

Facing Temptations That Destroy Us!
Finding Victory in Trials and Temptations

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. What is one thing that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? Was there a moment where God spoke to you personally through His Word?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- James taught us that one tremendous blessing that comes from seasons of trials is that our faith is approved. Like a coin that is tested to determine whether its weight matches its face value, a Christian's faith is validated as real when it withstands life's trials. In this sense, trials are a testing ground that reveals if our faith is genuine faith. In your own opinion, how has enduring trials and being an approved Christian given you greater confidence in your walk with Christ?
- James taught us that a Christian should take responsibility for his/her own temptations and not play the blame game. Today, it seems like fewer and fewer people hold to the value of taking personal responsibility for their lives and actions. Culture at large is quick to blame everyone else for their own struggles. How does playing the blame game hinder us from personal spiritual growth, and from becoming the people that God intends for us to be? What are the downsides to blaming others for our temptations? How does blaming God or others for our temptations ignore our nature and our greatest spiritual needs?
- James shared a four step process of how temptation gets us and pulls us away from God. First, we're enticed by our sinful desires, appetites, or cravings. Next, we're lured to leave God's side and chase the bait of our fleshly desires. After that, we decide to sin and its hooks drag us away from God into error. Finally, we experience the true sense of death that accompanies our sin nature, manifested in guilt, shame, regret, embarrassment, etc. The key to victory is to meet temptation quickly and head on with spiritual battle. Let's get practical and discuss some real life ways that we can stop temptation before we get carried away. What are some disciplines, habits, tools, or practices that have worked for you?
- James employs us to stop making excuses for sin, and to reject false doctrines that embolden yielding to temptation. We know that Jesus saved us to live holy lives. We also know that we're all works in progress; we're still being sanctified. What are some

false ideas that are common today that make room for sins and that wreck a Christian's holiness? Conversely, what are Biblical doctrines that inform a winning walk?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Luke 4:1-13
- Hebrews 4:15
- Deuteronomy 8:3
- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 Corinthians 10:13

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- We've been instructed to be joyful in trials, to cooperate with Jesus in His work amidst our trials, and to ask God for wisdom to navigate our trials. As you think about your current trials, are you yielding to Christ in these ways so that God can more greatly approve the genuineness of your faith? If not, what changes do you need to make to conform to God's Word so that you can be approved?
- Have you decided to take responsibility for your own temptations without blaming someone else, especially God? Are there specific instances where you've been blaming others, but need to take on the mind of Christ to accept responsibility?
- As you think about your specific areas of struggle...your proclivities, what game plan can you put in place now to battle with your own temptations when they come around again? What's your Christian battle strategy to defeat your specific temptation?