

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

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Because you are growing in your new faith, your old way of living no longer fits. You need to replace natural impulses and old patterns of behavior with new attitudes and desires. The Bible describes this as a new nature that God has created in you. The apostle Paul says in his letter to the Colossians,

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, **Colossians 3:9-10**

Once you became a Christian, God gave you His Holy Spirit to help you live and grow in your new spiritual nature. As you begin to live what you learn, change will come. Now understand, this isn't a spiritual "self-improvement" program. When we try to live a godly life in our own strength, we fail miserably. God wants us to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome our old, sinful nature.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEMPTATION AND TRIALS.

There is a difference between being tempted and being tested (trials). Simply put, the purpose of a temptation is to entice you and draw you into sin. The purpose of a trial, or test, is to develop godly character or strengthen your faith.

Every trial you face is an opportunity to trust God. Sometimes, however, you may feel angry or think God has deserted you. You are being tempted to turn your back on God and miss out on what He wants to develop in you. The devil wants to hold you back from growing. As Jesus said in John 10:10, the devil is a "thief" who wants to "steal and kill and destroy:"

Read **James 1:13** and explain why God will never tempt you. _____

Read **James 1:2-4** and explain why God will allow you to experience trials

DISCOVER HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION.

Where does temptation come from? The Bible teaches that Satan is the tempter with demonic forces who do his bidding (see Ephesians 6:11-12). The devil's strategy includes using the "world" and the "flesh:"What does this mean?

The "world" refers to a way of thinking that is hostile to God. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, the devil is called "the god of this evil world" who "has blinded the minds of those who don't believe:"

What temptations does the world offer?

Read **1John 2:16** for the answer. _____

The "**FLESH**" refers to our old nature, which is influenced by the world. In James 1 :14-15, we learn that, "Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death:"When we give in to any temptation, we can't blame the devil. He may get us to"think about it;" but we are the ones who listen, desire, and give in to what he offers. Never put the welcome mat out to an evil thought.

It isn't a sin to be tempted, for even Jesus faced temptation. But when you begin to entertain the thought in your mind, you open the door to sin. How can temptation be resisted and overcome? Read the following verses for the answer.

1Corinthians 10:13 _____

James 4:7-10 _____

DISCOVER HOW TO PERSEVERE IN TRIALS.

Usually, our first response to difficulty is to ask, "Why me?"We don't understand what God is doing. Life's lessons often come with thorny circumstances. Some crisis, loss, or drastic change occurs. You may not feel God's presence. Your prayers seem to go unanswered. You may wonder if God is punishing you or has simply forgotten about you.

Unlike temptation, where running away is definitely the best option, God means for us to persevere-hang in there-through times of testing. We may not get an answer for all of our "whys;" but we can take comfort in knowing that God only allows difficulties in our life to cause our faith to grow. He wants us to learn to live by faith, not by feelings.

Read the following verses to learn the purpose for trials

1Peter 1:7 _____

2Corinthians 1:3-7 _____

What can you be certain of when going through a trial?

John 16:33 _____

Luke 6:47-48 _____

What does God promise when you are going through a trial?

Psalms 55:22 _____

Isaiah 41:10 _____
