

**Sermon or Lesson: James 1:14-15** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Placing The Blame Where The Blame Belongs

INTRO: Back in the early 1970's, a TV comedian named Flip Wilson coined a phrase that became quite popular at the time, "The devil made me do it." Of course using an excellent delivery, Flip Wilson's usage of the phrase was quite funny and seemed innocent. However, from God's perspective, the principle behind this phrase "The devil made me do it" is neither funny nor innocent because technically it contradicts what God says about who is to blame and responsible.

Let's look at what God says in this passage in James 1:14-15 about who is to blame for doing bad things - for sinning.

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READ: James 1:14-15, with v.13 for context

[Lesson Question: What is being described here in verses 13-15?]

SECTION POINT: The content of verses 13-15 is a description of the steps and dynamics of giving into temptation to sin.

- - These verses are describing the sequential steps that comprise the overall process of committing a sin.
  - - Specific focus is on the dynamics involved in each step, progressing through the process.
  - - The type of outcome being described here for the resisting of temptation is failure.
  - - Every person or "each one" (v.14) of us is tempted, and this process or progression of steps is characteristic to and applies to everyone.
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v.14 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is the source of temptation being cited here? And what are some other possible sources of temptation?]

SECTION POINT: God says here the first step in the process of failing a temptation is the generating of the temptation thought from the source of "our own evil desires".

"desires" = Strong's #1939 "lusts; a longing (especially for what is forbidden)"; "lusts" (KJV & NAS)

- - Each person ultimately becomes the possessor of the evil desire.
- - Evil desires have in their nature some tangible and/or perceived selfish advantage, benefit, gratification, or agenda to gain.

Aside from our own evil desires, other sources from which temptations generate can be:

- - other people;
  - - opportunities or circumstances in life;
  - - the Kingdom of Darkness;
  - - voices in our mind;
  - - our dreams during sleep;
  - - our own foolishness or lack of common sense, uneducated, inexperience, naivety, casual regard, thoughtlessness, faulty judgment, defective understanding of what is right and wrong, distorted perspective, and etc.; i.e. not just acting from evil desire but also failing to act appropriately even though there is no evil desire present or intended. (cf. James 4:17)
  - - Other sources of temptation can act in conjunction with each other and then ultimately link with “our own evil desires” or thinking, thus operating independently or corporately.
  - - We each consider, then decide, and then act on the temptation from whatever the source or combination of sources. Therefore, we each ourselves individually are ultimately responsible for our own temptation failures.
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[Lesson Question: In this verse 14, after our generation of an evil desire, what is the next step in the process of failing a temptation and what does it mean?]

**SECTION POINT:** After our generating of an evil desire, the next step in the process of failing a temptation is being “dragged away and enticed”.

“dragged away” = Strong’s #1828 being drawn out; to drag forth, i.e. (figuratively) to entice (to sin); “carried away” (NAS)

“enticed” = Strong’s #1185 “being seduced; to entrap, i.e. (figuratively) delude”

- - After a temptation to sin has formed in our mind, we consider and contemplate its merits, or its value, or its usefulness, or its desirability to us, in order to determine if we are going to make the choice to agree with it or not.
- - This action of considering its value exposes us to being attracted or invited or seduced or deceived or deluded or enticed to “desire” some feature we think the temptation is offering us to acquire or accomplish.
- - Thus, because the temptation is an opportunity to sin, we are being enticed or “dragged away” from a sin-neutral non-involvement position and from a potentially righteous or holy response to the opportunity the temptation is based on.
- - Furthermore, we are exposing ourselves to potentially falling under entrapment, enslavement, and compulsion to the sin that the temptation is offering or representing. (cf. Romans 7:5 (NIV) - being “controlled by the sinful nature”)
- - Also, we are opening the door to being enticed by or dragged into subsequent temptations and sins that relate to or spring forth from the original temptation.
- - “Being dragged away” may or may not be against the person’s better judgment or will.

- - Likewise, the tempted person may or may not be fully aware of the true nature or ramifications entailing the temptation; e.g. Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis chapters 3 and 4).
  - - An interesting note here is that the term “dragged away” seems to hint at containing an intrinsic power or power potential; this would seem to suggest that we are dabbling with something powerful when we entertain temptations, similar to a child playing with a loaded pistol.
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## v.15 - READ

[Lesson Question: What does the next step entail - "conceiving"?)

