



Thank you for previewing a *youthministry360* Leader/Student Guide. We're pumped you're considering purchasing a ym360 Bible Study resource.

We put a lot of intentionality into the content and the layout of our lesson plans. This short intro will help you know what to look for as you evaluate this preview.

Looking At Your ym360 Leader Guide

This Leader Guide combines deep, meaningful Bible study with relevant, creative activities. You'll find all our lessons plans both easy to follow and easy to teach.

Each ym360 Leader Guide is broken down into the following sections:

- **Teacher Prep Videos**—Short, straightforward videos designed to help you prepare to teach the lesson
- **Bible Background**—A one page, easy to digest snapshot of the specific passage's context and main biblical truth. Use this to help prepare to teach your lesson.
- **The Lead In**—An interactive, thematic intro to the lesson
- **The Main Event**—An intense, deep time of Biblical study designed to drive home the lesson's truth
- **Bonus Round**—An optional activity that goes deeper into the lesson's biblical theme
- **The Last Word**—A final activity allowing you to really hone-in on the lesson's application

Additionally, every ym360 Bible Study resource features a student component. This lesson features a Student Guide that corresponds with an activity in the Leaders Guide.

If you have any questions about your Leader Guide/Student Guide preview PDF, please do not hesitate to email (feedback@youthministry360.com) or call us (888.96.ym360).

Vivid Lesson 1: The Fight Within

Objective: The point of the lesson is to help your students identify their internal struggle with sin and commit to fight against it.

Scripture Focus: James 1:12-17

Overview: If only we didn't have the weight of our sin nature to struggle with. Life would be so much easier, wouldn't it? But as we all know, we do have a sinful nature and it does affect us. Dramatically. God calls all Christ-followers to grow in our faith. A major way this growth happens is through a realization that we're our own worst enemies. In this life, we'll always be contending with the sin that lives in us. But it's more than just that. It's important for you to help your students grasp that one of the measures of a Christ-follower's life is in this very struggle. Giving in to sin is not an option. Your students must accept the challenge to keep up the fight. After all, it's through the fight itself that their faith in Christ will deepen and mature.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Vivid Lesson One Teacher Prep Video*, click on the URL below and view the video entitled "*Vivid Lesson 1: The Fight Within*."

- www.youthministry360.com/vivid-prep-videos

Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

The Details

Who wrote James?

James, who was Jesus' brother and the leader of the Jerusalem Church.

When was it written?

Most people believe the date was sometime in the mid-40s A.D.

What was the purpose of its writing?

James was seemingly writing to a Jewish audience. His message was pretty straightforward throughout the book: don't let your faith be one of words only, and live your faith powerfully. It's a message that James hammered home in direct, easy-to-grasp language. It's what makes James such a practical book for all believers.

The Main Point

JAMES 1:14-15

The main point of this lesson is found in verses 14-15. Here we see that James described the way sin works. It's an important passage for all Christ-followers, but especially those who are young in their faith, to understand.

James made a very important point; namely, that God does not lead anyone into temptation. The truth that God is perfectly good is an important theological point.

- Psalm 25:8 calls God "good and upright."
- Psalm 52:9 says God's "name is good."
- Psalm 100:5 says, "The LORD is good and his love endures forever."
- Psalm 119:68 says, "You are good, and what you do is good."

God cannot act in any way that goes against His goodness. Therefore, He can't lead anyone into temptation, as that would be leading people to be enticed to do evil. So how do we explain how we're tempted? James cleared this up in verse 14.

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James wrote that we're tempted by the evil desires that live within us. Our sin nature is our spiritual heritage from Adam and Eve. Once they sinned, sin became a part of all people after them. It's this evil desire inside of each of us that leads us to temptation. When we accept the salvation that Jesus offers to all who believe in Him, we're saved from the punishment of our sins through Jesus' atoning death on the cross. But we still have a sin nature, and we still sin.

James described this process in verses 14 and 15. Our evil desires "drag" us away. Away from what? Away from our desire to lead a godly life. When an evil desire "conceives," it gives birth to sin. The conception that James referred to hints at a process—one that's deliberate, one that takes time, and one that's entered into with planning and intentionality. Our evil desires don't always lead to sin. But when we allow them to find fertile ground in our hearts and minds, those desires give birth to sin.

In verse 15, James summed up the result of sin: spiritual death. This echoed the words of Paul in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin equals death. Always has, always will. Only through God's grace and our acceptance of Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross can we ever defeat the penalty of sin.

Wrap Up

Only God is good. Only He is able to save us from our sins. However, we must contend with our evil desires. We must fight against temptation and strive to live holy lives. This was Peter's call in 1 Peter 1:15-16 when he wrote, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" Your students have to understand that this internal struggle is literally what following Christ is all about. The Spirit will help them. And through this struggle, they will grow in their spiritual maturity.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains four elements: *The Lead In*, which is a creative, interactive activity that introduces the theme of the lesson; *The Main Event*, which is the heart of the lesson and contains the Bible Study section; *The Bonus Round*, which is simply an additional Bible Study activity that supports the main thrust of the lesson, and *The Last Word*, which focuses on driving home the application of the lesson's biblical truth.

