



# REDEMPTION

MAKING MUCH OF JESUS

James 1:12-18

## *Dealing with Temptations*

5/17/2020 - 5/23/2020

### MAIN POINT

We must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God's Word in order to fight temptation.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever gone on a diet? What type of food were you most tempted to eat even though you knew you shouldn't?**

**Were you able to successfully deny yourself those foods? What did you learn about the nature of temptation through that time?**

Diets are a lesson in self-control. We deny ourselves something that we enjoy to reap the benefits of weight loss or a healthier lifestyle. But anyone who has ever been on a diet will tell you that with the denial of food comes the presence of temptation, because most of the food that we enjoy isn't good for us to eat all the time. In those moments, our willpower might not prove to be enough. While a diet is a benign example, we will face temptations in this life that are not so innocent. Our sinful nature means that we will be tempted by the sinful desires produced by that nature. Our willpower is insufficient to resist; therefore, we must appeal to something greater.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read James 1:13.

**Let's discuss the nature of temptation. What is the goal of temptation? What is the devil trying to get us to do when we are tempted?**

**Where do our temptations come from? Where do they not come from? Why is it important to realize these truths from God's Word as we are being tempted?**

James wrote, "When tempted . . ." The implication here is that temptation will come eventually, just like suffering and trials. No one can escape the presence of temptation, which at its most basic level is the desire to satisfy a God-given desire in an ungodly way. We are tempted every day, but we must always remember that temptation itself is not a sin. Jesus was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Jesus was tempted in the desert, yet He did not sin. His temptations did not come from God, and neither do ours. Temptation always comes from evil, and God cannot be tempted by evil. He is not responsible for our temptations.

**Read through Matthew's account of the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11. If James is right and God cannot be tempted by evil, was Jesus (who is God) truly tempted? Explain.**

**Read Hebrews 4:15-16. What makes Jesus able to be tempted? Why is Jesus' temptation a good thing for us?**

Jesus is fully God and fully man. Theologians and Bible scholars call this the hypostatic union. This \$10 theological word simply means that Jesus is one man with two natures. Jesus wasn't partially God and partially man, but rather He was fully both without either nature compromising the other. Jesus was fully tempted in the desert because to be human is to be tempted. Satan appealed to Jesus' human nature to satisfy human desires (hunger, thirst, desire for power). This is actually good news for us because it means that when we are tempted, we don't have a far-off Savior who cannot identify with our experiences. Jesus was tempted, but He overcame those temptations; in doing so, He provided a model for His followers.

| Have a volunteer read James 1:14-15.

**In your own experience, where do your temptations most often come from?**

**What is the ultimate fruit of our temptations?**

Though our temptations are all different, they follow the same process. All temptation begins with desire—a good desire given to you by God, but also includes a deception that leads us to

see that desire through the lens of our sinful nature. Giving into that temptation happens because we disobey, and the result of disobeying God's commands is death. The language James used here is like a fish who takes bait without realizing there is a hook inside the bait. Once the hook is in, death is inevitable.

| Have a volunteer read James 1:16-18.

**Temptation is ultimately caused by poor thinking and judgment. What are some irrational and untrue thoughts that your temptation wants you to believe are true?**

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What happens when we follow God's plan for resisting?**

We will never escape temptation this side of heaven, but we can overcome them when we rely on Jesus instead of our own power. He alone can provide the grace and power needed to succeed. Anyone who has ever faced a temptation without looking ahead and looking up can tell you, willpower only works for so long. More than anything, we need to be redeemed and sanctified through a steady diet of prayer and God's Word. The path to overcoming temptation has been laid before you—you just have to follow it.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Temptations generally take one of three forms: A. The lust of the FLESH; B. The lust of the EYES; C. The PRIDE of life (Matt. 4:1-11 and 1 John 2:16). Which is most commonly the case with your temptation?**

**Jesus fought off temptation by quoting God's Word. Is there a verse of Scripture that you could memorize to help you fight these temptations?**

**Is there a person in your life who knows what you are tempted by? Why is being honest about your temptations a good way to fight off those temptations?**

**Do you know a new believer who is struggling to deny their temptations? What would it look like for you to walk with them and help them obey God in all things?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for never tempting us to do evil. Praise Him for using even our temptations to bring us closer to the image of His Son. Pray that in your temptations, you would rely on the power of

the Holy Spirit to make the same choices that Jesus made and deny sinful temptations that only lead to death. Lastly, thank God for the grace, life, and freedom you have in Jesus Christ.

## COMMENTARY

| James 1:13-18

1:13-18. The term trial (v. 13) connects this group of verses to the preceding section (vv. 2-12). God's relationship to temptation is made clear by two kinds of statements. On the one hand, there are assertions that clarify what God is not or does not do: God is not tempted... and He Himself doesn't tempt. On the other hand, there are assertions as to what things do come from God: every generous act and every perfect gift.

1:13-14. The twofold negative stance (God is not tempted and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone) emphatically denies that God leads people into temptation. The source of temptation is one's own evil desires. "Desires" focuses on the immediacy that carnal desire creates, spurring a person to act, to be drawn away and enticed like a fish is baited to bite a hook and is then pulled from the water.

1:17. Father of lights refers to God (v. 5), who created the lights that rule days and seasons (Gen 1:14-19). No variation or shadow cast by turning alludes to the fact that God's nature is unchanging and that His promises are secure.

1:18. Message of truth refers to the gospel, by which new birth comes. Firstfruits refers to the best that the harvest produces. God gives good gifts that yield wondrous fruit, not temptation that leads to death through wayward desires.