

DAY 1 – LET’S TALK ABOUT SIN AND TEMPTATION

PROVERBS 1:10

My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them!

1 PETER 5:8

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

JAMES 1:13-15

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

DEVOTIONAL

The words ‘sin’ and ‘temptation’ are ones which many of us have heard our entire lives, especially if you grew up in church. But what do those words really mean and what does it mean to be tempted? Sin, or *cheit* in Hebrew, is defined as ‘missing the mark’; in this context, missing God’s standard of living and being. Temptation can be defined as ‘the desire to sin’.

In fact, in the book of James, temptation is said to come from our own desires which entice us to act in a way against God’s standard of living and is what gives birth to choosing sinful actions which eventually births death. What James is teaching us is that we are tempted by the devil himself through our own proclivities, our own desires; it is the lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh and the pride of life that causes us to sin.

While we may have a proclivity towards sin and give into temptation, we need to remember that God’s goal for us is to succeed in *resisting* temptation and, instead, live according to His Word and plan for our lives. The goal of this reading plan over the next five days is to equip you to turn your back on temptation, to resist the devil with God-given authority and power. Are you ready?

PRAYER

Dear God, as I journey through these next five days of learning and growth, I ask that You would reveal to me ways I can resist the devil and turn my back on temptation. Thank you for being with me in this season and equipping me for every day of my life.

DAY 2 - WE ARE ALL TEMPTED

PROVERBS 1:10

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JAMES 1:13-15

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12-13

If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

ROMANS 3:23

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

ROMANS 7:18-21

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life - that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.

DEVOTIONAL

Do you ever look at a person and think to yourself, 'there's no way they have to overcome temptation, they're too good and in tune with God'? The Bible tells us this thought is inaccurate. It tells us that no matter who you are, child or adult, male or female, rich or poor, young or old, we all can and will be tempted by sin and sinners. Why? Because the reality of life is that as long as we live in this fallen world and have air in our lungs, the capacity and the temptation to sin or to be enticed by sinners is a part of life. Whether it's your first week as a Jesus follower or you've known and loved Him your whole life, the devil doesn't discriminate and will seek to use temptation to harm you.

We need to remember that no one is above temptation. No matter how good they are, how much they may pray or read their Bible, temptation will always come because we live in a fallen world. We are all walking different journeys and our temptations may look different from one another's, but we can overcome them.

PRAYER

Lord, please help me to remember that we all face temptation and that I have not failed You for being tempted. Help me to not compare myself to others and know that I have the power to turn away from temptation with You on my side.

DAY 3 – GOD GIVES US VICTORY

PROVERBS 1:10

My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them!

1 CORINTHIANS 15:56-57

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:12-15

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptised. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

DEVOTIONAL

As overwhelming as temptation can be, we need to remember there is good news: we are already victorious in our fight against sin and temptation. For those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, He already came and nailed sin and death to the cross when He died for us. The gift of salvation ultimately wiped all power of temptation and sin in our lives away. And as a result, we have the power to turn our backs on temptation and overcome it.

This means that we are not facing an unwinnable battle; we are not fighting to overcome the impossible in denying our fleshly temptations. The victory is already ours and already here; we simply have to receive it and walk in it.

PRAYER

God, help me to believe with confidence and with victory that because of Your sacrifice and grace I have victory over sin and temptation. Thank you for giving me victory in every area of my life.

DAY 4 - THERE IS ALWAYS AN ESCAPE ROUTE

PROVERBS 1:10

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1 CORINTHIANS 10:12-13

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DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever watched a classic whodunit murder mystery movie? The premise is always the same; a crime is committed, there are several suspects with motive and opportunity, a sneaky plot twist and an unexpected escape route – such as a trapdoor or hidden tunnel – for those in the know. Likewise, God always provides a hidden tunnel or trapdoor for us to escape from the snare of the enemy. It does not matter what the temptation is, how big or small it may be, there is always a way of escape.

In 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that God Himself provides a path to escape. Why would He do that? Because God is faithful and cannot deny who He is. Because God is good and loving, kind and merciful, He ensures that every time we are tempted and enticed to sin there is a way out for us.

Your path of escape might not be the same as your friend's or your spouse's. It might be a friend who walks in at the right moment; a phone call or a text message at the right moment; it might be a Bible verse that comes to mind, or a memory that comes to the surface. Whatever it is, God provides the path of escape, but it is up to us to recognise these paths and use them to overcome our temptations.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for providing an escape from temptation. Thank you for not allowing me to be tempted beyond my ability to overcome it. Please strengthen me so tha

DAY 5 – RESIST THE DEVIL

JAMES 4:7-8

So, humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

1 PETER 5:5-7

In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So, humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands, so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’” Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’” Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.” “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

A common misconception is that temptation comes from God to test us. But it doesn’t. When we look through Scripture, we understand that ultimately it is the devil who is the real source of our temptations. Remember, it was the devil that tempted Adam and Eve to sin in the garden of Eden. It was the devil who tempted Jesus three times in the wilderness. The devil is our adversary and if we are going to turn our back on sin and temptation, then we need to resist the devil. Resisting the devil requires us to submit ourselves to God and humble ourselves before Him, so that we can receive the grace and power from God that we need to actively resist the devil, and see him and his temptations flee.

Some ways we can take action against the temptation is by:

- Declaring the Word (like Jesus did in Matthew 4)
- Praying each time we feel tempted
- Declaring our freedom in Christ
- Being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit
- Turning off all our devices
- Walking away from situations when we feel tempted
- Focusing our attention on things that are pure, noble, true and lovely (Philippians 4:8)
- Staying committed and connected to your local church family

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for equipping me with the power and ability to resist the devil and his temptations. I pray that Your grace and mercy would always be with me, that I may be empowered to resist and overcome the devil's temptations in every situation.

FINAL PRAYER

Today, I decree that sin and temptations no longer have power over me. I decree that I will notice and take the path of escape set before me. I decree that I have the power to resist the devil and his temptations. I decree that I walk in victory over sin and temptations because of what Jesus did on the cross. I decree and declare all this, in Jesus' name. Amen.