



# PRESSURE POINTS

SAMPLE



CHIP HENDERSON



SAMPLE SESSION

THE PRESSURE  
OF TEMPTATION





*What food tempts you to say  
yes to just one more bite?*



## THE POINT

*God won't tempt me, but He will provide a way to resist temptation.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Just one more slice—one more bite—there's no harm in that, right?

Satan wants you to believe it's OK to give in to temptation. Who'll know? Where's the harm? Give in to the little temptations and you'll find yourself giving in to the big ones. We all know someone who lied and lost their reputation, the flirtatious person at the office who lost their marriage, or someone who gave in to the temptation of gossip only to lose their best friend. Temptations promise good things, but in the end they always fail to deliver. The Bible is full of people who gave in to temptation and lost it all, but it also contains stories of men and women who successfully resisted temptation. What did they know that we don't?

God doesn't tempt us. Instead He provides a way for us to resist temptation and escape its harm.

So what's it going to be? One more bite, or will you put the fork down? James 1:13-18 has the plan of action for resisting temptation and living in a way that pleases Christ.



# WHAT DOES **THE BIBLE** SAY?

## **James 1:13-18** (HCSB)

**13** No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God." For God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone.

**14** But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires.

**15** Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

**16** Don't be deceived, my dearly loved brothers.

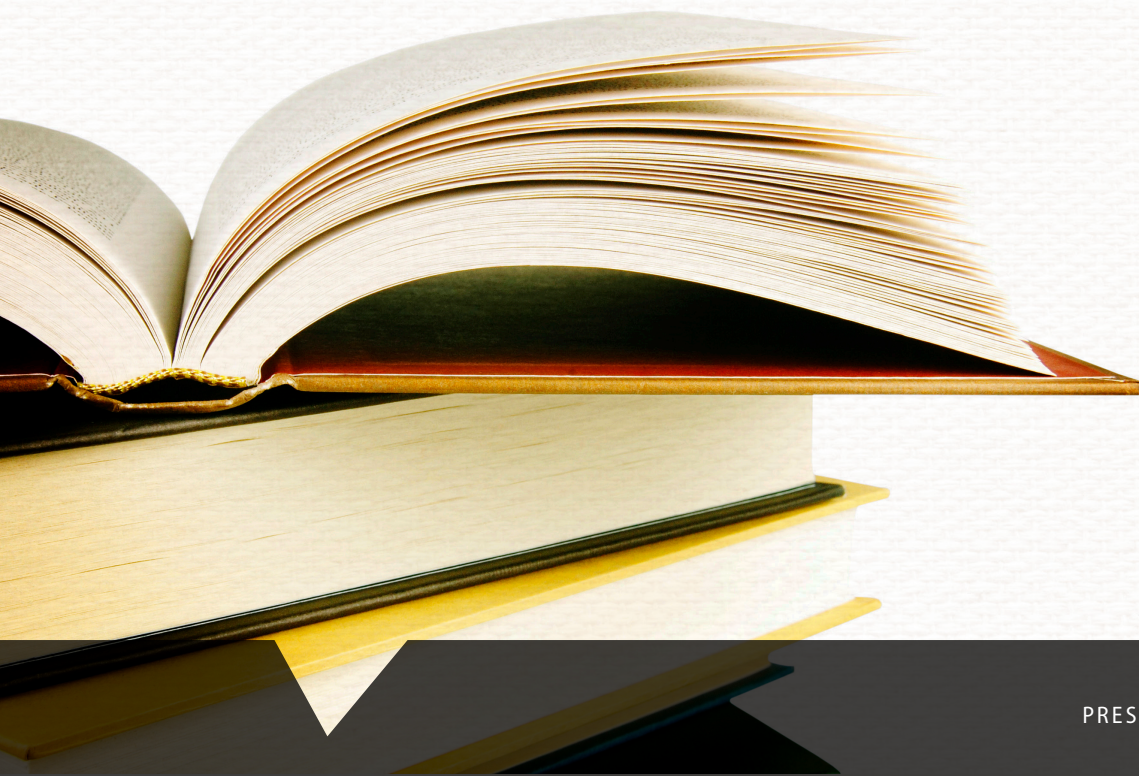
**17** Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning.

