

# Expository Files 23.12

Dec. 2016

Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley



**With this issue  
We Cease Monthly Publication**

## Expository Files

Copyright © 2016

Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

Keep up with EF on  
Facebook: *Expository Files Group*

*Next Book – Release Date, Jan. 2017*

*Twelve Spiritual Disciplines*

[www.expositoryfiles.com](http://www.expositoryfiles.com)



# **EXPOSITORY FILES 23.12, DEC. 2016**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

*{HYPERLINKS MAY NOT WORK ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS}*

*{IF VIEWING WITH YOUBLISHER, YOU MUST DOWNLOAD THE PDF, THEN LINKS SHOULD WORK}*

[Expository Files Announcement](#)

[Front Page, Final Page, Jon W. Quinn](#)

[Replying to the call of a fallen world, Dan. 3:16-18, Jon W. Quinn](#)

["If the Lord Wills," Jas. 4:13-17, Nathan Quinn](#)

[Through Faith in Christ, Gal. 2:15-21](#)

[Gal. 2:20, Johnny Felker](#)

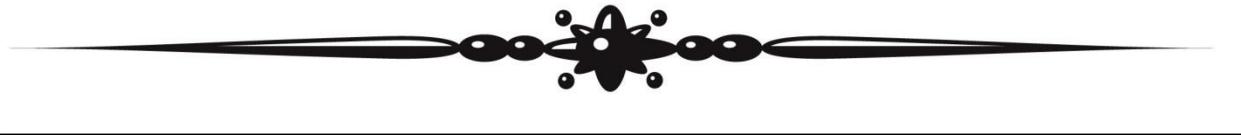
[Pagan Idolatry, Isa. 36, Drew Nelson](#)

[Spiritual Disciplines: Resisting Temptation, Jon W. Quinn](#)

[Plan of Salvation](#)

[Final Page, Final Page, Warren E. Berkley](#)

[PRESSING ON MAGAZINE – Highly Recommended](#)



## Expository Files 23.12, Dec. 2016

Edited by Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

---

### Expository Files Ceasing Monthly Publication

This December issue (23.12) will be the final monthly issue of Expository Files. The editors are saddened, but our sadness is diminished by the knowledge that we have provided exposition of Bible texts for 23 years, still archived and available through our website which links to the Canadian server owned by Steve Rudd.

In the summer of 2015, the editors met in Texas. Jon has experienced serious illness with his vision. While he still awaits a potential remedy (for which we all pray), there is the continuing strain on his eyes doing publishing work and especially the tedious html editing. And Jon's future visual capacity is uncertain.

Aware of this in our 2015 meeting, we agreed that we had worked so well together over 23 years, it would just not seem right to break up the team. Warren told Jon, "if I can't do this with you, I'm not doing it alone or with anyone else."

The time has come. This issue will be the final monthly publication. Other words of reflection will appear in the **Front Page** and **Final Page**. And, in the Final Page, Warren will highlight some of the initial plans to keep the EF imprint alive in other forms.

Thanks to all our writers, our wives, proofreaders and readers. We are thankful to God for the opportunities afforded us over 23 years of continuous monthly publication. *Click Here To Visit A Magazine We Recommend, [Pressing On, edited by Mark Roberts.](#)*

[Click Here For A Sample Issue Of Pressing On \(PDF Link\)](#)



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## **The Front Page (For the final time)**

### **Expository Files 23.12**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

I will say that the decision to cease publication of Expository Files has been a difficult decision for me. I will explain why the decision needed to be made in a moment.

I appreciate Warren being so understanding as I hesitated between the decision to continue or to cease editing Expository Files. 22 years is quite a long time to regularly do a thing. To be working on our last issue is sad thing for me. It will be strange not putting together an issue next month. I am so thankful that Warren approached me with his idea back in 1993. A monthly electronic publication! No postal regulations or costs. No spoiled or lost issues. Not a whole lot of expense involved. Will this internet thing ever catch on? Let's do this!

Neither of us had any idea how many people we would reach or how long it would last. I cannot begin to express how much I have enjoyed working with Warren through the years. I still wonder why he asked me to co-edit EF with him. We had been friends since the late 70's when we were both located with churches in Kansas. But we had never lived very close to one another since then. He knew many men more capable than I. But, it worked! Warren has always been such an encouragement. I love and respect him as a brother and friend. Without question, He is a loyal soldier of our King. He has helped make me a better disciple of Jesus.

I also want to thank all those who have written for our publication over the years, several of them posthumously. We could not have done it without them (well, we could have, but the issues would have been much shorter!).

The problem I have been dealing with over the past year and a half which has led to this decision is a disease of the cornea. At one point last year, the cells started detaching from the surface of the cornea and this was extremely painful. Various medications and treatments were tried, but ultimately I had to have surgery. The remaining cells were scraped off and allowed to grow back. Unfortunately, they did not grow back as smoothly as we had hoped. The slight imperfections in the

rounded shape of the cornea meant continued vision impairment, though much improved over what it had been.

