



MAIN POINT	MAIN BIBLE VERSE
Temptation promises life, but always leads to death.	James 1:13-18
<p>Temptation doesn't begin with God. It begins with our own desires. What looks exciting or satisfying in the moment often leads somewhere destructive. James exposes the progression of sin and reminds us that real life isn't found in giving in, but in trusting the unchanging goodness of God.</p>	
<p>Teaching Script / Guide</p>	

HOOK

- "Have you ever said, 'I'll just do it one time' ... and then it was definitely not one time?"
 - "I'll just watch one more episode..." → it's 2:30am
 - "I'll just check my phone real quick..." → 45 minutes gone
 - "I'll just have one snack..." → somehow the whole bag is gone
- There's always that moment where you *know* what you should do...
 - ...and then there's what you actually do.
- And somehow, in that moment, the wrong decision often feels like the better option... at least the more pleasurable one.
- That's what temptation does.
 - Temptation doesn't feel wrong in the moment. It feels right. Good even.
 - It feels justified.
 - It feels harmless.
 - Sometimes it even feels deserved.
- But here's the problem:
 - Temptation never shows you where it leads.

TENSION

- If temptation showed you the full outcome, most of us wouldn't give in.
 - If it showed:
 - the regret
 - the damage
 - the consequences
 - the distance it creates between you and God
 - ...you'd probably walk away.
- But temptation is deceptive.
 - It zooms in on the moment and hides the future.
- And when we fall into it, we start looking for someone or something to blame. We look for excuses.
 - "It's just how I am."
 - "Everyone else is doing it."
 - "It's not that serious."

- “God will forgive me anyway.”
- And sometimes... we even blame God.
 - But James steps in and says: We’ve misunderstood where temptation actually comes from.

TRANSITION TO TEXT

- So if temptation feels so convincing... If it feels so normal... If it keeps showing up in our lives...
- Then the real question is: What is actually happening when we’re tempted? This is where James heads next.

TEXT

- Read or invite a student to read James 1:13-18.
- James 1:13
 - I love how this starts off because this is SO important!
 - Last week we talked about how pressure reveals our theology. Well, temptation can do the same, so James comes out the gate ready to set the record straight.
 - God cannot be tempted by evil. And He does not tempt anyone.
 - God doesn’t lure people into sin.
 - Temptation is not coming from God.
 - But he doesn’t leave it at that, he explains the process, and I just want you to look at this, think about your own life... and tell me if James hits the nail on the head in these next verses.
 - James 1:14–15
 - James describes temptation like a process: Desire → Sin → Death.
 - So where does temptation come from?
 - Temptation begins internally. It starts with something we want.
 - But when desire is allowed to grow unchecked, it eventually leads somewhere destructive.
 - Temptation promises freedom, but it actually enslaves.
 - James’ concern is not only that you don’t give in to temptation. Obviously, that’s important, but it’s even more important because of where temptation leads. He’s giving us a spoiler alert.
 - It’s as if he’s saying, “temptation disrupts your judgement, so let’s figure out where this will lead while we’re thinking clearly.”
 - James 1:16–18
 - James warns: “Do not be deceived.”
 - Temptation is deception. It convinces us that sin will give us something God won’t.
 - But James reminds us: God is the giver of every good gift.
 - The things we chase in sin— approval, pleasure, security, control— are things God ultimately provides in healthier, better ways.
 - *(There’s an easy bridge to John 10:10)*

TRUTH

- Temptation always overpromises and underdelivers.
- It offers life... but ALWAYS leads to death.
- God isn’t restricting your life. He’s protecting it.

APPLICATION

- You don’t overcome sin by trying harder—you overcome it by trusting deeper.
 - Sin loses its power when you stop believing its lies and start believing something better: That in Jesus, you are already fully known, fully loved, and not lacking anything you’re trying to get through sin.
 - So when temptation shows up this week:
 - Name the lie (“This will make me happier,” “I need this,” “No one will know”)
 - Replace it with truth (“God is better,” “This won’t lead where I think it will,” “I’m not missing out”)
 - Bring it into the light—talk to God about it honestly and, if needed, a trusted friend or leader
 - You’re not fighting for approval—you’re fighting *from* it.
 - And because of Jesus, sin is no longer your master—you have the power, through the Spirit, to say no and choose what leads to life.
 - Ask students to reflect:
 - What temptation keeps showing up in your life?
 - What lie is it telling you?
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- What need are you trying to satisfy through it?
- Temptation often points to a deeper desire:
 - to feel loved
 - to feel respected
 - to escape pain
 - to feel powerful
- But sin is a shortcut that leads somewhere destructive.
- Real freedom comes from trusting God's design.

INVITATION

- Every person in this room fights temptation. I know that because we all have desires that are not of God within us. The goal isn't pretending you don't struggle. The goal is learning to face it honestly.
 - Encourage students to bring their struggles into the light—with God and trusted believers.
 - Pray for strength, honesty, and trust in God's goodness.
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