**18** By His own choice, He gave us a new birth by the message of truth so that we would be the firstfruits of His creatures.

## *Key Words*

**trial/tempt** (vv. 13-14) – These words come from the same Greek word. Context determines whether the word is used for trials (referring to difficulties and hardships as in verse 2) or enticements to sin.

**evil desires** (v. 14) – The single Greek word means a longing or desire. It can be a good or natural desire, but it is usually used to refer to something forbidden.





*If temptations promise good but never deliver, why do we so often say yes to them?*

## QUESTION #2

### James 1:13

James wrote to Christians who, like us, faced the pressures of temptation. He outlined the truth about temptation and showed how to handle it. In the previous session we studied about trials, but temptations are different. Trials bring the pressure of hardship or difficulty. There is nothing necessarily good or pleasurable about a trial. Job lost everything (Job 1–2). Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. 22). There was no appeal in those.

But there is appeal in temptation. The pressure comes through its appeal. The appeal of temptation is typically characterized by promises:

- ▶ **Temptation promises you some gain.** The gain may be fun, money, pleasure, adventure, position, or an appeased palate. The grass of temptation will always appear green.
- ▶ **Temptation promises you won't get hurt.** You can get away with it. Nobody will know. It's not even that wrong. You won't get burned like others. You are different. You can handle it.

Being tempted isn't wrong, but giving in is. Temptation promises that you will be better off after you indulge, but you won't. James communicates two truths:

- ▶ **Temptation is inevitable but not irresistible.** It's not a matter of *if* you are tempted, but *when* you are tempted. Temptation comes to all of us. It even came to Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11). Temptation comes to a pastor as surely as it comes to any member of his church.
- ▶ **Temptation never comes from God.** We know this because of what God has revealed in His Word. We know this because of God's nature. He is untemptable. He lacks nothing and needs nothing. No evil offer appeals to God. He does not tempt us because He is good, loving, and righteous. He cannot and will not pressure us to do anything contrary to His character.







*In what ways are we tempted to satisfy a God-given desire in a sinful way?*

**QUESTION #3**

*"God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape"*

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

## **James 1:14-15**

**Temptation is unique for every person.** Temptation comes when each of us is carried off by our own desires. The Greek word for "own" is *idios*. "Idiosyncrasy" comes from it. It's unique to you. Therefore, what may tempt me may not tempt you. Some are easily tempted to react in anger to a situation; others seldom get angry. Some are tempted by sexual opportunities; others stay away. Some are tempted to engage in gluttony or other excess; others walk away from another helping. You face some temptations that others around you don't. But they face temptations you don't face.

**Temptation follows a predictable process.** The process in James 1:14-15 can be illustrated with fishing. An angler throws bait to an unsuspecting bass. When a worm dangles before him, his desire awakens. He swims away from the safety of his log and swallows the bait. The fish is no longer in control. He is pulled against his will toward the angler's boat, net, cooler, and maybe the taxidermist. What bait is used on us? James says we are tempted when we get carried away and enticed. We have desires—maybe even God-given desires—for food, sex, approval, shelter, love, or power. These aren't bad in themselves, but fulfilling them in wrong ways is deadly (Mark 4:19, Col. 3:5, 1 Tim. 6:9). When we leave the safety and shelter of God's provision we take Satan's bait. Sin conceives in us. Sin entangles. We suffer.



