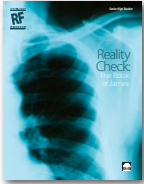


# Is Your Faith Real?

In order for a person to have eternal life, he or she must have faith in Jesus Christ and accept Him as his or her personal Savior. James took this message one step further. He encouraged believers to put actions to their faith and to grow in their Christian life.

True and genuine faith results in works done for the Savior! Is your faith real?



## **The Real Faith in Life Devotional Bible Study**

is designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for Monday through Saturday, along

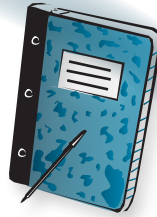
with an In-Class worksheet to be completed during your group study.

In order for you to gain the most out of your devotional time, use the following tools along with your student book.



**Bible study tools:** In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance.

If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation.



**Journal:** Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class each week so that you can take notes during the

lesson or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.

Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org).

This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study. (This recommendation does not constitute a blanket endorsement by RBP.)

# Trials & Temptations

## James 1:1–18

We can't escape trials and temptation; they're inevitable in this fallen world. But we can handle them in a way that marks us as different from the world. We can respond joyfully to trials—with confidence that God has allowed these things in our lives to accomplish good and to strengthen our faith. And we can overcome temptation by obeying the principles found in God's Word.

## Memory Verses



*"My brethren, count it all joy when  
ye fall into divers temptations;  
Knowing this, that the trying of your  
faith worketh patience"  
(James 1:2, 3).*

# Monday

The book of James was written to believing Jews who had been scattered from Jerusalem as a result of persecution.

**Read James 1:2–4 and answer the following questions.**

1. What were these scattered Jews facing?
2. Look up the word “trying” in a Bible concordance to find its original Greek meaning.
3. How did James say these believers should view the hard times that had come upon them?
4. Why were they to respond this way?

What trial are you facing in your life right now? Remember: Your trial—whether big or small—is important to God. He loves you and wants to help you through the situation you face. Talk to God about your trial. Ask for His strength to endure it in a way that will please Him.



**Memory Verse Activity:** This week's memory verses are a great reminder that there is a purpose for facing trials. Place this week's memory verse card in your Bible. As you study God's Word each day, read the verses and remember their promise.

## Tuesday

### Read James 1:5–8.

1. What is wisdom? Check a Bible dictionary for a specific definition.
2. Why would the believers to whom James was writing want wisdom?
3. To whom were these believers to go for wisdom?
4. How were they to go?
5. Just as wisdom was important for these struggling Jewish believers, Christians today need godly wisdom as well. Look at Monday's devotions. How would godly wisdom help you endure the trial you are facing?
6. How can you get that godly wisdom?

Tell God that you need the wisdom that comes only from reading His Word and obeying the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you gain the wisdom you need as you endure your trial.



*The person who asks for wisdom but hopes for an easy way out of his or her trial is not spiritually mature. Verse 7 warns that a person who has not fixed his or her faith on the Lord has no right to expect God to answer his or her prayers!*

# Wednesday

**James 1:9–11 refers to the rich man versus the poor man. Read these verses.**

1. What is true about both the rich man and the poor man?
2. What do these verses tell you about a person's possessions and his or her trials?
3. What is promised to the one who can endure a hard situation and not be drawn away into sin (v. 12)?
4. What have you learned from this passage that will help you next time you face a trial?

*The "crown of life" can be interpreted in a couple of different ways. One is that the crown (or reward) is both eternal life and a fulfilling life here on earth. Another interpretation is that the "crown of life" is a literal, tangible crown for believers who have endured temptation during their lives on earth. This crown will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. In this view, the crown of life is one of several crowns that will be given as rewards. Study the following passages to learn more about other crowns mentioned in the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4.*



# Thursday

## Read James 1:12.

1. Look up the following words in a Bible dictionary and write their original Greek meanings.

Blessed

Endureth

Tried

2. Write verse 12 in your own words, incorporating the meanings you've discovered.



*This verse can apply to you! Remember that trial you wrote down on Monday? Follow the principles you have learned about facing trials and claim the promise of this verse. God will work in your life through your trial.*

# Friday

## Read James 1:13–15.

1. Since God does not ever tempt a person to do evil, why does He allow trials to come into our lives? (Hint: review verses 1–4.)
2. Where does temptation come from?
3. Read Matthew 4:10. Where else does temptation come from?
4. Knowing where temptation comes from will make it easier for you to resist it. In what areas are you most vulnerable to temptation?
5. How can you apply the principles you have learned today to help you avoid temptation?