Reading and editing, as well as formatting for the web became very difficult and even frustrating. It had always taken quite a bit of time to index all the articles for the archives, but now it was taking much longer still. During this time I have also been preaching from outlines with large fonts; 18 point fonts at first. And with difficulty. That has since come down to a 16 point font presently, and I am comfortable with that and could probably go 14. I will have another surgery soon. I am also dealing with some eye pressure issues.

So, that is where I am right now. I want to say that it could have been much worse. I continue to preach, teach both public and private Bible classes and publish a weekly bulletin. I can drive, but generally do so only in the daytime. I can actually see at a distance without glasses better now than I have been able to my whole adult life, but not quite as well with glasses.

I just wanted to explain why we came to this decision. I also wanted to express my thanks to God for the opportunity that I have had over the past 22 years to work with Warren in this endeavor. Glory to His name! So, a heartfelt thank you to my friends, Warren and Paula. Also to my wife Barbara. She has been so supportive in so many ways. Actually, I am a very blessed person. Very blessed!

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## **“We Will Not”**

### ***Replying to the call of a fallen world***

**(Daniel 3:16-18)**

**By Jon W. Quinn**

To have *“integrity”* is to be honest while doing what is right regardless of the costs. The Old Testament book of Daniel teaches us much about integrity, not only in the example of the book's namesake, but also in his three contemporaries; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In addition to the examples of faith, courage and commitment, there are other themes running throughout the book as well. One theme is that the Hebrews were not in captivity because the gods of Babylon were stronger than Jehovah, but rather because of the unfaithfulness of God's people; *“Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.”* (Daniel 9:11).

Another message of the book is that the people would soon be allowed to return home and rebuild Jerusalem, and that a Messianic kingdom was coming, but it would not be established immediately upon their return home from captivity, but about 490 years in the future (Daniel 2:44; 9:24-26). This, of course, speaks of that which was fulfilled in Jesus and His kingdom (Colossians 1:13). But let us turn our attention to the example of faith seen in Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

#### **The King's Selection**

*“...youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding, and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.”* (Daniel 1:4,5). These were not three young men with nothing to live for. They were mentally, physically and socially qualified. They were to be trained for three years and then serve on the highest court of advisors in the land. The policies of a world empire would be formed

based on their input. The honesty, dedication and integrity of these three men was no accident. Spiritual mindedness and seeking to please God goes hand in hand with being the best you can be.

### **The King's Decree**

*"...that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up." (Daniel 3:5).* A new law was passed that required worship of an idol. Now these three young men have an opportunity to do what so many are willing to do; compromise a bit to maintain their favored position. A report reached the king that the three Hebrew youths refused to worship the king's idol (Daniel 3:12). The king reacted with anger and summoned the three youths and ordered them to worship the image as commanded, or they would be burned alive. They were given every opportunity to compromise. Everyone waited to see the outcome. Would they do the sensible thing? Would they crack? Are they so fanatical that they won't even just agree to do what everyone else has already done? What's wrong with them? Do they think they are better than everyone else?

*"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18).*

Well, that did not go over well with the king! "Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. (Daniel 3:19). The end result was that they were thrown into the fire which was so hot that those who threw them in were killed by the heat. But God did not allow the flames to harm these young men. Upon seeing such power behind the three, *"Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.'" (Daniel 3:28).* He also decreed that no one throughout the empire was to say anything derogatory about Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews.

## **The Temptation to Compromise**

First, these were young men. One thing that stands out in the Bible is the blessing of being faithful to God in ones youth. Age is not an excuse to compromise with the world in matters contrary to God's will. The principle of reaping what is sown applies to the young and the old (Galatians 6:7,8; cf. 2 Timothy 2:21-22; 2:1-3; 1 Tim 4:12 and Ecclesiastes 12:1,12-13).

Also, these young men were far from home. Being in a strange place is sometimes seen as a cloak for participating in evil. Perhaps those back home would never hear of transgressions, but God always sees. We cannot hide behind a cloak so thick that God does not see (Job 34:21,22).

Finally, we see the proper answer to the invitation to compromise our faith. It is *"no"* even when it will cost us plenty. These young men did not have to be given a second opportunity to sin against God, because their answer would be the same, whether God delivered them from harm or not. It did not matter. It would be worse to reject God than to suffer the cruelest of hardships caused by faithfulness. There is simply no other proper response to the world than this same bold response.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## **“If the Lord Wills”**

**James 4:13-17**

### ***The Rich and the Poor in James #4***

**By Nathan E. Quinn**

In the book of James there are multiple instructions that deal with how godly people should view wealth. There have been warnings of dangers that relate to pride and worldliness that should give us pause as we reflect on our life and the goals we make. Work is a part of life and there is a need to make money. In fact, providing for “one’s own” is a commandment of God. Building an inheritance to leave to ones children is something a good man will strive to do (Proverbs 13:22). Making plans, work and business are a basic part of life. Yet even with this necessary pursuit James gives a clear warning about our priorities and encourages us to be more concerned about accomplishing what is right.

