

LESSON PLAN

TRIALS, TESTS AND TEMPTATIONS

James 1:1-15

Lesson Memory Verse: James 1:12 - “**God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able;** but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (Grades 1 & 2 memorize portion in **bold.**)

Lesson Aim: Teach the children that trials are tests from God to make us stronger; temptations are from Satan to destroy us..

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): How many of you like to take tests at school? (Let children respond.) Tests are hard, aren't they? But tests are good for us when they make our minds work better. Boys like to test their muscles to see if they are getting stronger. Girls like to test recipes to see if they can make food more delicious. Good tests are trials that God brings into our lives to make us better Christians. There will be tests of sickness and injuries, tests of problems at home and trouble with friends, and there will be tests of disappointments and delays in your life that God will use to make you a godly Christian.

Bad tests are temptations that Satan uses to hurt us and drag us down to Hell. Trials are the opposite of temptations. Trials are good for us, but temptations are bad for us. Satan uses temptations to attract us into sin. If you sin as a believer in Jesus Christ, you will be a weak Christian. If you sin as an unbeliever, you will find it more and more difficult to turn from your sins and get off the wide road that is taking you to Hell.

HE (for Authority): Satan uses temptations to make you turn away from God, but God uses trials to make you strong so you can resist Satan's temptations and turn away from him. Our memory verse is a part of 1 Corinthians 10:13 and it reminds us that God will help us when we are tempted by Satan. It tells us that “God is faithful.” You can count on His help when Satan tempts you. He “will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.” That means He will not allow you to be tempted more than you can handle with His help. It goes on to promise that He will “make a way to escape.” Satan may think that he has you trapped, but God will show you a way to escape from his temptation. You can always pray to ask for God's help, if you are a Christian, and He will give you the strength to escape. Jesus was able to escape from Satan's temptations when He gave the right Scripture verses to defeat Satan's temptations. You can do that, too, if you memorize the verses we give you each week. The last part of the verse guarantees “that you may be able to bear it.” It is God's promise that He will not let you be defeated, if you depend on Him. He is stronger than Satan and He will not let Satan get you to sin.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): **PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.** Today we are going to see how some people failed when they were tested and others won.

OUTLINE OF THE DOCTRINE

I. Everyone is tempted - 1 Cor 10:13.

Satan tempts all people to sin so he can make them weak, but God can turn a temptation into a trial for believers to make them strong.

WE: The way we react to temptations will show what kind of a person we are. If we sin, we are a weak Christian, or we may not even be a Christian. If we do not sin, it shows we are a strong Christian.

II. Three persons are involved in a Christian's trials and temptations.

A. God – Jam 1:2-4, 12.

God allows trials in a Christian's life to make him stronger. The same Greek word is translated temptation and trial. Here “temptation” should be considered a “trial”; related words in these verses are translated “trying” and “tried.”

B. Satan – Jam 1:13-15

Satan will tempt a Christian to sin. He wants him to join him in rebellion against God. Sin will destroy him.

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C. A Christian – Jam 1:5

A Christian may not understand why he is having a trial or temptation, so he can ask God for wisdom.

WE: We are in a spiritual war, but God has given us spiritual supplies to protect us (Eph 6:10-18).

III. A Christian must handle trials in the right way – Jam 4:7.

A. He must submit to God.

He will receive a crown of life from God when he endures a trial (James 1:12).

B He must resist Satan.

He can resist Satan's temptations to sin by the power of his faith in Christ (1 Peter 5:8-9).

WE: We can be made stronger by God's trials; we can defeat Satan's temptations to weaken us.

APPLICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE

(Use some of these familiar Bible stories to show how people have failed or passed their tests.)

I. People that Failed Their Test.

A. Adam and Eve - Gen 3

God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, but He told Adam and Eve not to eat its fruit. It was there to test their obedience. They were perfect and God gave him everything they needed to be happy. If they obeyed God, they would be able to live forever in a perfect world. But Satan used the serpent to make Eve doubt God and then she disobeyed Him. She encouraged Adam to eat the fruit and they failed the test that God gave to them. As a result they were separated from God, suffered much and eventually died.

