

# what is temptation?

## introduction

People spend hundreds and even thousands of dollars to stop bad habits. There are probably things in your life that you consider to be bad habits, things you do but know are harmful to you. Don't worry. You're not alone. We all struggle in this area. The Bible calls one part of this struggle temptation. Temptation is the thought that pops into your mind before you actually do something wrong. Even Jesus was tempted (Luke 4:1-13). As a group, list some common temptations, then read James 4:7-8.

## message

James teaches us several important things. First, he says to submit to God. When we do this, He will help us overcome the temptation. Next, he tells us to resist. This means to stand against or oppose. We're to declare war against the devil and his temptations. The concept of resisting is found in other Bible passages.

- Acts 6:10: The Jews could not stand up against, or resist, the wisdom of Stephen.
- Galatians 2:11: Paul opposed Peter for being so wrong. He resisted.
- Ephesians 6:13: The phrase, "stand your ground," means to resist.

The Bible uses this simple word to tell us how to fight temptation. Resist the enemy is what James 4 tells us. Notice what the rest of the passage says. James asks us to come near to God and purify our hearts. Don't be double-minded, he says. You can't love God and continue to sin.

## salvation appeal

If the struggle against temptation overwhelms you, the first step you can take is repentance. This means you decide to stop giving in to temptation and instead turn to God and seek His forgiveness. It is more than just being sorry, though. It's giving of yourself to God, allowing Him to be in charge. Today, consider all that has been said. If you need a Savior, pray and ask Jesus Christ to cleanse you from all sin. He will free you from temptation's power.

## challenge

Resisting Satan's temptation is a spiritual battle. It's more than just saying, "Satan, I resist you." That's part of it, but there are choices that we must make. This means coming to God with a pure heart. We must continue to pray and stand firm against the enemy.