*“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” (James 4:13)*

James calls out to the entrepreneur to consider what he is about to write. He describes the great lengths of careful planning that one will go through in order to make a profit. All the details are worked out and all the right questions have been answered! The when, where, how long and what have been carefully considered and there is a great anticipation of the productive outcome. Now it is just time to work the plan and enjoy the fruit of the labors.

*“Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14)*

The reality is, even the most well thought out plan rarely works out to exact expectation. Questions about tomorrow are never completely answered today. There will always be parts of our life that are entirely out of our control. We can never know what our life will be like tomorrow. We can assume and we may be right, but just as a vapor appears and then vanishes our life can change or come to an end without any warning whatsoever.

Too often in one's pursuit of wealth the Lord is either neglected or left out all together. While careful planning is made for "profit" sake, the Lord's will is not considered. God's plans and providence may or may not allow us to go to such and such a city. James goes on to point out that it is arrogant to make these plans without recognizing the possibility that the Lord may or may not allow it (James 4:16).

*"Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin."*

In a pursuit of financial profit it becomes easy to forget to plan on diligently serving the Lord. While we assume tomorrow we put off what needs to be done today. While we are careful to ensure the greatest chance of success in our business endeavor, we neglect the needs of our soul as well as the souls of those around us. Too often our plans to make money result in a neglect of doing what is right; When we neglect doing "right" for any reason (including business endeavors) we commit sin. It is always the Lord's will to do what is right today. This passage is about prioritizing "the right thing to do" above going "to such and such a city". For these reasons we live our life with a "what we ought to say" mentality. We approach every decision saying "if the Lord wills" we will do what we plan to do. As we do this, we prioritize the revealed aspects of God's will above the plans and uncertainty of the future. Since tomorrow can only be assumed, we take care of our spiritual needs today. We ask questions like does God want me to do this? Is there something in the word of God that suggests something else would be better to do? Have I neglected a responsibility that God has given me? When we "know" the right things, we do it. We are to never let our business plans interrupt the commands and instructions of scripture for when we do, to us it is sin.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## Through Faith in Christ

### Galatians 2:15-21

Warren E. Berkley

*<sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

*<sup>17</sup> But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! <sup>18</sup> For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*

This is a follow-up from Paul's encounter with Peter. Peter and others had acted hypocritically in relation to Gentiles (after certain Jews arrived they wanted to impress). Paul dealt with Peter and others about that. This is a follow-up.

"Jews by birth" should know, after hearing the gospel, that one's birth, race or nationality is not a pathway to justification. And, doing the works of the law of Moses is not awarded with access to God. Access to God after the resurrection and today is **"through faith in Christ."**

That phrase needs to be marked, underlined, highlighted and considered as the main idea of this section. It is not race, nationality or obedience to the law that takes sin away and brings the forgiven sinner into fellowship with God. It is **"through faith in Christ."**

To know what this means, please read everything in the New Testament that is **before** this phrase and everything **after**. Especially, engage in a good reading of the book of Acts. All that is involved in “faith in Christ” emerges right on the pages. Hearing the gospel, believing in Christ, confessing that belief with repentance followed by baptism – **makes you a Christian, no matter if you were/are Jew or Gentile.**

This question comes up (verse 17): “But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!”

**Sins committed by Christians (i.e., Peter’s hypocrisy at Antioch) never reflect on Christ.** The fact that one becomes associated with Christ in baptism, does not imply that all future mistakes are attributed to Christ. Paul wanted it to be known, Peter’s mistake belonged to Peter, not Christ.

Paul applied this to himself: “For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.” The sins of the servant do not reflect on the Master.

To this Paul added: **“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”**

Christ lives in His followers, *as long as His followers are living “by faith in the Son of God.”* This leads Paul to praise God for His grace, in contrast to keeping the law of Moses. Christ died for the express purpose of making the way to God accessible to all.

**[Back to Table of Contents](#)**

**“It Is No Longer I Who Live,  
But Christ Lives In Me”**

**—Galatians 2:20**

**Johnny Felker**

How would you describe the ultimate priority of your life? What principle knits together the activities of your life into a unified purpose? For Paul, that priority and principle is expressed in his loving challenge to Peter recorded in the epistle to the Galatians: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

This one window into the heart of Paul is the basis of all his life’s efforts as a Christian. For in the integrity of a good conscience and through the working of God’s grace, Saul of Tarsus became a follower of Jesus Christ.

**Understanding Paul’s Statement**

For years Paul had sought to merit righteousness by works of obedience to the Law. Motivated by the strictest devotion to the traditions of the rabbis, he earned the reputation of one “blameless” (Philippians 3:6). However, after becoming a Christian, he realized how inadequate his efforts had been to earn righteousness before God in this way. For the law that was intended to impart life to him (through perfect obedience) called instead for his death because of sin (Romans 7:10). Indeed through the Law, Paul died to the Law in order that he might live to God (Galatians 2:19). Touched by the love of the Savior who died for him, Paul crucified the old man and freely accepted the righteousness that is “through faith in Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:9). In baptism he began a new life in which Christ lived in him (Romans 6:3ff).

