

WEEK TWENTY-SIX: **“Growing Through Temptation”**
DAY ONE: **“Growing Through Temptation”**

Read: James 1:12-15 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1441)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 201 to top of 203

Reflect: Rick Warren writes “God develops the fruit of the Spirit by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you’re tempted to express the exact opposite quality!” (p. 202) If this is true, then what fruits of the Spirit is God developing in you right now? For a reminder of the fruits of the Spirit see Galatians 5:22 (p. 1352).

Dig: Does the statement above mean that God tempts us as a way of growing fruit in us? What does James 1:13-14 (p. 1441) say regarding the source of temptation?

Related to that, does God shield us from all temptation? See Matthew 4:1 (p. 1079).

What is the progression of stages of temptation seen in James 1:12-15 (p. 1441)? (We’ll look more at this progression in upcoming days.)

Apply: Pray the following prayer from Psalm 19:13-14 (NIV).

“Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me....May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer.”

WEEK TWENTY-SIX: **“Growing Through Temptation”**

DAY TWO: **“How Temptation Works”**

Read: James 1:12-15; Genesis 3:1-7, 19 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, pp. 1441, 6)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 203-204

Reflect: What are 3 of your greatest desires? Or think of it this way—list three things you typically need to be content. Are these good or sinful desires? Do you see evidence of Satan’s schemes in how he either plants these desires or twists how you want to fulfill these desires?

Dig: Look again at the progression of stages of temptation in James 1:12-15 (p. 1441).

How do you see these stages played out in the Garden of Eden? (Genesis 3:1-7, 19; p. 6, 8)

Contrast that to Jesus’ temptation in Matthew 4:1-11 (p. 1079). At what stage does the progression stop? See also Hebrews 4:15 (p. 1424).

What advice does scripture give to stop the progression of these stages? See 2 Timothy 2:22 (p. 1406) and James 4:7 (p. 1446).

Apply: Apply the instruction of Romans 13:14 (NIV): “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

WEEK TWENTY-SIX: **“Growing Through Temptation”**

DAY THREE: **“Overcoming Temptation: Recognizing Patterns”**

Read: 1 Peter 5:8; Proverbs 4:13-15, 23-27, 16:17 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, pp. 1455, 696, 709)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, p. 206

Reflect: You’ve heard it said that the best offense is a good defense. A good defense means that we must be alert. What patterns of temptation in your own life have you been alerted to as you reflect on this reading?

Dig: Why does Peter urge his readers to be self-controlled and alert?

According to the passages from Proverbs, once you’ve been alerted to paths and patterns of temptation, what should you do? Put your responses into a list—for each reference to a “path” list the various commands that are given (look for at least 10).

For example from Proverbs 4:14: Do not set foot on the path.

Apply: Focus on at least one pattern of temptation that you’ve been alerted to in your life. How are you going to apply the Proverbs 4 passage to this pattern? Be specific in your response.

WEEK TWENTY-SIX: **“Growing Through Temptation”**

DAY FOUR: **“Overcoming Temptation: Request God’s Help”**

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16; Psalm 91:14-15 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1424, 652)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 207-208

Reflect: In what ways have you been tempted within the last week? Think not only about your actions but also the attitude of your heart. In those moments did you call out to God for help?

- If so how did you see evidence of God’s power and deliverance?
- If not, what prevented you from calling out to him? Some common reasons include:
 - I didn’t think it would help.
 - I really didn’t want to resist temptation.
 - I never thought about calling out to him.

Dig: Read Hebrews 4:15 (p. 1424). In what ways was Jesus tempted?

What are your greatest weaknesses? Now picture Jesus battling these same temptations, because he did!

What is the key difference in how Jesus responded to temptation and in how we do?

When you face a major life decision or battle a major life trial and then hear about someone who faced *exactly* what you’re going through, what are you inclined to do?

How much more should we approach Jesus and his throne of grace? In contrast to the advice and support that other people can give what does this text say we receive and find from Jesus?

What’s the key to receiving this? See Hebrews 4:16 and also Psalm 91:14-15.

Apply: Let’s do it—approach God’s throne of grace with confidence:

- Spend some time acknowledging his name (as Psalm 91 says) by affirming who he is.
- Ask him for his grace and strength in your weakness.

WEEK TWENTY-SIX: **“Growing Through Temptation”**

DAY FIVE: **Lectio Divina**

Using the “Lectio Divina” method of Bible study (see page 2 of this booklet), meditate on this scripture:

“Happy is the man who doesn’t give in and do wrong when he is tempted for afterwards he will get as his reward the crown of life that God has promised those who love him.” James 1:12 (LB)

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life; write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer - thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.