SECTION POINT: After being "dragged away and enticed", the next step in the process of failing a temptation is by an act of our will the temptation "conceives" or is taken in ownership.

“conceived” = Strong’s #4815 “having conceived; to clasp, i.e. seize (arrest, capture); specifically, to conceive (literally or figuratively); by implication, to aid”; 'conceive' - (AHD) "to form, develop, or devise"

- - After agreeing with the temptation and desiring it, we then contemplate and decide whether or not to take ownership of it, clasping or seizing it for oneself.
  - - By an act of our will, we each decide and make a choice of commitment, thereupon at that moment owning the temptation with its desire goal - i.e. conception has just occurred.
  - - Accountability before God for committing an actual sin now officially and judicially comes into effect against us.
  - - Being motivated by "our own evil desire" (v.14) to choose to now personally own the temptation, we then start to form and develop the temptation, preparing the means by which to accomplish or acquire its desired goal, and if necessary devising a plan.
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[Lesson Question: What are the dynamics of the next step - "giving birth to sin"?)

SECTION POINT: In this next step, agreeing action is being taken upon the temptation, giving birth to or producing sin.

“gives birth” = Strong’s #5088 “produces; to produce (from seed, as a mother, a plant, the earth, etc.) literally or figuratively”; generates

- - Temptation, which formerly was in the form of a concept or thought, has transformed or metamorphosed into now “giving birth” or producing a sin.
- - This 'birthed' sin has now become a transgression or violation that harms or brings adverse effect upon someone, whether it be oneself, another person, or God.

- - Effectually, we are now setting in motion the dynamics to act upon the temptation in some way - incorporating its component dynamics mentally or emotionally, disseminating them verbally, and/or implementing them physically.
  - - Like the preceding steps in this process, this decision to initiate taking agreeing action is a choice each of us makes, by our own free will.
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[Lesson Question: What are the dynamics of the last step - grows and "gives birth to death"?)

SECTION POINT: After becoming an actual sin, the last step in the process of failing a temptation is it "grows" and then it produces "death".

"when it is full grown" = Strong's #0658 "being fully formed; to complete entirely, i.e. consummate"; "finished" (KJV); "accomplished" (NAS)

- - In this stage, the temptation desire has matured - in its full manifestation, i.e. it has been agreed with, planned out, and now is being implemented - being solidly acted upon either outwardly and/or inwardly.
  - - In essence, the desire temptation has now given birth to or produced death - i.e. the person is judged guilty by God for that sin and thereupon is recipient of God's determination for judgment consequences for committing that sin, which includes death. (cf. Romans 7:5 "...we bore fruit for death")
  - - This phrase "when it is full grown" suggests that other additional sins can be instigated and born out of the first sin, which also generate and compound adverse accountability and judgment before God.
  - - Note that God has allowed the sin to mature - to fully form, to come to full fruition, to branch out, to multiply. God does not interrupt nor stop its progress or development. So believers are not immune from this progression.
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Some other observations about the process of failing a temptation:

- - The temptation process being described here is self-initiated and self-voluntary but the tone of the wording here may hint at the colluding presence of compulsion ("dragged away" v.14) and there are other passages that describe forced compulsion, e.g. Romans 8:6-8; 7:14-20.
  - - The person himself/herself bears the responsibility for the committing of a sin.
  - - God has no role, nor involvement, nor responsibility in the committing of a sin. God does not extend a proposal to any person to consider to sin, He does not help anyone decide to sin, and neither does He cause anyone to act in sin. Instead, according to 1 Corinthians 10:13 God is actively working to encourage and help each believer to successfully resist giving in to temptations.
  - - Giving into temptation springs forth from our "own evil desires" (v.14) or sin nature, which we all have and were born with (except Jesus alone). As described in this passage, giving into temptation is a series of progressive steps each person takes in making a choice to sin.
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BIG IDEA: Along every step in the process of a person committing a sin, that person by an act of their will is the one who considers / decides / and acts, therefore that person bears the blame and the responsibility before God for committing the sin.

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APPLICATIONS:

- - Who or what do you blame when you sin? When you fly into a rage?
  - - What handy excuses do you recite when you sin?
  - - Deep down, do you really think on Judgment Day that God is going to buy into (accept) your blaming and excuses? Did He buy into (accept) Adam and Eve's blaming and excuses after they sinned in the Garden of Eden?
  - - On Judgment Day, do you think all the times you gave into temptation will be worth it?
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