It is this single purpose that forged the many statements we read from Paul’s pen and that defined his attitudes and activities. It was the appeal of all his letters: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Romans 13:14). It was the grounds of his hope for those he taught: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Consequently at Antioch, when some were advocating that conditions of righteousness by the Law be

added to the gospel, Paul firmly challenged them all. He reminded them that advocating any other grounds of righteousness implied that Christ died needlessly (Galatians 2:21). Only one thing mattered: “I am crucified with Christ; Christ lives in me”.

### **Applying the Message to Ourselves**

When we clearly see Paul’s earnest desire to be like Christ, we will have discovered not only who Paul was, but also what God has called us all to be. If we are to enjoy Paul’s hope, then we must live his life. We too must come to see the selfless love of the Savior who gave himself up for us. Smitten in heart by the magnitude of our selfishness, we must crucify the old self that the body of sin might be put away from us (Romans 6:6). We must behold with reverence the Spirit-drawn portrait of the glory of the Savior (2 Corinthians 3:18). We must put to death those fleshly inclinations that lead us away from the Lord’s likeness (Romans 8:12–13). We must submit ourselves totally to the Holy Spirit’s commands as the expression of the beautiful character of the Lord (Romans 8:14).

In the most practical terms, the Lord must become the pattern for all our conduct. In every action and thought, we must ask ourselves, “Is this what my Savior would do? Would he go where I am going? Would he say what I am about to say?” And when we do, we will see God’s power working in us day by day, conforming us to “the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29). Christ will truly be in us (Romans 8:10). His thoughts will become our thoughts. His deeds will become our deeds. To profess to be a Christian and do otherwise is to miss the whole purpose of our calling.

It was this purpose that permeated the life of Paul and found expression in this wonderful mirror into his heart. May we then in the spirit of Paul’s great affirmation also meaningfully pray, “Oh to be like thee, oh to be like thee, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art! Come in thy sweetness; come in thy fullness. Stamp thine own image deep on my heart”.<sup>1</sup>

### **[Back to Table of Contents](#)**

---

<sup>1</sup> Felker, J. (1998). “It Is No Longer I Who Live, But Christ Lives In Me”—Galatians 2:20. *Christianity Magazine*, 15 (1), 14.

## **Pagan Theology**

**By Drew Nelson**

### ***Isaiah 36***

When engaged in debates about God and the Bible with nonbelievers, it is common for the nonbeliever to make claims about the believer's convictions or to trot out some factoid about the Bible to bolster their case. He will say, "the Bible is full of contradictions" or "your God endorses slavery, genocide, and the subjugation of women." The implication is, "I know more about your faith than you do. If you weren't so ignorant and sheep-like, you'd convert to non-belief too." There are such things as ignorant believers (hopefully not us!) and informed nonbelievers. But as a matter of habit, do not let nonbelievers tell you what you believe. To illustrate, consider this story from Isaiah 36.

After conquering the northern kingdom of Israel, Assyria marched south to Judah. When they arrived at the city gates of Jerusalem, they made the same offer they made to every capital they conquered: "Will you surrender to us, saving yourself a lot of death and destruction? Or will we have to besiege your city, starve you out, and destroy you?" King Sennacherib sent his Rabshakeh (chief officer), who negotiated loudly in the Hebrew language so that all Jerusalem would understand and cower at Assyria. The Rabshakeh mocked King Hezekiah and Judah for trusting their God. But consider the theological truth of his jeers.

*"But if you say to me, 'We trust in the Lord our God', is not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed?" (Isaiah 36:7).* The Rabshakeh had heard of King Hezekiah's mission to tear down the high places where idols were worshipped. For this, God had lauded Hezekiah: *(Hezekiah) removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah...and the Lord was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered (2 Kings 18:4, 7).* But to the Rabshakeh's pagan and polytheistic mind, Yahweh was just one god among many, and in tearing down the altars, Hezekiah had simply removed other potentially helpful gods from Judah. The Rabshakeh wrongly mocks what God had commended.

Later the Rabshakeh urged Judah to ignore Hezekiah's pleas to stay faithful to Yahweh: *"Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you saying, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"* (Isaiah 36:18-20). Assyria had invaded nation after nation, each with their own gods. After conquering each nation and their gods, they enlisted those conquered gods in their pantheon and believed Assyria's divine power increased with each victory. To Assyria, Yahweh was just another god to be conquered and added to the collection. How wrong they were: *"For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God"* (Deuteronomy 10:17).

