

GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF JAN. 24, 2016

"Christianity Isn't For Cowards"



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Matthew 4:1-11, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:2-4, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-10

REFLECTION AND STUDY

DAY 1

On Sunday, Pastor Bob talked about temptation. It's not a sin to be tempted. Everyone experiences temptation. Jesus himself was tempted by the devil in the story we talked about in Matthew 4:1-11. It's what we do in response to that temptation that makes all the difference; it's when we yield to it that it becomes sin. Each of us are tempted by different things: money, food, lying, spending beyond our means... What are the things that tempt you?

- Think about the last time you were tempted.
- Did you resist the temptation or give in to it?
- When you are tempted how do you react? What do you do to fight the temptation? Do you ever go to God for help in resisting?

Pray about a temptation that you're dealing with right now. Ask God to help you with your struggle against it.

DAY 2

Our sins hurt God, just as it hurts us when we ask our children not to do something and they do it anyway. Have you ever thought about your sins in this way? We feel guilty about hurting our family or loved ones with our wrong actions. But do we ever think about how our actions are hurting God? Do you ever decide to do the right thing because you want to please the One you love—the One who also loves us more than we can imagine?

- How do you feel when you give in to temptation?
- What motivates you to do the right thing?

Pray and ask God's forgiveness for the times you've hurt him.

DAY 3

The more we resist temptation, the stronger we get. The more we see God help us out, the more we realize we can depend on him, as well. **Read what God promises in 1 Corinthians 10:13.** God tells us that he will make a way for us to keep from falling into temptation. Are you taking him up on his promise and looking for the way out that he provides?

- How do you feel knowing that the Scripture says God will not allow you to be tempted more than you can take?
- If this is true, why do we still fail to resist temptation at times?

Pray and ask God to help you to lean on him and remember to go to him in times of need.

DAY 4

Read 1 Peter 5:8-10. What does this Scripture tell us about resisting the devil? Be alert—Keep your eyes open so you can see when the devil is working. Resist and stand firm in the faith. God will make you strong, firm and steadfast. Notice that the scripture doesn't say that God will keep you from suffering. In fact it says that believers all over the world are enduring the same suffering that you do. What it does promise is that the suffering won't last forever, and that God will be with us faithfully and give us strength.

- Are you staying alert to temptation?
- Are you standing firm against it?
- Are you going to God for help?

Each time you face a temptation, remember you can go to the Lord in prayer. Go to Him now and pray over any temptations you are suffering under.

DAY 5

Jesus acted aggressively when he commanded Satan to leave, and we should do the same. The longer any of us lingers in a tempting situation, the more likely it is that we'll yield to it. The quicker we get out, the more likely we are to resist. Remember, you'll no doubt face temptations in coming days. When you do, keep **James 4:7** in mind. ***"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*** With God's help, you are stronger than you think! Christianity isn't for cowards so be like Jesus, face the devil and command him to leave!

- Do you ever feel like you're not strong enough to resist temptation?
- Do you ever shrink from things instead of facing them head on?

One of Satan's most effective methods is to make us feel that the situation is hopeless, when in reality it never is. Don't forget that God is on your side, and has promised to faithfully be there to help you when you are tempted. Let that truth give you courage!

Pray and ask God to give you courage. Thank him for his faithfulness.

DAY 6

The next time you find yourself tempted, remember what Jesus did when he was tempted by the devil. He stood on the Word of God, and he told the devil to leave him alone! Jesus had specific Scriptures that he used to fight the devil. Do you have any Scriptures that help to give you strength against temptation?

Take some time and revisit a section of the Bible that gives you strength, or do an online search for Scriptures related to what it is that tempts you. Write down a few lines of scripture that speak to you, or put them into your phone. Keep them somewhere close to you so you can re-read them when you are feeling weak or tempted.

DAY 7

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life's demands do not squelch the whispers of God's language of love upon your heart.