will receive a crown of life. It is no fun to be tempted of the devil. However, if every time we are tempted we seek the way of escape, that is Jesus, we will have the victory. The fact God allows temptation has always puzzled me. We pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." We have to remember that the Holy Spirit, not Satan, led Jesus into a time of temptation. The reason God allowed this temptation of Jesus was so He would win the victory over the tempter for us. Now the reason that God allows us to be tempted is to prove to the enemy that we too have the victory over him because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. We can endure temptation and receive the crown of life because Jesus endured and overcame every temptation Satan presented Him. Even trials, troubles, temptations and testings will work for our good if we love Jesus and are living our days fulfilling His will and His calling on our lives.

**READ: Ezekiel 35:1-36:38; James 1:1-18; Psalm 116:1-19;
Proverbs 27:23-27**