Do you see the problem with letting unbelieving pagans tell you what you believe? They evaluate your beliefs and tell you what you should do based on their own worldview (pagan polytheism or atheism). They transplant all of their assumptions onto your theology. In the end, Yahweh shows his sovereignty in Isaiah 37 and 2 Kings 19, and the mocking Rabshakeh is shown to be the fool all along. Don't let nonbelievers tell you what you believe.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## *Twelve Spiritual Disciplines*

### **Resisting Temptation**

By Jon W. Quinn

---

To resist temptation, one needs to better understand its nature. Human beings are the creation of God, and we each are given by our Creator the ability to make free moral choices. It is because of free will that there is temptation at all. The human will plays an integral part in the course our lives take, good or bad. It is my own individual will, shaped, by my heart, by which I will be successful at resisting temptation. The first step in resisting temptation is to be willing to obey the Father. If I am willing to do the will of God, my outlook, priorities and perceptions will develop toward that goal. Jesus said *“If any man is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.”* (John 7:15).

To learn about resisting temptation, how can one do better than to look at Jesus? The Hebrew writer suggested that we *“fix our eyes”* upon Jesus as we run our race. But is that being fair to us when dealing with temptation? He is God, the Son, incarnate. Did Jesus have some kind of unfair advantage that made it easier for Him to resist temptation? James confirms that it is impossible to tempt God with evil: *“Let no one say when he is tempted, “ ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”* (James 1:12). And yet, the Hebrew writer affirms that there is nothing in the temptations that we face that Jesus did not face as well. *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:15-16).

So, we will consider the example of Jesus later in this chapter. We most certainly are encouraged to do so, and with good reason. But first, we need to solve the supposed dilemma posed here regarding Jesus being God in the flesh and being tempted to do evil while at the same time God cannot be tempted by evil.

## God's Holy Nature and Temptation

Consider how temptation works. We find a very enlightening revelation of the process given to us in the Book of James. It is not very complicated at all and well illustrated. James begins by saying, *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone”* (James 1:13). The idea of the Greek (peirazomai) is to be tried, put to the test, or enticed. In the context it refers to temptation rising from within, from uncontrolled appetites and from evil passions (Vine IV-116). Also, Thayer states that evil (kakos) is *“thinking, feeling or acting”* which is *“base, wrong, wicked”* and adds *“that which is contrary to law, either divine or human.”* (320). So, we are charged not to say that any enticement to do evil comes to us from God. God cannot be enticed to do evil and He does not entice anyone else to do evil. There are no exceptions to this. James says, *“Let no one say...”*, not *“Let almost no one say...”*. God is good. He is completely holy and perfectly righteous and absolutely pure. James affirms that He is without variation or shifting shadow (James 1:17). God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). There is no inclination to moral evil within God, and none comes from God, in prospect or in fact, ever.

While God does not tempt us with evil, He does put us to the test in other ways, and there are ways in which He, Himself, can be tempted. For example, the Israelites *tried* God's patience with their rebellious attitudes (1 Cor. 10:9). We also find that God put Abraham's faith to the test by giving him commands to obey (Heb. 11:17). But He never tempted Abraham or us with sin by prompting us to lose control of our appetites. He never appeals to our desires to create within us evil passions.

There are actually two different parallels used by James in this text which inform us concerning the nature of temptation and sin. The first illustration is that of using bait to lure prey to its destruction. The second is that of the birth process, but in this case the result of the birth is not life, but death.

### Carried away and Enticed

*“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”* (James 1:14). James traces temptation to its very origin. We learn here what temptation is even before it becomes a temptation. The first order of business is to accurately assign the responsibility for a person's sin. My sin is not your fault,

my parents' faults, my friends' faults, or my enemy's fault. It most certainly is not God's fault. Whose lust was it that led to temptation and sin? It was the sinner's "own" lust!

The body of a human being can be used for good or evil, and it is the person who makes the decision. One can use his or her body to glorify God and make it a temple of the Holy Spirit or one can use it to bring dishonor upon oneself by partaking in the deeds of the flesh. One walks either according to the spirit or according to the flesh. Paul says the two, flesh and spirit, are opposed to one another. He tells us that those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh and its passions and walk according to the spirit. However, those who practice the deeds of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The sinner was first "*carried away*". This means that he was drawn out of safety and security much as "*game is lured forth from its covert.*" (Thayer 222). What causes an animal to leave the safety of its burrow to confront the danger of a trap? What is it that is considered worth the risk? What causes the bird to perch on the net ready to spring? What makes a fish divert its course and head toward a hook that will mean its death?

The answer is found in the word "*enticed*" Thayer has "*to beguile by blandishments.*" (128). The danger is hidden or obscured by something that is attractive and inviting. The deadly hook is covered with a lure. The trap is hidden and some tasty morsel is put in the center of it to attract a victim. Normal caution is temporarily forgotten as plans are made to possess the bait. It looks safe, as it was intended to look, but that is a lie. The Hebrew writer exhorts, "*But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*" (Hebrews 3:13).

An excellent example of the way this works is found in Satan's approach to Eve. His goal was to remove Eve's sense of danger and heighten her expectation of reward. Satan had a long list of reasons why to sample the forbidden fruit would be a good thing. He omitted mentioning the reasons why disobeying God would be a tragic mistake. It is a crafty Satan that that made evil seem good, or at least advantageous. It was a deceitful Satan who said, "*You surely shall not die!*" It was an alluring Satan that said "*For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*" When Eve looked at the fruit, she saw what she wanted to see. It was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes, and it would make her wise. She had stopped thinking

about the consequences, and that was a fatal error. The bait was set and the trap was ready to spring (Genesis 3:1-6).

