

James 1:13-18 (NIV)

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. 16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

59-01-03-The Father of Lights

fatherhood, God the Father, light, lust, temptation, grace, Father's Day
James 1:13-18

Our heavenly Father's *provision* is from a heart that is *PRO-VISION*.

INTRODUCTION: (text as Scripture reading)

–The word *provision*, when hyphenated, becomes *pro-vision* (*provision means a meeting of needs; pro-vision means supportive of seeing or vision-friendly*). Both ideas characterize God the Father: **HOM.idea**.

–When God created the “formless and empty” mass of the universe, His first word over it was, “Let there be light.” Why light, before all else? God is *pro-vision*. He's a God *of action*, but also *of communication* [In movie production, you hear, “*Lights, cameras, action!*”]. In the drama of life, *God's Word* provides the *lights*, *angels and humans* are the *cameras*, and the *story of creation and redemption* is the *action*.

–Our **text** today in James 1 describes God as “*the Father of heavenly lights*.” Why is He called that? He is *pro-vision*. He first wants us to have the ability to see, because, by seeing correctly, we will understand His parental heart and find Him truly “*Our Father...*”

I. Light Lets Us See Our Father's Provision Realistically, v.13-14,

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

- A. *God is a Father Who gives only good things to His children– Luke 11:11-13, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”)*
- B. *If we say, “Yeah, His motive may be right, but all these things He made can become temptations!” then Ge 1:31a says, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (Even the forbidden fruit had some good purpose, which we may someday learn about.)*
- C. *“But what about **food and sex and human ambition**? They tempt us **to overeat and to lust and to be greedy!**”*
 - a. *Nothing God created has power to tempt us, but “each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.”*
 - b. *Not food but wanting more than we need causes overeating.*

- c. *Not the body of the opposite sex* but desiring what does not sexually belong to us causes the *sin of lust*.
- d. *Not ambition* but harnessing it for selfish goals creates *greed*.

TRANS: Our Father is *PRO-VISION*: He wants us to see realistically the goodness of His provision. Pleasure in eating food is a bonus; the goal is nourishing the body. Enjoying the body's beauty is a bonus in being sexually reproductive beings created in God's image. The *thrill of human ambition* is merely a bonus for accomplishing *creative work* that can serve others. **Our heavenly Father's provision** of bonuses is *generous*. But *He is totally goal-oriented*, and He wants us to see this realistically, because He's *PRO-VISION*!

II. Light Lets us See What's Really Good for Us, v.16-17a, Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...

- A. That word "*deceived*" points straight back to the Garden of Eden:
 1. By getting Adam and Eve to feed on a personal "knowledge of good and evil," Satan got their eyes "opened" to moral independence.
 2. The forbidden "fruit" spiritually killed them, just as God warned—**Ge 2:17**, "...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (*Independent morality is lethal*, because "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"... "*the Father of heavenly lights*.")
- B. Satan's trick "opened" humanity's eyes the wrong way:
 1. Now people choose their own morality— **Pro 21:2a** (NKJV), Every way of a man is **right in his own eyes**...
 2. Was Adam's *independently* "opened" eyes seeing right, when he told God in **Ge 3:12**, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."? (God said in **Ge 2:18**, "It is **not good** for the man to be alone. I will make a helper **suitable for him**." Eve was still "good," still "suitable for him," but Adam now *saw* her, not as a *divine provision*, but as a *troublesome liability*.)
- C. God's light is His Word! It opens our eyes the right way, showing us what is really good for us— **Ps 119:105**, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

TRANS: *Built into us* is the ability to **trust**, not for trusting in our own

independence and walking in our own light, but for trusting God as "Our Father" and walking in the light of His Word. Satan uses many voices to gain our trust, as he did with Eve, using the serpent's voice, but God's Word says in **Pro 3:5-6**, *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight*.

III. Light Lets Us See Our True Destiny, v.18, *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created*.

- A. [When the lights come up on the stage, the drama is about to begin.] *New birth* comes about "through the word of truth," which is the source of God's light. It's like a real physical birth [**No light in the womb**: babies are in the dark, until light introduces them to a whole new world.]
- B. I get excited talking about human destiny, because it's so much bigger than I once thought... but that's because I was seeing it through the lens of a microscope focused on getting to heaven...
 1. *New birth* is not about getting to heaven anymore than regular birth is about getting to ride in a car seat. Yes, you do get the car seat, you do get a ride to heaven, but *heaven is just the launching pad for our ultimate human destiny*.
 2. Born-again humanity [the Church, the *Bride of Christ*, that is, *us!*] were given new "*birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created*" (This is talking about a *whole new world of creation* (both spiritual and physical) that humanity is going to provide the leadership for:
 - a. Jesus, by His Incarnation, His Cross, and His Resurrection is the King who initiated this *divinely-planned human project*.
 - b. We, as His corporate Bride, reigning beside Him, are the ministers who will serve in governing "a new heaven and earth."

CONCLUSION:

—"*the Father of heavenly lights*" is *PRO-VISION*. He wants us to see His provision for us realistically. He wants us to see what is really good for us. He wants us to see our true human destiny. Don't take your *new birth* lightly. See it in God's light. And in the midst of the loud, passing voices that try to distract you, trust in these Holy Scriptures, for *His Word is a lamp to your feet and a light for your path*.