



A Faith That Wins The Battle Of Our Minds



BIG IDEA

Temptation never shows up looking like temptation, it looks like something good. James shows us that temptation starts in our own hearts, not with God and not even with the devil, which is actually good news: if the battle is internal, God can meet us there. What you believe about God's goodness determines what you do with your desires.



ICE BREAKER

1. Have you ever failed at something because you weren't prepared for it, rather than because you weren't capable? What happened?
2. When you think of "temptation," what's the first image that comes to mind?
3. Who's someone you trust enough to tell when you're struggling with something? What makes that relationship work?



MAIN POINTS

Temptation starts inside you, not out there. James is clear that God doesn't tempt anyone (James 1:13), and while Scripture says the enemy has schemes (Ephesians 6:11), James doesn't let us blame the devil either. "Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed" (James 1:14). The enemy may bait the hook, but the hook only works because of our own desires. That's actually good news: if the battle were only "out there," we'd be helpless. Because it's in our hearts, God can meet us there.

Temptation follows a pattern: Desire, Deception, Disobedience, Death. Desire itself isn't sin, God gave us good desires like safety, love, and accomplishment. The problem is trying to fulfill those desires outside God's will. Desire opens the door to deception (temptation always looks better than it is and hides its true cost), deception opens the door to disobedience (the moment our will says yes, sin is conceived), and left alone, sin grows into death. It rarely happens all at once, a small compromise like gossip, a lie, or one click leads to another, until it's grown into something that harms your connection with God and the people you love. The enemy often times this for when you're most tired or worn down.

Temptation isn't a single moment, it's a process, with exit ramps along the way. "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Being tempted isn't sin, Jesus himself was tempted and didn't sin. Three practical ways to take the exit ramp: name your lure (be honest about what you're susceptible to), name the lie (every lure promises "this won't cost you," but sin always costs something), and tell someone (the lure works best in secret and loses its grip in the light).

What you believe about God's goodness determines what you do with your desires. Every temptation carries the same whisper the serpent told Eve: "God is holding out on you." Once we doubt God's goodness, we start entertaining the enemy's offers. But "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17), and Satan can only take, while God gives. You beat temptation not by gritting your teeth, but by trusting that what God gives is better than the bait, and by remembering you're not defined by your worst moment, but by who God says you are.



DISCUSS

1. Why do you think James refuses to let us blame either God or the devil for our temptation?
2. Which part of the Desire, Deception, Disobedience, Death pattern do you relate to most, and why?
3. What's one "lure" you know you're susceptible to? (You don't have to share details, just name that it's there.)
4. Why do you think temptation loses power once it's brought into the light with someone else?
5. How does believing God is good, versus believing He's holding out on you, change the way you handle desire?



NEXT STEP

Jesus First: Name your lure and the lie behind it this week. Write down the truth, "the wages of sin is death", somewhere you'll see it, and ask God for forgiveness where you need it.

People Always: Tell someone, a friend, your Group, a prayer team, or a pastor, about a temptation you're facing. Don't fight it alone.

Made for More: Remember the goodness of God by naming his gifts to you this week, specific people, blessings, and opportunities, and let gratitude crowd out room for the enemy's bait.



SCRIPTURE

James 1:12-18 Ephesians 6:11 1 Corinthians 10:13 Romans 6:23 Acts 3:19



NEXT WEEK SNEAK PEAK

Join us next weekend as Pastor Shan continues our Faith That Works series in James with "Faith Is an Action." Invite someone to join you and don't miss the journey ahead!

	
 IDEA PRINCIPAL	
 ROMPEHIELOS	
 PUNTOS PRINCIPALES	
 CONVERSEN	
 PRÓXIMO PRIMERO	
 ESCRITURAS	
 ADELANTO DE LA PRÓXIMA SEMANA	

Questions or Feedback? Email Groups@CentralAZ.com