

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

### A LIFE LONG BATTLE

James 1:14 “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”

Good and evil. Sinner and saint. Belief and unbelief. These opposites seem so easy to define and comprehend. However, when it comes to who you are and how you think and do, you realize these three phrases capture the constant battle that is waged within your heart, soul, mind and spirit.

Adam and Eve had it made. God created them sinless, placed them in a garden that was simply described as paradise. They lacked for nothing. They were blessed beyond human comprehension. Yet, the Devil, wily, crafty, shrewd and evil led them to willfully disobey God’s direct command. They ate the forbidden fruit.

James describes exactly how Satan went about leading Eve and then Adam into sin. He lured and enticed them by their own desire. How better to understand these words of James than to think of a fisherman putting a big, juicy earthworm on a hook, throwing it into the lake to “tempt” a hungry fish seeking out its daily food to take that worm into its mouth only to become hooked and caught. This is the picture James paints with the words “lured and enticed” as to how you end up sinning.

Note St. Paul’s discussion concerning this spiritual battle that goes on within you. “Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (Romans 7:21-24)

As Luther wrote, the Devil strives, as he did with Eve and Adam, to “seduce and lead you into misbelief, despair and other great shame and vice.” (Small Catechism) This is where God’s gift of faith to you in your Lord and Savior Jesus is your answer to the Devil’s attempts to lead you into sin and hell, “Thanks be to

God, who delivers me (you) through Jesus Christ our (your) Lord! (Romans 7:21-25) He has defeated your adversary the Devil, rescued you from His grasp and grants You His victory earned and won by His perfect life, satisfactory death and victorious resurrection.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, my Good Shepherd, protect and rescue me from all temptations to do evil, forgiveness when I sin and life everlasting through Your victorious life for me. In Your holy name. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The strife is o'er, the battle done;  
Now is the victor's triumph won;  
Now be the song of praise begun. Alleluia!

The pow'rs of death have done their worst;  
But Christ their legions hath dispersed.  
Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

The three sad days have quickly sped,  
He rises glorious from the dead.  
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

He broke the age-bound chains of hell;  
The bars from heav'n's high portals fell.  
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell. Alleluia!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee,  
From death's dread sting Thy servants free  
That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia!  
(LSB 464)