



SATURDAY 07.30.11 James 1:13-15

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires.” In this passage from James we can connect the dots between selfish desires and sin. When we turn our attention from God and what He desires for us, and instead focus our attention on ourselves, we begin to walk the path that leads outside the Garden of Eden.

- But this passage also assures us that this temptation does not come from God. From whom, then, does it come? What can you do to resist?
- If Satan’s fall from grace began with his selfish desire to be equal to God, when we give in to our own self-sins, whom do we most resemble: God the Father, or the “father of lies”?



SUNDAY 07.31.11 Matthew 4:1-11

In this passage we are reminded that we are not the only ones that have experienced temptation. Jesus, himself, was tempted by Satan. And yet, each time, Jesus was able to resist. His efforts provide us the means by which we, too, can resist temptation.

- As you read the passage again, take note of Jesus’ defense tactics. What is His primary weapon? Do you need to spend more time in God’s word?
- The incomparable beauty of God’s love for us is that He continues to love us even though we continue to fail Him. Make a list of how God reveals His love to you in spite of, and often in the midst of, your failures. Add to it each day. How will this list help you to keep your focus on Him?



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

Top Ten: The Stories Behind the Songs - Weekly Guide 7/25/11

Title: “Your Love”

Singer/Songwriters: Brandon Heath, Jason Ingram

Album: Leaving Eden

Song #7

Psalm 36:5-9

“Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. You care for people and animals alike, O LORD. How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your river of delights. For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.”

“Your Love” excerpt

You’re the hope in the morning, You’re the light when the night is falling
 You’re the song when my heart is singing - it’s Your love
 You’re the eyes to the blind man, You’re the feet to the lame man walking
 You’re the sound of the people singing - It’s Your love

Things I’d like to remember from this week’s study:



TUESDAY 07.26.11 Genesis 2:8-17

This passage from Genesis describes the lush garden that God created. He then placed Adam and Eve within that idyllic place - Paradise. One could imagine that the people who first heard these words from Genesis would have considered it to be true paradise compared to the parched, near-deserts of the Middle East.

- What image does the word “paradise” evoke in your mind? Is it the lush, green, tropical location described in the book of Genesis or is it something or somewhere else altogether different?
- When Adam and Eve chose to eat the forbidden fruit, God sent them away from Paradise forever. We know now that the TRUE paradise they left behind was their perfect communion with Him. What forbidden fruits tempt you to turn from your communion with God?



WENESDAY 07.27.11 Genesis 3:1-13

The imagery of this story asks each of us the basic moral question: whose wisdom and purposes will guide me? Will I be my own God, doing whatever pleases me? Or will I honor and be guided by the God who created me? In the story, Eve and Adam listened to the serpent instead of to God.

- A simple act: “she took...and ate.” What a vivid picture of how easily innocence is lost! Do you see how these same words became words of salvation when, during the Last Supper, Jesus said “take and eat”? In what parts of your life do you long for a fresh start?
- Now the man and woman were scared of God, rather than loving God. They blamed others for their own choices. In what ways do you recognize yourself in this picture?



THURSDAY 07.28.11 Genesis 3:14-24

The sad ending of this story points to the consequences that follow when we stop trusting God and miss the mark. But Paul tells us in Romans 5:20, “where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” Because of His great love for us, God still gives his children what they need.

- The “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” is a picture of God’s commitment to human freedom, of the truth that we can worship and praise our Creator or reject God’s love and wisdom. What risks does freedom create? Could a truly loving relationship with God ever develop unless we had a truly free choice in the matter?



FRIDAY 07.29.11 Luke 23:39-43

You have probably read or heard this passage of scripture before. In it we hear Luke quote Jesus as saying, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

- What is Jesus offering to the criminal on the cross when He says this? Is He offering more than an idyllic location to spend the rest of eternity? Or is he offering the perfect communion that Adam and Eve once shared in the Garden of Eden?
- What did the criminal do to earn this promise from Jesus? Does it change the focus of Jesus’ words on the cross to stress “with me” more than “Paradise”? How does this example of grace give you hope in the face of your short-comings?
