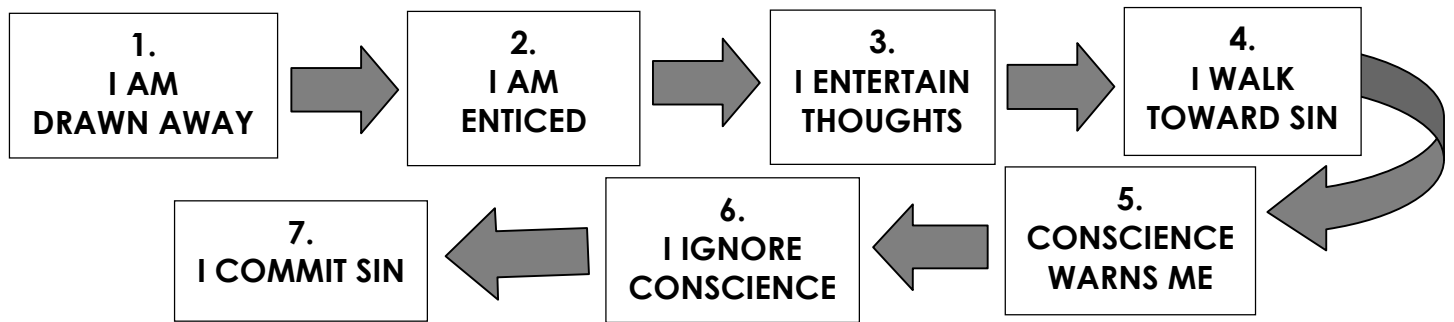


CHAPTER 1: A PLAN FOR VICTORY
Lesson 3 THE CYCLE OF TEMPTATION

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:13-15).



Just as the sun rises and sets every day, winter, spring, summer and fall pass each year; likewise, temptation and sin follow cycles as well. Let’s look at the very first temptation to discover who tempts us, how we are tempted, and why. But God has a remedy.

(1) I Am Drawn Away. When we are not mindful of the things of God, we can be drawn away to a place where Satan can entice us with his lies.

1. Looking at Genesis 3:1, how did Satan draw Eve away from God?

The word *serpent* here translates as “the shining one.” 2 Cor. 11:14 tells us that Satan transforms himself as an angel of light in order to deceive. The serpent (Satan) drew Eve away and enticed her with the words, “Has God indeed said...” causing her to doubt God’s truth and perfect plan—paradise! Satan’s objective is to draw us away and to entice us, causing us to doubt God’s Word. This results in forfeiting God’s good plan.

(2) I Am Enticed.

Genesis 3:6 tells us “The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her.” The word *convinced* here means “enticed.”

Like Eve, we are all enticed in three ways: (1) **the lust of the flesh**, appealing to our human nature (Satan enticed her that it was good), (2) **the lust of the eyes** (she saw that the tree was beautiful), and (3) **the pride of life** (she wanted the wisdom it would give her).

2. What does 1 John 2:16 say about this enticement?

(3) I Entertain Thoughts. In 2 Samuel 11, we read that King David should have gone to battle—but he didn't. This put him in the wrong place at the wrong time and he saw Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop. He should have looked away, but he entertained thoughts about her. Confession and repentance can take place here. We can stop thinking sinful thoughts before it leads to the act of sin.

3. According to 2 Corinthians 10:5b what is a good way to capture our thoughts?

(4) I Walk Toward Sin. When I continue to entertain sinful thoughts, just like King David, it will lead to sin. At this point I need to make a U-turn. A good detour is to walk in the direction of God by reading the Bible, listening to a Christian radio station or by joining in fellowship at church.

4. What does Psalm 1:2 about this?

(5) My Conscience Warns Me. God's law is written on the conscience of every person—even Atheists. Though sin has marred the image of God, that sense of right and wrong still remains in everybody. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit will bring conviction when you begin to stray. The wise thing to do is to pay attention and obey God's leading.

5. What does John 14:26 teach us?

(6) I Ignore My Conscience. Even though I know right from wrong, I ignore God's truth to pursue my desires. Like Eve, I believe the lie ("Go ahead, I deserve it"). This is self-deception: in my mind I justify what I am doing. The more I push aside my convictions of right and wrong, I become desensitized to hearing God's Holy Spirit.

6. Write God's reminder found in Hebrews 3:15.

(7) I commit the act of sin. James 1:14-15 plainly says, "When you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from your own desires, which entice you and drag you away."

7. But there's hope. What is the promise found in 1 Corinthians 10:13-14.

When we are tempted, God has made a way of escape for each one of us, and tells us the first step: Flee! When you feel a temptation coming on—run from it! Run to Jesus