

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Read James 1:13-15 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, James 1:13-15**March 23, 2014****Title: How to win over temptation, part 4**

Facilitator: Remind the group that there are two major enemies to the Christian life: the devil (1Peter 5:8), and the old nature (Galatians 5:17), and that the battlefield is within each of us—in our minds.

Read to the group: The best defense is a good offense. It's true on the ball field and it's true on the battlefield. It's the difference between treating symptoms or curing the disease, pleading guilty for a reduced sentence or proving your innocence in court. And it's true for the battles we fight to win over temptation. So far we have raised defensive barriers to block temptation from joining our old nature and conceiving sin. We've learned that sin brings dire consequences and we can avoid those consequences by resisting temptation. We've learned that we are accountable whether we like it or not, and if we're in it to win it, having an accountability partner can reinforce that barrier. We all have triggers that lure us to the sin trap and we have physical and emotional cues that tell us the trap is about to snap shut. By knowing our trigger points and understanding our personal physiology, we know when to call time-out or run—not walk—away from temptation.

In this fifth and last barrier to prevent temptation from impregnating our old nature, we take the offensive by learning to set the mind on things above.

Question: Peppy used the computer geek maxim, GIGO—garbage in, garbage out, to illustrate that what we take into our minds determines what comes out of our minds. Brainstorm for examples of thoughts (any thoughts) we could take into our minds and ways they could affect what we say and do.

Question: Colossians 3:1-2 exhorts those of us who have been raised with Christ to seek and set our minds on things above. If we're not seeking things above, what things are we seeking? Name some of them. How can they lead us into temptation and sin?

Question: Say you were passed over for a job promotion, one you worked hard for and feel you deserved. Now the new guy with less experience is your supervisor. What thought or thoughts would you choose to take captive and make obey Christ?

Question: What if you were the new guy who got the promotion over the one who thought he deserved it? What thoughts would you choose to take captive and make obey Christ? Share similar experiences in which you had a choice to think the "whatever...things" of Philippians 4:8-9 or the "evil ideas" of Mark 7:20-23.

Question: Peppy offers Philippians 4:8-9 as a grid through which we can filter our thoughts, dwell on the "whatever is..." and in verse 9, "practice these things." How can making a conscious decision to think the things of verse 8 lead to their practice as commanded in verse 9?

Facilitator: Point out that Philippians 4:8-9 is a conditional promise: If we think and practice these things, we have the peace of God with us.

Question: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 reads like a battle plan. If our weapons are not human, then what are the weapons "made powerful by God" that tear down strongholds? How do we become skilled in using these weapons to capture every thought and make it obedient to Christ?