## **James 1:16-18**

So how do we deal with the pressure of temptation? We draw upon the good and perfect gifts God gives to us. Instead of leading us to evil, God provides what we need to live righteously, and resist temptation:

- ▶ **A relationship with Christ**—Too many of us think we are helpless to resist temptation. But as a child of God, the power of Christ in you gives you victory over sin. As a Christian—a saint—you are called to be holy and blameless. Because you are a child of God, you can successfully resist temptation. Jesus Christ takes up residence in your life and empowers you by His Holy Spirit. So repent, and call on God's power to live like a Christ-follower.
- ▶ **God's Word**—When Jesus was tempted, He used Scripture to respond to the pressure of temptation (Matt. 4:4). Since Jesus, who is God, used Scripture to resist temptation, how much more should we? What better way to overcome the pressure of temptation than repeating and obeying the Word of the One who made us and who knows us better than we know ourselves? When we memorize God's Word and hide it in our hearts, we have the ability to give the right answer at the right time. God's Word becomes our defense (Ps. 119:11).
- ▶ **An escape route**—One of God's greatest gifts to us is the promise from 1 Corinthians 10:13. God will provide a way of escape and help us stand up to any temptation we face. God the creator and sustainer of the universe, the One who knows everything and everyone, promises to provide us with the ability to resist the pressure of temptation. God's escape route may be a telephone ringing, a whisper in your conscience, or a friend keeping you accountable. But God does not stop us without our participation.

Yes, we need to call out to the Spirit of Christ inside of us for help. Yet we also need to not walk past God's opportunity to bail out. We can also escape by avoiding those things that lead us toward temptation and by doing those things that make us stronger, more like God. The pressure of temptation is great—but God is greater and He has provided us with all that we need to resist that pressure.

***What are some other gifts God has provided that could help you resist temptation?***

**QUESTION #4**





***How can you support and encourage someone struggling with temptation?***

**QUESTION #5**

*Choose one of these circumstances and identify a way of escape:*

**THE CIRCUMSTANCE**

- 1.** I'm lonely and in a hotel room with Wi-Fi and cable:
- 2.** The cashier gave me too much cash back:
- 3.** An "exaggeration" on my application will help me land this job:

**THE ESCAPE**

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## LIVE IT OUT

Being tempted isn't wrong. But the longer we consider a temptation, the weaker we get. So choose God's way of escape:

- ▶ **Think about the temptations you face.** Pray, asking God to help you recognize and carry out His strategy to overcome each.
- ▶ **Memorize Proverbs 4:25.** Practice it in moments of temptation.
- ▶ **Find a friend you can trust.** Ask him or her to hold you accountable as you face temptation.

Sin may offer temporary pleasure, but we will experience consequences when we give in to temptation. Put down the fork. Choose God's way of escape.



## A Marriage Redeemed



**Magical. It's really the only word that described the week our family had just spent. It was a once-in-a-lifetime trip—the kind you dream, plan, and save for—it had been a fairy tale.**

**We were on the long drive home to Texas, the kids asleep in the back of our van. I was tired, too, but on a high that comes from making dreams come true. I didn't know my "perfect world" was about to end.**



To continue reading "A Marriage Redeemed" from *HomeLife* magazine, visit [BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles).





## My group's prayer requests

## My thoughts



# Pressure Points

As we've faced common pressure points seen in the Book of James, the ultimate goal has been for all of us to develop into people who know Christ and His gracious work, who are contributing servants in the community of faith, and who are effectively engaging the culture without losing distinction.

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## Christ



No one faced greater pressure than Jesus Christ, who faced incredible trials and temptations. However, Jesus endured the extreme trial and agony of the cross with joy, knowing what it would accomplish for us (Heb. 12:2). And because He never gave in to a single temptation, He was able to bring us forgiveness for our sins and empowerment to stand against temptation.

# OK







# Community

Because anyone can become a part of the family of God, we are to treat all people with the same love we express to Christ. Consequently, when we stand together, we support and encourage each other in the midst of whatever pressures we are facing.



# Culture

The body of Christ can truly impact the culture with their treatment of people who are different from them socio-economically, politically, and ethnically. A love for Christ that is expressed in love for all people can transform a society. The meekness and strong resolve of those who endure injustice patiently is a strong witness to the group or culture that oppresses them.

Society can be transformed by the quiet witness of those who endure opposition yet continue to love those who are against them .





