

### **“Temptation”**

**James 1:13-18**

#### **Introduction**

In the Bible, we find some people who resisted temptation and some who gave in to temptation. For example, Joseph fled from sexual enticement, while King David stole another man’s wife. Eve listened to the serpent in the garden, while Jesus overcame Satan’s propositions in the wilderness. The good news is that believers today can have victory over temptation because God always provides us a way out.

We first need to understand what temptation is and what it is not. Temptation is solicitation to do evil in order to disconnect us from God’s will. The enemy’s goal is to disconnect us from God by pulling us in the opposite direction from where He would have us go. Temptation is *not* equal to sin. Therefore, we do not need to feel guilty when we are tempted. While God allows temptation, He does *not* cause it. He cannot do evil. God permits Satan to tempt us, and when we are tempted, we are afforded the opportunity to understand the condition of our souls. Our response to temptation reveals the level of our spiritual commitment. Temptation can also be caused by the desires of our flesh when we want something outside the will of God. And when our flesh brings on the temptation, the enemy only exacerbates the situation by triggering the temptation to grow. He deceives us by making evil attractive. If we succumb to temptation, we commit sin and suffer consequences.

Temptation is cured when we focus on God’s goodness, His Word and His plan. When we are tempted to act outside of God’s will, we must intentionally shift our focus. Our attention should be on the good things God has done. Our gratitude will help us not to fall for the bad things the enemy puts in front of us. Just like Jesus in the wilderness, we should remember what God has said in His Word when life gets hard. The Word of God must trump how we feel. Focusing on God’s Word and His plan is how we rise above our fleshly desires. He wants to use our victory over temptation to take us to the next spiritual level.

#### **Getting Started**

1. What are some of the most common temptations people in our culture face today?
2. People often use the phrase “guilty pleasures” to refer to experiences they enjoy. What would you say are your “guilty pleasures”?

#### **Let’s Get Personal**

1. What temptations do you find the hardest to resist? What are some consequences you have experienced because of temptation?
2. What mechanisms of the enemy are most effective at making your temptations look attractive?
3. When do you find it difficult to focus on God’s goodness and His plan for your life?

### Take the Next Step

1. What Scriptures address your particular temptations? Memorize those Scriptures by writing them down and keeping them somewhere you will see them constantly throughout the week.
2. What steps do you need to take this week to work on intentionally shifting your focus to God's goodness when you feel tempted?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: James 1:1-12; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Hebrews 10:35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; Isaiah 43:1-2; John 16:33; Romans 12:12; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 5:3-5; James 1:13-18; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; Psalm 50:15; Genesis 39:6-18; Matthew 4:1-11, 6:13, 26:41; Luke 8:13; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Genesis 3:1-6.

### Renew Your Mind

*"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."*

*James 1:14-15*

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