The Lead In

Title: Life is Like a Basketball

Goal: The idea is to get students thinking about their lives as Christ-followers and how they're supposed to live as a result.

Set Up: You'll need the *Vivid Media Disc* and a way to show the Lesson One Video, such as a DVD player. Or if you would prefer to drop the video into your presentation software, open the Media Disc on your computer, download the .MOV or .MPEG file, and drop it into a slide.

FIRST >> explain that you're beginning a six-lesson study on the Book of James. Explain to your students that you're going to watch a video that both introduces this particular lesson and also casts a little light on what the next six lessons of study will be about.

NEXT >> show the video.

THEN >> engage your students in a short discussion using the following questions:

- **What does it mean to be a hypocrite?**
- **Why do you think that one of the most common critiques aimed at followers of Christ is that they're hypocrites?**
- **When people say they're followers of Christ and then act in ways that go against the teachings of the Bible, what effect do you think this has on people who are not followers of Christ?**
- **What about people who may be curious about following Christ?**

FINALLY >> explain that today's lesson is all about the struggle we all face between wanting to be Christlike and living holy lives and our own sinful desires that lead us astray.

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The Main Event**Title:** The Fight Within**Goal:** The idea is to teach students that the struggle to sin comes from within them, and that they're called to resist this temptation with God's help.**Set-Up:** If you have a projector, you'll need the "The Fight Within" presentation for use with PowerPoint file. If you don't have a projector, consider using the "The Fight Within" PDF file to conduct the activity. Choose to either walk through the diagram using the PDF or to replicate it on a dry erase board. You'll also need the Student Guide and something for your students to write with.**FIRST** >> take a moment to set the stage for your students. Using the Bible Background, share with them the vital stats behind the Book of James.**THEN** >> read the passage aloud, or have a few students volunteer to read it. Draw students' attention to verse 12. Start the study by asking what comes to mind when they hear words and phrases such as persevere and stood the test. Help them to flesh out the idea that these words hint at a struggle of some sort; they convey some sort of resistance by an individual.

Explain to students that this passage in James paints a pretty vivid picture of the internal struggle with temptation and sin that all Christ-followers face. Read verse 13 aloud again. Explain to students that because God is perfectly holy and righteous, He could never lead anyone to sin. The sin we're guilty of comes from our own sin nature.

NEXT >> display the blank pyramid and direct your students' attention to their Student Guide. Explain that in verses 14-15, James showed us the process that gives birth to sin in our lives.

Read or have a student read verse 14. Then ask the following questions:

- **What does this verse say is at the core of our temptation?**
 - o Answer: Evil desires
- **Describe the nature of these desires. How are they depicted in the passage? What do we see them doing?**
 - o Answer: The desires aren't passive; they're active! They're aggressive and ugly. They "drag us away."
- **The word entice means to attract someone by arousing their desire. Give a couple of examples where a person might convince themselves that sin is attractive.**
 - o Answer: Sex outside of marriage feels good, so why not do it? Putting someone else down makes me look better. Lying achieves a desired end that's better than telling the truth.

THEN >> show the slide where "Evil Desires" is written in the pyramid, or if you're replicating the pyramid on a dry erase board, write the words Evil Desires in the bottom of the pyramid. Encourage your students to write the words Evil Desires on the pyramid in their Student Guide. Explain that the sinful, evil desires inside all people lead us into temptation. Explain that we're the source of our own inclination to do wrong. Show the slide where "Temptation" is written in the pyramid. (Or write it on the board.) Lead your students to write the word Temptation on their Student Guide.**NEXT** >> draw your students' attention to verse 15. Read it again, or have a student do so. Ask the following questions:

- **Desire leads to temptation. When temptation and desire get out of control, what's the result?**
 - o Answer: Sin

(Show the slide where "Sin" is written in the pyramid. [Or write it on the board.] Lead your students to write the word Sin on their Student Guide.)

- **The word conceive means to give birth or to cause to originate. What has to happen for temptation to become sin?**
 - o Answer: Temptation has to be acted upon. Temptation itself is not sin. But when temptation conceives (when it gives birth to actions), it brings sin into an individual's life.

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- **What happens when sin is given room to grow in our lives? What's the result?**

- o *Answer:* Death

(Show the slide where "Death" is written in the pyramid. [Or write it on the board.] Lead your students to write the word Death on their Student Guide.)

- **When James uses the word death, what does he mean?**

- o *Answer:* A life of unchecked and unrepentant sin always leads to spiritual death. When people profess faith in Christ, His sacrifice on the cross counts for payment of their sin. Part of being a new creation in Christ is the death of our old love of sin and a new life in the Spirit dedicated to seeking righteousness. A true Christ-follower will no longer seek sin. Because of Christ, His followers have life. Apart from Him, there's only death (Rom. 6:23).

FINALLY >> encourage students by reading verse 16 again. Remind them that God is not capable of leading them into sin or causing them to sin. Just the opposite is true. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 aloud to your students: "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." Ask:

- **What does this mean to you personally?**
 - **What kind of hope does it provide for your ability to overcome temptation?**

Remind students that God's desire is for us to live righteously, to be lights in a dark world. With the Holy Spirit's help, and with Scripture as our guide, we can strive to fight against our sinful nature and live holy lives.