# LEADER GUIDE

# PRESSURE POINTS

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

In order to make the most of this study and to ensure a richer group experience, it's recommended that all group participants read through the teaching and discussion content in full before each group meeting. As a leader, it is also a good idea for you to be familiar with this content and prepared to summarize it for your group members as you move through the material each week.

Each session of the Bible study is made up of three sections:

### 1. THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE.

An introduction to the theme of the session and its connection to everyday life, along with a brief overview of the primary Scripture text. This section also includes an icebreaker question or activity.

### 2. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

This comprises the bulk of each session and includes the primary Scripture text along with explanations for key words and ideas within that text. This section also includes most of the content designed to produce and maintain discussion within the group.

### 3. LIVE IT OUT.

The final section focuses on application, using bulleted summary statements to answer the question, *So what?* As the leader, be prepared to challenge the group to apply what they learned during the discussion by transforming it into action throughout the week.

For group leaders, the *Pressure Points* Leader Guide contains several features and tools designed to help you lead participants through the material provided.

## ICEBREAKER

These opening questions and/or activities are designed to help participants transition into the study and begin engaging the primary themes to be discussed. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak, but maintain a low-pressure environment.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Each "What Does the Bible Say?" section features at least four questions designed to spark discussion and interaction within your group. These questions encourage critical thinking, so be sure to allow a period of silence for participants to process the question and form an answer.

The *Pressure Points* Leader Guide also contains follow-up questions and optional activities that may be helpful to your group, if time permits.

## DVD CONTENT

Each video features teaching from Chip Henderson on the primary themes found in the session. We recommend that you show this video in one of three places: (1) At the beginning of group time, (2) After the icebreaker, or (3) After a quick review and/or summary of "What Does the Bible Say?"

The Leader Guide contains additional questions to help unpack the video and transition into the discussion. For an expanded leader guide with commentary, see the "Leader Tools" folder on the DVD.



## SAMPLE SESSION: THE PRESSURE OF TEMPTATION

### THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

**The Point:** God won't tempt me, but He will provide a way to resist temptation.

**The Passage:** James 1:13-18

**The Setting:** After writing about how we should respond to the trials we face, James turned his attention to temptations. We all face trials and temptations, but temptations do not come from God. James concluded this section by pointing our attention to what does come from God. He is the giver of all good things.

**Icebreaker:** What food tempts you to say yes to just one more bite?

**Optional follow-up:** How have you successfully resisted those “one more bite” moments in the past?

**Optional activity:** Bring a decadent dessert to the group and allow people to sample if they choose. Use the questions below to explore your group's emotional reactions to temptation.

- What emotions did you experience when you first saw the food?
- What emotions or sensations did you experience as you ate it?
- What emotions did you experience afterward?

**Video Summary:** In this video Chip talks us through James 1:13-18, our primary text. He focuses his teaching on the reality that we all face temptation—James talks about *when* we are tempted, not *if*. But we don't have to give in. We can overcome. Chip also discusses how the way we face temptation has a great deal to do with how we see ourselves. God sees us as saints, holy, called out, set apart from sin. And when we begin to see ourselves the way He sees us, we can begin to win the fight.

**WATCH THE DVD SEGMENT FOR SESSION 2, THEN USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS TO TRANSITION INTO THE STUDY.**

- Spend a few minutes discussing identity and who God says we are versus how we sometimes see ourselves. Lead the group to examine how an accurate picture of our identity could put us in a better position to fight temptation.



- Chip explains that in the process of being tempted, Satan will attempt to replace God's truth with lies in our minds. Ask group members: What process do you go through to (1) recognize the lies when they come up, and (2) replace those lies with God's truth?

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

ASK FOR A VOLUNTEER TO READ ALOUD JAMES 1:13-18.

Response: What's your initial reaction to these verses?

- What do you like about the text?
- What questions do you have about these verses?

TURN THE GROUP'S ATTENTION TO JAMES 1:13.

**QUESTION 2:** If temptations promise good but never deliver, why do we so often say yes to them?

MOVE TO JAMES 1:14-15.

