

## TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. James 1 : 2-4

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1 : 13-15

James is one of my favourite letters in the New Testament because of his forthrightness and common sense.

But whenever I read the first chapter the above verses confused me. For the first verse tells us to count it all joy when trials come our way. Then after some verses later in v 13, he says do not say God is tempting me when you are tempted.

What does this mean? As I was thinking about this seeming contradiction, I really believe the Spirit of God taught me the difference.

Trials are those over which we have no control. For example Joseph had no control over the fact that he was sold as a slave by his brothers. I had no control over my father's death. So trials are events which happen beyond our control. But when God allows these trials in our lives, this testing produces patience and this patience leads to fullness in Jesus.

Temptations are those which we put ourselves into it. A shining example would be David gazing at Bethsheba, when he should have been in the battle field. Not only did the sight of Bethsheba tempt David, but he desired her, had her, killed her husband. So the temptation of David gave birth to death. He had control over his actions, yet he was ensnared by his senses. The same is with Samson too.

My dear young friends, there are some trials which God allows us in our lives, so that through these trials we may be purified and become more like Jesus.

At the same time, we are surrounded by temptations all over. We gaze and gaze at what we should not and sometimes squarely blame God, saying He allowed us to be tempted.

Such lame excuses will not save your soul from death. The wages of sin is death. You cannot drive into the bar and tell yourself you are going to fight the temptation to drink. This is ridiculous. But this is what we do most of the time.

We see things that we should not be seeing. And when this temptation snares our eyes, and brings in desire, we are slowly drawn into the dragnet. And finally we shift the blame and say why did God allow me to fall into this temptation.

But you could also have said no. We have the choice to say yes or no to temptation. That is why James emphatically states, " Do not say, I am tempted by God."

I hope you see the difference now.

I pray God opens the eyes of your heart and draw you closer to Himself.

God bless.