It is our own lust by which we are carried away. This is precisely how Adam and Eve became sinners. There is no difference in our natures from theirs. There was human desire in the world before sin, corruption and the fall. The word “*desire*” refers to longings and cravings which we all have. The root word itself is morally neutral, and it must be determined from the context in which it is used as to whether it is an evil desire or not, though it is by far most often used in a negative sense in the Scripture. One desires food when he is hungry and water to quench his thirst. Sexual desire was given as motivation to propagate the human race. Paul *desired* to depart and to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23). Desire in and of itself is not sinful, but to transgress God’s will in order to satisfy desire is to sin. For Eve to desire wisdom was not a sin, but for her to break God’s commandment with a view to becoming wise was indeed a sin.

Natural desires were given us by God, and they have a purpose. But the lust to do evil comes from within us, not from our God. Our giving in to this temptation results in sin and death. We must not allow ourselves to become captivated by desire and be ensnared by sin.

### **Sin is Born**

“*Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin...*” (James 1:15a). James now begins the second metaphor. No longer is he using the idea of the bait and trap. The point is to show what happens when lust is aroused, and this illustration brings us to the very same conclusion as the previous illustration did; that sin brings forth death. This time, the process leading to sin is paralleled to conception and birth. The parent is *lust*, and when lust conceives, a birth will result. The offspring’s name is *sin*.

Not every temptation results in the conception and birth of sin. There is such a thing as spiritual birth control, which when practiced consistently, will keep our lusts from ever becoming proud parents. Our Lord has challenged us in His Book to do those things necessary to keep our lusts childless. Allowing the words of Christ to take firm root within our hearts will help us not to fall away in time of temptation.

But when lust has conceived, sin is born. The phrase “*gives birth to*” means “*to bring forth*” as in the KJV (Vine I-153), or to “*bear children, generate.*” Sin, the

child of lust, is transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4). When the decision to do evil in order to gratify desire was made, sin was conceived. When the misdeed was carried out, sin was born. The result is a departure from the way of righteousness and a missing of the mark of what is acceptable unto God.

***But here is the key to overcoming temptation:*** our aim should not only be to keep the *birth* of sin from occurring, but also its *conception*. Repeatedly, Jesus warned of the consequences of harboring evil thoughts within our hearts. He taught that it was at this stage that our battles with temptation must be fought and won. To wait until lust has already conceived is to wait too long. One simply must not permit his heart to become an incubator where sinful plans and thoughts take shape and mature. For example, Jesus said, "...everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" and "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." (Matthew 5:28; 15:19). How many have fallen because they thought they could conceive evil in their hearts and somehow avoid the inevitable birth of sin? Far better for us is to listen to Jesus on the importance of maintaining purity of heart; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8).

### **When Sin is Accomplished There is Death**

"...and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." (James 1:15b). Sin and death are close partners in Scripture. They seem to enjoy each other's company and are practically inseparable. When sin *is accomplished* (or "*finished*" as in the KJV) it brings forth death. Thayer suggests "*having come to maturity*" (69). There is a conception followed by a maturing process which leads to the birth of sin, and sin results in death.

To those who would suggest that they are being tempted by God to do evil, it is said that it is each one's own lust that is the origin of an individual's sin, and sin "*brings forth*" death. God, on the other hand, is the giver of good gifts. It is "*in the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.*" (Jas. 1:17,18). See the contrast? Sin *brings forth* death, but God *brings forth* the first fruits of His creatures by the word of truth.

The end result of sin is death. There is such a close connection between all kinds of death and sin in the Scripture that one needs to look at the context to

determine exactly what is meant by “*death*” in each passage where such a connection exists. Sometimes it is physical death; sometimes spiritual death; sometimes eternal death, which the Bible also refers to as the second death. Here, death refers to spiritual death.

### **What About the Temptation of Jesus?**

What are we now to do with the teachings that Jesus is God, and that it is impossible to tempt God with evil, while also showing how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness?

The solution is that we let James answer this supposed dilemma in the context. Satan tempted Jesus in the sense that he tried to create within Jesus the willingness to satiate His hunger by disobeying God. Satan solicited Jesus to sin (Thayer 498). Satan is sometimes referred to simply as “*the tempter*” because he entices to sin. But he did not succeed in creating such willingness within Jesus. We have seen that James defines *his* use of the word “*temptation*” as one being *carried away* and *enticed* by his own lust. Though Jesus’ hunger was great, Satan found it impossible to *carry Jesus away* through *enticing* Him by His own desires (cf. Matthew 4:1-11). With all of Satan’s encouragement, there was not the slightest hint of even a momentary struggle with the “*moral dilemma*” within Jesus’ heart as to whether He would break His fast and turn the rocks to bread. He would not even consider it a possible course of action. Satan tempted Jesus *only* in the sense of making an appeal which focused on the desires of Jesus, but *not* in the sense of creating within Jesus a confused loyalty to God by causing Him to consider that He might potentially choose to disobey God to satisfy His desires. Jesus’ own moral excellence would not permit Him to disobey the Father. It is this quality of absolute perfect integrity on Jesus’ part that assures us that we can be confident that everything He taught and claimed is flawlessly true. It is impossible to carry God away by enticing Him with His own lust.