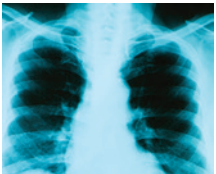
Talk to God about your struggle with temptation. Ask Him to give you the strength to resist that temptation. For extra help, look in a Bible concordance for verses that relate to the specific areas in which you struggle. Study those verses throughout the next week.

# Saturday

## Read James 1:16–18.

1. James gave a specific command to the Jewish believers (v. 16). What is that command?
2. What term of endearment did James give to these believers?
3. Why would James give this command to these believers? (Look over this week's devotions to see what these people had been going through!)
4. James gave a glimpse of the wonderful goodness of God (v. 17). What kind of gifts does God give?
5. Contrast God's gifts and character (v. 17) to Satan's (vv. 13–15).
6. Verse 17 is a great reminder that God is always the same. Bible scholars refer to this trait as "immutability." What does this trait mean to you?
7. Since God is immutable, what He says will always be true. What are some promises God has given believers in the Word of God? Write some promises and the references below.

Choose one of these promises to claim as you face a particularly difficult trial or temptation. Remember: God is always the same. He will be faithful.



**I know my faith is real when I persevere through trials and temptations by trusting God.**



# Journal Notes



# Open Book Test

Many people give you answers to tests in life. Read each test and summarize some popular answers you are given by TV, magazines, or friends. In column three, record godly responses. Be sure to support your responses with Scripture.

Tests	Popular Answers	God's Answers
Someone you thought was your friend is spreading untrue rumors about you.		
Your boyfriend or girlfriend wants you to "prove your love" by having sex.		
Your science teacher is a proclaimed evolutionist. He has required you to write a paper on the origins of life. You need a good grade on this assignment.		
A new Christian family has just joined your church. They didn't have much to begin with, and now a fire has destroyed their belongings. You have \$50 you've been saving for clothes.		
Your little sister is heading toward the phone to call her best friend. You're expecting a call from your friend any minute.		