WE: We must submit to God's commands and obey Him or we will suffer like Adam and Eve.

B. Achan - Josh 6:18-19; 7:20-21

God made a rule that the first tenth of whatever we earn or receive belongs to Him. When God gave Israel the victory at Jericho, God told them that this rule applied. Since this was the first city they conquered, He told them to give Him everything in that city and keep nothing for themselves. Later God gave them the things in the other cities which they could keep for themselves. He only asked them to give Him the first tenth.

God knew that Achan would see the Babylonian garment, the silver and the gold, but He had warned him not to take them. Satan tempted Achan to take these things for himself. God allowed Satan to tempt him, but He did not want Achan to fail. He wanted to make him stronger through this temptation. He was willing to help Achan overcome the temptation, but Achan did not ask God for His help. Instead he chose to give in to Satan and failed the test. Achan brought great trouble to himself, his family and his country.

WE: We must not yield to temptations and sin. Overcome the temptation and receive the crown of life.

C. The disciples in Gethsemane - Luke 22:39-46

Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him into the garden to test them. He knew they were tired, but He wanted them to watch and pray for spiritual strength. They failed the test and went to sleep. As a result they did not have God's power to keep them faithful to the Lord during His trial – they left Him. After Jesus went to Heaven they learned how important prayer was and Satan could not stop them.

WE: We need to learn to obey the Lord and pray. This will give us the power to resist Satan.

D. Peter's denial - Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

Satan desired to destroy Peter. He wanted Peter to stop following Jesus completely because he knew what a good witness Peter could be. God allowed Satan to test Peter so he would learn that he could not stand against Satan by himself (Jn 13:37). He had to depend on Jesus for strength. When Peter failed the Lord and denied Him, he realized what an awful thing he had done and he went out and wept bitterly. Because Peter was sorry, Jesus met with him after He arose from the dead and told him he was forgiven.

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WE: We, too, can be forgiven, if we fail any of our tests, but we must go to Jesus and ask Him to forgive us (1 Jn 1:9).

II. People that Passed Their Test.

A. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac - Gen 22:1-13

God told Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to see how much Abraham really loved and trusted Him. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God stopped him and gave him a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac. Because Abraham obeyed God in this hard test, Abraham learned to love and trust God more than ever before. He became strong in his faith.

WE: We will find our faith stronger every time we obey the Lord and pass one of His tests.

B. Job - Job 1:6-22; 2:6-10

God loved Job. He could see Job's heart. He knew that Job loved Him. But Job needed to learn a lesson, so God allowed Satan to test Job. Satan was sure if he hurt Job that Job would curse God. He wanted Job to fail in the test. Job's wife failed and Satan used her to discourage Job. But Job did not fail. He trusted God (Job 13:15). Job learned some very important lessons by the hard things he experienced. He saw how great God is and how sinful he really was in God's sight. He realized that he had not deserved any of the riches that he had possessed, but that those things had been gifts from the God who loved Him (Job 42:5-6). After Job learned these lessons, God blessed him and gave him even more than he had before (Job 42:10).

WE: We will receive from God all that we need in this life when we pass the tests that He gives to us.

C. The temptation of Christ - Luke 4:3-13; Hebrews 4:15

God loves us so much that He allowed His Son, Jesus Christ, not only to become a man so He could die for our sins, but also to suffer severe testing by Satan. Because Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan, He is able to understand how we feel when Satan tempts us. Jesus defeated Satan, so He can help us to overcome every temptation Satan uses on us.

WE: We should thank Jesus for defeating Satan by not giving in to his temptations or else He could not save us. Now we can call on Him to help us defeat Satan every time he tries to tempt us to do wrong.

BE (for Action): Ask the children, "What kind of tests does God allow boys and girls to have today?" (Let the children tell how they have been tempted this past week. You may have to suggest a few tests to prime the pump. Perhaps children were tempted to look at someone else's paper at school or to say something unkind to a friend. Perhaps some were tested through sickness or injury.) Ask the class how they can defeat Satan in their tests. Remind them to submit to God and resist Satan. Have some of the children pray for victory in the tests they will have during the coming week.