There have also been times when mere men responded to temptation with this very same kind of moral excellence, even in the face of very powerful incentive to do otherwise. I am caused to think of three young men threatened with being thrown into a blazing fire if they did not relent and partake in the pagan religious rituals of their captors. “*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if*

*He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”* (Daniel 3:16-18).

These examples could be multiplied. But the Lord God is the Giver of good gifts. He is not the giver of temptation to do evil, and most certainly is not responsible when one yields to temptation. He, Himself, cannot be carried away by enticements. Let no man say otherwise.

### **Victory Over Temptation**

*“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.”* (Romans 6:23). Even as Paul contrasts sin and death with God’s gift and eternal life, James does the same thing in the context of our passage. James tells us not to be misled about the situation because it is God who gives us good and perfect gifts by which we are brought forth from sin to be blessed. God is not the giver of temptation to do evil, but of the good things which allow us to triumph over temptation, sin and death.

It is those who are approved by persevering through temptation or trial that are promised the crown of life (James 1:12). The word *crown* refers to a victory crown, and is distinct from a crown of royalty. Vine states that this crown was a symbol of triumph in the games or some contest. At other times, he also suggests that it was a sign of public honor, given for some great service rendered for king or nation (I-258). A victorious general, for example, might be presented with such a crown in his homecoming victory parade. It was woven as a garland of oak, ivy, parsley or olive. In the Scripture, this crown is an emblem of life, joy, reward and victory. But where the crown of the athlete or warrior would soon shrivel and fade, this crown will not fade nor lose its glory to time, it is an *“unfading crown of glory”* (1 Peter 5:4).

King Jesus promises that He will give a victor’s crown of life to the faithful (Revelation 2:10) and Paul said he looked forward to the victory crown of righteousness that was laid up for him, but not only for him, but also for *“all who have loved His appearing.”* (2 Timothy 4:8). But again, this champion’s crown is given only to those who persevere under trial; for they must first be approved, showing that their professed love for God is genuine. *“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”* (James 1:12).

James encouraged us not to be deceived (James 1:16). There is hope in this admonition. We have discussed the deceitfulness of sin, and the dangers inherent within, but there is no law that says we must be deceived and defeated. It may be easier on our psyche, at least for the moment, to blame someone else when we sin, but it is much harder on our souls because to do so is to forfeit our victory crown.

This admonition against deception is given between the negative assertion that God does not tempt anyone with evil and the positive proclamation that *“Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.”* Do not be deceived, you do not have to suffer defeat but you can win the victory! As God is the Maker of the stars, He is also the Giver of our salvation. He is not the cause of our being drawn away, but He is the One who graciously gives us the remedy for our own failures. He is the Father of Lights, and His goodness never varies and is never obscured by any variation or shifting shadow or hint of evil.

*To Him who made the great lights, For His lovingkindness is everlasting: The sun to rule by day, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, The moon and stars to rule by night, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. (Psa. 136:7-9)*

#### Works Cited

Thayer, Joseph Henry. The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon. Lafayette: Christian Copyrights, Inc. 1979

Vine, W.E. Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

# The Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

## Plan #1 - God's Plan

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, *"Brethren, what shall we do?"* Peter said to them, *"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:36-38).