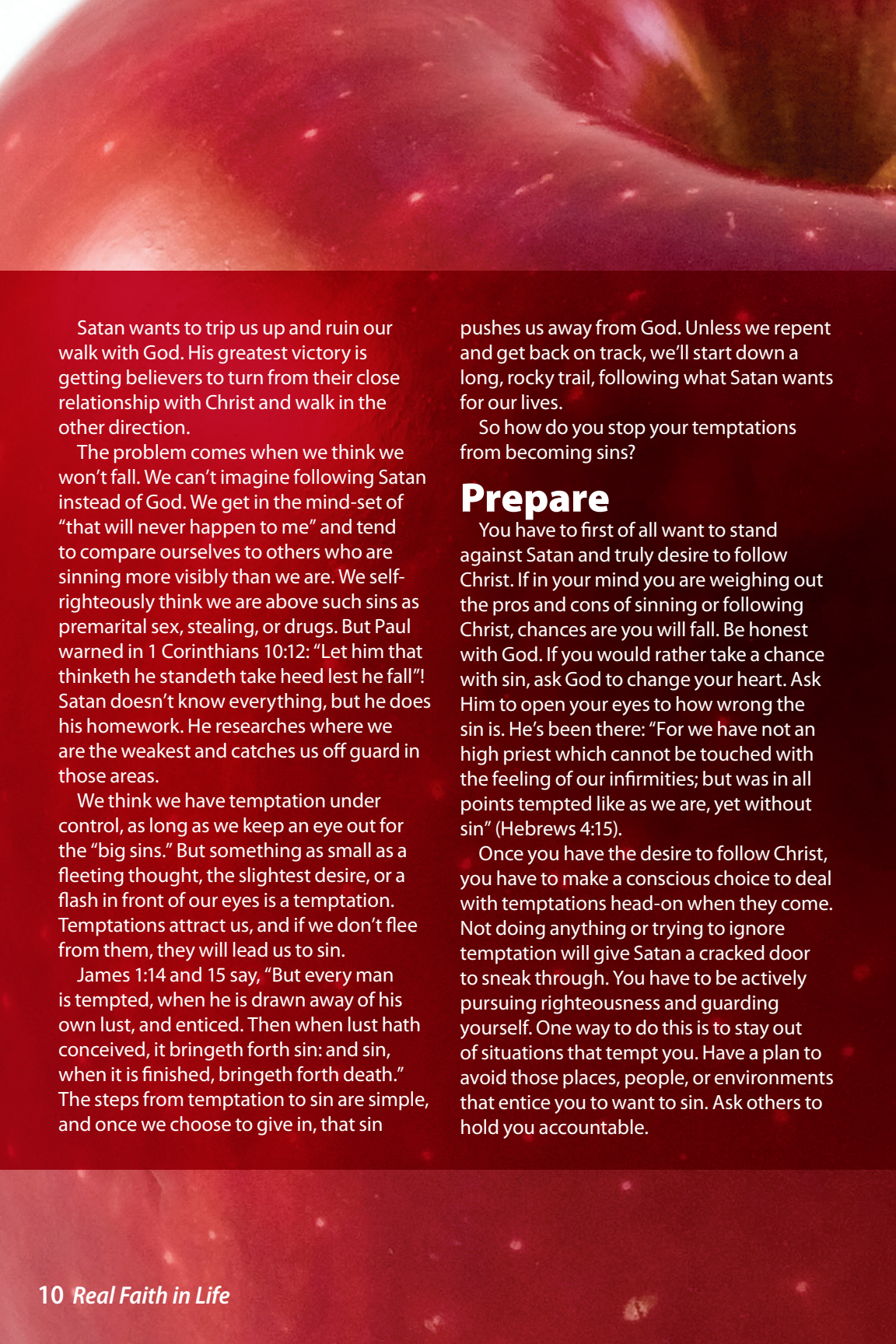


# What Will You Do With Temptation

What does the word “temptation” bring to your mind? Maybe you’d rather not talk about temptation or admit that you struggle with it. Here’s the deal: everyone is tempted. Temptation is not sin; it’s what you do with it that either pushes you farther from God or draws you closer to Him.

Let’s look deeper into what the Bible has to say about temptation. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul stated, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”





Satan wants to trip us up and ruin our walk with God. His greatest victory is getting believers to turn from their close relationship with Christ and walk in the other direction.

The problem comes when we think we won't fall. We can't imagine following Satan instead of God. We get in the mind-set of "that will never happen to me" and tend to compare ourselves to others who are sinning more visibly than we are. We self-righteously think we are above such sins as premarital sex, stealing, or drugs. But Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"! Satan doesn't know everything, but he does his homework. He researches where we are the weakest and catches us off guard in those areas.

We think we have temptation under control, as long as we keep an eye out for the "big sins." But something as small as a fleeting thought, the slightest desire, or a flash in front of our eyes is a temptation. Temptations attract us, and if we don't flee from them, they will lead us to sin.

James 1:14 and 15 say, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The steps from temptation to sin are simple, and once we choose to give in, that sin

pushes us away from God. Unless we repent and get back on track, we'll start down a long, rocky trail, following what Satan wants for our lives.

So how do you stop your temptations from becoming sins?

## Prepare

You have to first of all want to stand against Satan and truly desire to follow Christ. If in your mind you are weighing out the pros and cons of sinning or following Christ, chances are you will fall. Be honest with God. If you would rather take a chance with sin, ask God to change your heart. Ask Him to open your eyes to how wrong the sin is. He's been there: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Once you have the desire to follow Christ, you have to make a conscious choice to deal with temptations head-on when they come. Not doing anything or trying to ignore temptation will give Satan a cracked door to sneak through. You have to be actively pursuing righteousness and guarding yourself. One way to do this is to stay out of situations that tempt you. Have a plan to avoid those places, people, or environments that entice you to want to sin. Ask others to hold you accountable.





## Prayer

As we read in Hebrews 4:15, Jesus, our “high priest” knows what we’re going through. And through Him, we can approach our Heavenly Father. He wants us to come to Him for everything, even our struggle with sin. In Hebrews 4:16, the writer encouraged us to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” As we daily spend time in God’s Word and talk openly with Him, we will find that the temptations for the things that once attracted us will lessen. We will more easily discern the quiet whispers of the Devil and more readily run to God for help.

## Perseverance

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2–4). Perseverance helps us develop character and causes us to grow in our relationship with Christ, which will help us in our struggle with temptation.

In Matthew 4, Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, and it was not easy. He had been fasting for forty days; Jesus was physically worn down. Yet instead of allowing Satan to have the victory,

He persevered and answered Satan’s temptations with Scripture. We may get tired of saying no to the same things over and over, but in following Christ’s example, we become more like Him.

Remember, “God . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,” and not only that, He promises to “make a way to escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13). We never have to give in to sin!

What tempts you? Are you tempted with the things of this world such as money, popularity, beauty, success? Are you tempted in your character to cheat, lie, or even deny Christ and your beliefs? Are you tempted with pleasing the flesh with sex, drugs, materialism, pornography? You are not alone, and God can strengthen you to overcome any temptation.

Even if you’ve been struggling for a while and have not been able to resist certain temptations, it’s never too late to turn back. God will always accept you and wants you to ask for His help. What will you do when temptation comes? Will you allow Satan to push you from God, or will you actively seek to draw closer to Him?