

Day 4: You & temptation

Read it: 1 Corinthians 10:13 & James 4:7

Think about it:

What kind of things tempt you? Do you have any temptations in particular that have a grip on you? Maybe you have anger issues. Or you are tempted by the abuse of alcohol or drugs. Perhaps laziness or overeating; possibly you experience sexual temptation. We all have our vices and God wants to help you gain victory over each of these. Today's verses give you hope as God gives you some steps to take to break free of the grip of temptation and sin.

First, realize that you are not the only one dealing with that type of temptation. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 you can be encouraged by the fact that there are other people who have struggled with the same sin. You will not experience something that no one else has ever gone through. Second, be assured that God is faithful. Even if you feel like God has turned His back on you, He commits to be faithful to you. He will not leave you and will not let you take on more than you can truly handle—and He will give you a way out of the situation.

Third, there is hope because Satan will flee when you resist him. He hates to hear God's Word and the more you know verses and even quote specific scripture out loud, the more Satan will flee from your presence. Scripture reminds Satan that He has already been defeated by Jesus and that every child of God is protected by their heavenly Father. When you face Satan in a tempting situation, scripture is a valuable tool.

Act on it: Develop the habit of memorizing scripture! The more familiar you become with God's Word, the more you can use scripture in the battle with sin and temptation. Start with one of the verses from today & the next time you face temptation remember the verse and say it out loud. God will honor your efforts and you will see a difference as you see the power of scripture.



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Week 4
May 17,
2009

Purpose: To nail down this week's topic from Bethlehem's current series, "GPS".

How to use it: Individuals can do it on their own 4 times a week to cultivate this habit of reading and applying the bible. Families: adults are encouraged to do HammerTime on their own & then meet with their whole family to go through it together.

Example of time: Read verses (3 min), Discuss/think about (5 min), Pray (2 min)

For more tools: check out Bethlehembc.com or BethlehemToolbox.com.



HAMMERTIME

Day 1: Know a tree by its fruit; know a person by their fruit **Read it:** John 15:1-8 (esp. verse 7)

Think about it:

If you and a friend walk up to a tree and discuss what kind of tree it is, the easiest way to determine the truth is to check its fruit. If there are apples hanging from the branches, it most certainly is an apple tree. And if you really want to give that tree a chance to grow, you have to prune it. It might be painful at first, but skillful pruning will provide a pathway to mature growth.

Your connection with Christ is the same way—He is the vine and you are the branch that bears fruit. To see if you are really connected to Him, look for the fruit. For you to grow more in His likeness, there also needs to be some pruning. See how many times Jesus uses the word "remain" in this section? He knows how important it is for us to be connected to Him, to be pruned by Him and to bear fruit for Him. Look at His expectation for you (verses 5 & 8), that you would bear much fruit. Reading and applying scripture is a vital habit for you to have in bearing fruit—Jesus modeled it for you! He abided in His Father & now the challenge is for you to follow His example and abide in Him.

Act on it:

Think about the habits in your life—are they pulling you towards Christ or pulling you away from abiding in Christ? As you consider strengthening this habit of bible study, remember that it can benefit you every day, especially to grow you stronger in the vine, which is Jesus. As you study this week about how Jesus used scripture in His ministry, start looking for ways to use scripture in your life every day.



Day 2: Praying about that tough decision

Read it: Proverbs 3:5-6

Think about it:

Do you often have tough decisions to make and you really struggle with which way to go? Maybe it is a financial decision, or possibly something involving a relationship or it could be a career or school decision. It can even be smaller decisions like how to use your time each day. All of those situations which require choices are important...and God wants to help you out! One reason why He has given you the bible (this GPS system) is to help you make better decisions.

When faced with a tough decision, a great place to start is to pray about your options. God loves it when you stop and speak with Him and really listen for His direction. How do you know that He will give you direction? Because He promises it in Proverbs chapter 3. He tells you that several virtues are involved in this process of getting His divine intervention in decision-making situation. First, in verse 5 it talks about trust. This shows you that you need faith (both to come to Him and ultimately to believe what He says). Second, also in verse 5, it says to not lean on your own understanding. This is humility—a humbling of yourself to realize that God has a better understanding, a clearer view or a wiser perspective. Third, in verse 6 it talks about obedience (in all your ways acknowledge Him).

For a tough situation with important decisions to be made, God offers His wisdom to you: faith, humility, then obedience. If you pray with that type of fruit in your life (see day 1) then He promises to “make your paths straight”.

Act on it:

The next time you are faced with a difficult decision, turn to God’s Word for direction. Commit to read this passage about wisdom and incorporate those virtues into your prayer time. God will truly be faithful to you when you are faithful to trust Him, especially in those tough situations.



Day 3: Jesus and temptation

Read it: Matthew 4:1-11

Think about it:

Did you know that Jesus got hungry? That He got tired? Did you know that the Son of God got tempted to dishonor His Father and give in to Satan’s offers of instant gratification? In short, Jesus went through exactly what we go through. How did He deal with those pressures? He combated them with scripture. Jesus knew the incredible value of knowing scripture and using it to overcome temptation.

Jesus knew scripture well enough to use it strategically when the situation dictated. See verses 4, 7 & 10 for examples. The good news is that you can do the same thing! When you spend consistent time in the Word, you become familiar with passages of scripture that can help you in difficult times. God offers you passages that can help with stress (Philippians 4:6-7), with fear (Joshua 1:9) or with loneliness (Romans 8:39). There are so many truths in scripture that can help you—and Jesus certainly knew how important it is to have a good grasp of scripture. Jesus knew that Satan would continually be coming after Him...and Satan has the same plan for you. He is relentless, crafty and smart. The good news, though, is that Satan is repelled by the use of God’s Word (see day 4 for more info on that). The bible is a weapon in this spiritual battle (see Ephesians 6:17)—Jesus mastered how to use it and He wants you to master it, too.

Act on it: Whenever you read through the gospels take note of how often Jesus used scripture in His ministry. It was a valuable weapon for Him as He fought against Satan and as He showed people the true character of God. See how Jesus used it and learn from His example—and you will be better suited to handle the spiritual battles in your life.