

Louder Than Words #2
Rejecting Sin's Temptations

Word

Scripture Reference

James 1:12-18

Discussion Questions

1. What's a desire that you often find difficult to resist? How do you justify it in your mind, causing you to give in? Share with the group.
2. Oftentimes, we make choices that are bad for us instead of choosing what is good for us because we would rather feel a moment of satisfaction now and then suffer later than getting what is best now. This is also often true of our spiritual lives. In what area do you find yourself prone to give in to temptation?
3. ***The Ultimate Prize for Rejecting Temptation: Crown of Life (v. 12).*** There is blessing to those who do not yield to temptation. Rejecting temptation is a strong act that evidence one's love for God. To those who love God and do not give in to temptation, God in turn gives a reward, which is the Crown of Life. The Bible teaches us that at the end of life, those who will enter heaven will receive eternal rewards, which is based upon how we lived our lives here on earth. Some will have less while others have more spiritual rewards, which implies that others will enjoy the fullness of life in heaven more than others. Hence, as believers, we are to live our lives in anticipation to that which is eternal and better than this world has to offer by rejecting temptation. What things get in our way of having an eternal perspective? How does focusing on the "crown of life" help us persevere in our faith?
4. ***The Source of Temptation: Man's Sinful Desires (v. 13-15).*** James makes it clear that even though God may allow trials and temptations to come into our life, God is not the source of temptation. Rather, the very source of temptation is man's sinful desires (v. 14). When we fall into temptation, it is because we choose to follow and act upon our selfish desires. Desire in itself is not a bad thing, but when we allow our desires which are contrary to the will of God to linger in our minds long enough,

it leads us to act upon it; and sin leads to death. 1 John 5:16 warns us that God may prematurely take one's life in order to stop him/her from living in sin. The road to temptation is the road to death. Why do we often blame God for tempting us when we sin? What temptations do you need God's help to resist this week? How can we as a community help each other resist temptation?

5. ***The Contrast to Temptation: God's Goodness (v. 16-18).*** The contrast to the temptations from our own selfish desires, James tells us, is God's perfect goodness. God's goodness in dealing with His children does not differ in level. God does not play favoritism; everything that He desires for us is for our good. Moreover, verse 18 also tells us the reason God allows us to know and experience His goodness. As God has given us the best gift of all, providing us salvation through Jesus, who died on the our behalf for our good, our response then must be to excel and be the best types of people (first fruits) in living a life that rejects sin's temptations. What are some evidences of God's goodness in your life? How does remembering God's goodness break the chains of sin in our lives?

Walk

The choices you make speak volumes about your life. A life that is able to reject sin's temptations speaks louder than words to this world. If it does not, then it is a life not marked by any difference from this world. Therefore, in order to not yield to sin, you as a believer need to have an eternal perspective. Remember to guard your heart and mind from your sinful desires, and direct its focus in the goodness of God in your life. Examine yourself. Are you satisfied with the temporary pleasures of this world now, or would you rather experience the fullness of life in eternity? What can you do to stop an evil desire from becoming an evil act? How much do you value the goodness of God? Or put in another way, how much do you love God? Would you choose to live the better life and reject sin's temptation? It's a choice you need to make.

Worship & Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for being a good God, who seek nothing but the best for us. Thank you for being extra gracious and merciful to us despite the many times that we have failed to reject sin's temptation. Lord, grant us the grace to persevere in our faith. Help us not lose sight of the eternal for the temporal. May Your Spirit fill us with desires that please and honor You, that we may not yield to the enticements of this world. Remind us that every good and perfect gift comes from You and may the overflow of Your goodness in our lives challenge us to live faithfully. May the lives we live be a strong testament of our love for You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.