**QUESTION 3:** In what ways are we tempted to satisfy a God-given desire in a sinful way?

This question is personal in nature, but don't force group members to divulge their own failures. Allow the discussion to focus on "people" in general, unless participants voluntarily choose to share their experiences.

**Optional follow-up:** How can we tell when we're satisfying a God-given desire in a sinful way? What symptoms do we show?

**Optional activity:** Give out nutrition labels from a sugared cereal. Invite the group to search the labels to name comparisons to temptation.

CONCLUDE WITH JAMES 1:16-18.

**QUESTION 4:** What are some other gifts God has provided that could help you resist temptation?



**QUESTION 5:** How can you support and encourage someone struggling with temptation?

**Optional activity:** Encourage group members to practice discerning God's way of escape by jotting ideas on The Circumstance; The Escape activity in their group member book. Let volunteers choose one circumstance and identify a way of escape God might provide. Encourage several ways of escape for each; this demonstrates God's escapes are custom designed for us.

**QUESTION 6:** In what ways can the support and encouragement you might give others help you when you need an escape from your own temptations?

**Note:** This question does not appear in the group member book. Use it in your group discussion as time allows.

### LIVE IT OUT

Invite group members to consider three steps they can take to fight the pressure of temptation (also in their group member book):

- 1. Think about the temptations you face.** Pray, asking God to help you recognize and carry out His strategy to overcome each.
- 2. Memorize Proverbs 4:25.** Practice it in moments of temptation.
- 3. Find a friend you can trust.** Ask him or her to hold you accountable as you face temptation.

**Challenge:** Encourage participants to consider other ways they can fight the influence of temptation in their lives this week. Consider going further and asking them to keep a journal and record how God provided a way for them to escape temptations throughout the week.

**Pray:** As you close the session, ask learners to pray silently to thank God for His love and provision. Encourage them to privately confess when they've given in to temptation. Close the prayer time by asking God to help group members be alert to moments when temptation is baiting them. Pray that they take the way of escape He provides.









## WHERE THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Bible Studies for Life™ will help you know Christ, live in community, and impact the world around you. If you enjoyed this session, be sure and check out these forthcoming releases.\* Six sessions each.

### TITLE

**Pressure Points** *by Chip Henderson*

**When Relationships Collide** *by Ron Edmondson*

**Do Over: Experience New Life in Christ** *by Ben Mandrell*

**Honest to God: Real Questions Christians Ask** *by Robert Jeffress*

**Let Hope In** *by Pete Wilson*

**Productive: Finding Joy in Work** *by Ronnie and Nick Floyd*

**Resilient Faith: Staying Faithful in the Midst of Suffering** *by Mary Jo Sharp*

**What Is God Like?** *by Freddy Cardoza*

### RELEASE DATE

June 2013

June 2013

September 2013

September 2013

December 2013

December 2013

March 2014

March 2014

If your group meets regularly, you might consider Bible Studies for Life as an ongoing series. Available for your entire church—kids, students, and adults—it's a format that will be a more affordable option over time. And you can jump in anytime. For more information, visit **biblestudiesforlife.com**.

**biblestudiesforlife.com/smallgroups**  
**800.458.2772**

*Title and release dates subject to change.*

*\*This is not a complete list of releases. Additional titles will continue to be released every three months. Visit website for more information.*



## SOME DAYS LIFE CAN FEEL LIKE A GIANT PRESSURE COOKER.

The easy response is to just open whatever valve will release the pressure, but too often that valve spews the pent-up steam of sin, frustration, harsh words, and inappropriate actions. Chip Henderson, Senior Pastor of Pinelake Church in Brandon, MS uses the Book of James to show us how to keep those pressures from ruining our lives and hurting those around us.

### CHIP HENDERSON



Chip is the senior pastor of Pinelake Church in Brandon, Mississippi, which has grown from 700 to more than 9,000 people on five campuses. He holds a Ph.D. in New Testament studies, is the co-creator of the L3 Journal and serves on the Board of Directors for the Launch Church Planting Network. Chip is also the author of the young adult study *Samson: A Life Well Wasted* (LifeWay). Chip and his wife Christy have three children.