Bonus Round (Optional Activity)

Title: Everyone a Sinner

Goal: The idea is to teach students that all people struggle with their internal sin nature, even the main characters in Scripture.

Set Up: None

Encourage students with the idea that struggling with our internal sin nature is not something unique to them. Explain that you're about to look at the lives of three real heroes of our faith, each of whom struggled with their desires to sin.

FIRST >> call on three volunteers who wouldn't mind reading aloud. Instruct the three volunteers to each take one of the following passages: Romans 7:21-25, Psalm 51:1-6, or Daniel 9:4-6.

THEN >> give some context for the first passage. Explain that Paul was one of the most powerful forces for following Christ that the world has ever seen. He wrote more books of the Bible than any other person. Yet, he still struggled with sin. Have the volunteer read Romans 7:21-25. Then ask the following questions:

- **Can you relate to Paul here? Why is it so frustrating when we want to do good but our "evil" desires are right there with us?**
 - **What did Paul point to as the only way out of this conflicting situation and the death that it leads to?**

NEXT >> provide some of the background for the second passage. Explain that David was the greatest ruler Israel ever knew. He was a godly man, even referred to as a man after God's own heart. Yet his sinful nature led him to commit adultery. He gave into his sinful desires. In this passage, David was asking forgiveness for sleeping with another man's wife. Have the volunteer read Psalm 51:1-6. Then ask the following questions:

- **What do verses 3 and 5 have in common with what we've been talking about so far?**
 - o *Answer:* They point to the idea that our sin nature is something we're saddled with. It's a real part of who we are that, on our own, we cannot do away with.
 - **David wrote that his personal sin is a sin against God. How does this change the way you think about sin—knowing that a sin you commit might not hurt anyone else but is still a major affront to God?**

THEN >> set the stage for the final passage. Explain that Daniel was as faithful a follower of God as you could find. He had been taken captive and held in a foreign land, but had never once turned his back on God. Yet hear how he talked about his people—God's people! Have the volunteer read Daniel 9:4-6. Then ask the following questions:

- **Daniel used the word rebelled. Can you define what it means to rebel?**
 - o *Answer:* To disobey one in authority; to act or show disobedience
 - **How is our sin rebellion against God?**

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FINALLY >> close by reminding students that sin is a struggle that every Christ-follower faces. Encourage them with the truth that the real measure of a Christ-follower is not whether that individual sins or doesn't sin; it's whether or not that person is repentant and intentional about striving to live free from sin.

The Last Word

Title: Worth Fighting For

Goal: The idea is to teach students that the struggle to sin comes from within them, and that they're called to resist this temptation with God's help.

Set Up: Go to www.teenslivingwithcancer.org. Browse under the Community tab and select a few posts from teenagers about living with cancer. You'll also need to refer back to the pyramid from the previous activity one last time.

FIRST >> ask students if they think fighting sin in their lives is worth it. Isn't it pointless? After all, we all have a sin nature. We'll never be perfect. Jesus paid for our sins on the cross. Why go through the struggle?

NEXT >> inform students that you're going to read a couple of posts from a website devoted to teenagers suffering with cancer. Read the posts you've selected from teenslivingwithcancer.org. When you've finished, ask why these teenagers keep fighting. Ask why they don't simply give up. After all, they have cancer. Help your students to see that for these teens, life is worth the struggle. Struggling with cancer is the choice these teenagers make because the alternative simply won't cut it.

Explain to students that our struggle with sin is similar. If a person has truly had their life renewed through a saving relationship with Christ, to continue to walk in sin is simply not an option.

THEN >> refer back one last time to the pyramid from the previous activity. Point to the section labeled "Temptation." Ask the following question:

- **What happens if you keep trying not to give in to temptation? What happens if you fight the fight inside of you and don't give in to the pull that leads you to fall away from God?**
 - o *Answer:* Temptation dies. Sin is not conceived. You persevere, just as James called you to.
- **Does God love you any more for not giving in to temptation? Are you any more saved than when you do give in?**
 - o *Answer:* No. God sees us through the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross. If we profess faith in Christ, we're made righteous in God's eyes because of what Christ has done.
- **Then why does it matter? Why is it so important for us to resist giving in to temptation?**
 - o *Answer:* Simply put, the Bible calls us to be righteous and holy. We're called to live the way that Christ lived (1 Pet. 1:14-16). Why? So that through our lives, we may point others to a relationship with God (Matt. 5:16) that they might in turn be saved from the death of their life of sin.

FINALLY >> finish the lesson by encouraging your students with the truth that the struggle they face is one all people face. They don't have to face it alone. (That's what their Christ-following friends, youth workers, and parents are for.) And the Holy Spirit actually gives them the power to stay strong.

Challenge your students to be aware of the common temptations they face this week and to strive to resist them when they arise.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

Do you have questions about a lesson?

Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

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SCRIPTURE FOCUS // James 1:12-17

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