## Plan #2 - Man's Doctrine

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

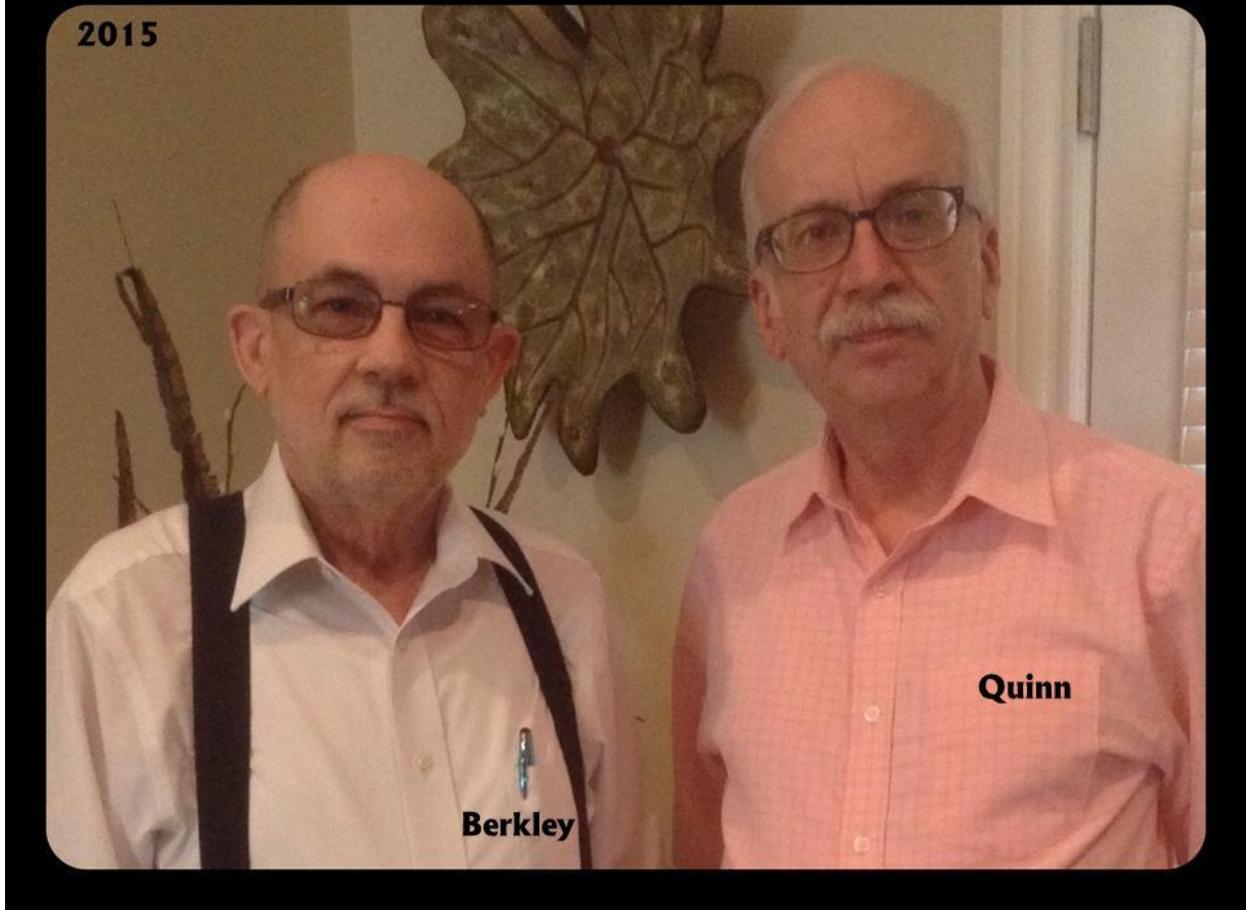
### The Sinner's Prayer:

*"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."*

The editors of Expository Files are happy with **plan #1** and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

2015



## Final Final Page, Warren E. Berkley

This issue is the most difficult Jon and I have prepared, since it is the last.

Back when “internet” and “world wide web” were new terms, using the CompuServe and AOL servers, we launched Expository Files (1994). Our purpose was simple: to provide another avenue to distribute Bible teaching. Our focus was not on academic papers or topical discourses for debate. We simply wanted to provide a means for preachers and Bible teachers to share the fruit of their study, with no claim they were polished or professional writers, scholars or men with any authority to prescribe belief. We just asked writers to write what they saw in Scripture, to the best of their ability, for distribution through the *then* new and innovative digital means. Inspired initially by Mark Copeland (the pioneer of digital distribution), we are now completing 23 years of continuous monthly publication, with the archives of every issue still available at our website.

We never imagined all the downloads, email responses and inquiries. From all around the world – *monks on Malta, regular readers in Hong Kong, Europe, Canada, almost every state and many Latin American locations where English is often read.* Expository Files is quoted (and in some cases misquoted) in books in print; studied by denominational preachers; referenced in schools with Biblical emphasis and duplicated in church bulletins across the country. We had no idea what reach the magazine would achieve with God’s providence as the primary power.

From our first acquaintance in Kansas, Jon and I have enjoyed a cordial, cooperative working relationship, based on our unity in Christ and affectionate friendship. We have published 276 magazines and 5 books together, with an exceptional working relationship. There isn’t any doubt that close relationships will continue as long as we are here on earth, then in heaven, I do not envision us sitting around talking about Expository Files. We will be so enthralled being in the presence of the Lord, our little efforts here will likely not come up.

What is ahead for Expository Files without the previous monthly publications? We have two books planned. [The Spiritual Discipline](#) book should be released later this month. We are also working on a podcast site. There may be other projects we take on as we settle into this transition. The Facebook group will be

maintained with occasional posts to highlight Scripture. The website with the archives will remain as long as possible. Our efforts to index all the pdfs will be undertaken. So, pray for Jon's health and stay connected with Expository Files.

We want to encourage our readers to subscribe to Pressing On Magazine. Visit the website here. For a free sample issue, [Click Here!](#)

<http://www.pressingonmagazine.com/>

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

**New Book Coming in Jan. 2017**

TWELVE SPIRITUAL  
**DISCIPLINES**

Co-Editors

Jon W. Quinn • Warren E. Berkley



AN EXPOSITORY FILES  
EXPEDITION SERIES BOOK • 2017

[Back to Table of Contents](#)