



WHAT I REALLY WANT / WEEK 1

MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROVERBS 4:13 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>Instructions are given as a guide—a way to show us how to use something or what next steps to take. In the Bible, God left us His message—a set of instructions—on how we're supposed to live. Instead of trying to figure out life on our own, we can turn to God's Word to help guide us toward the next step. When we're struggling through temptation, we can choose to look for God's best for us instead, and we can find that in His Word.</p> <p>This week, ask your small group leader to share a few Bible verses with you that help guide them toward choosing God's best for their lives.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ROMANS 8:39 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Have you ever gotten lost? Whether it was in a store as a kid or trying to find your way in a new school, feeling lost and alone can be a scary feeling. The good news is that when we have a relationship with Jesus, we're promised that because of Him, we'll never be lost or left alone. When we're not sure what to do in the face of temptation or we're even tempted to make a decision we know isn't God's best for us, we can remember that we're not facing it alone. We have access to a God who loves us and will never leave us.</p> <p>Take time to pray today, thanking God that because of Jesus, you'll never be lost or alone.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him.</p> <p>PSALM 105:4 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 3</p> <p>Wouldn't it be great if we only had to ask for help with the things we struggle with once in our lives? If we just could magically have it all figured out after that? Unfortunately, we all know that's not usually the way it works. Often when faced with a struggle or temptation, we have to ask for help or find guidance to deal with it again, and again, and again. The good news is that as this Psalm reminds us, when we continually seek God's help and strength to face it, He will give it to us.</p> <p>Is there a temptation you've been struggling to beat? Go to God continually with it this week, asking for His help to get you through it each day.</p>
<p>Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.</p> <p>GALATIANS 6:1 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 4</p> <p>Have you ever seen a roadblock on the highway? It's usually a sign that something unsafe is ahead. If you keep going on that same road, you're eventually going to run into danger. God often does something similar for us. He helps us see when we're headed down a path that may not lead to His best. He uses people like our friends, our small group leaders, our siblings, and even our parents to encourage us away from giving into temptation and toward His best for our lives.</p> <p>Who is the person like that in your life? Thank them this week for their support that keeps you on the right path. Then, think about how God might be calling you to be that person for someone else!</p>
<p>Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.</p> <p>MARK 14:38 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 5</p> <p>Temptation is difficult to say no to when we're on our own. No matter how hard we try, the truth is we've all given into temptation in the past. And we all probably will again! But here's the good news: We weren't meant to face it on our own. In fact, God has given us exactly what we need to not only resist temptation, but to start again even when we've given in. He's given us His strength, love, and forgiveness, and those things can help us keep going in the face of temptation.</p> <p>Commit this verse to memory this week. And when you find yourself facing temptation, say it out loud as a reminder of God's strength to help you deal with it.</p>

<p>But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 6</p> <p><i>Written by Katie, age 17 from Kennesaw, Georgia, USA</i></p> <p>We all know what it feels like to be tempted by something, right? Maybe it's being tempted to lie or disobey your parents or mentors. Or maybe it's being tempted to eat too much ice cream or stay up too late playing video games when you know you should go to bed. When we face temptation (and even when we give into temptation), we can always turn to God. He'll be there to help us and to forgive us when we mess up. And this will lead to our victory through Jesus! By not giving into temptation, we can experience more of the good things that God has planned for us. We can give thanks to God for helping us when we face temptation and for the good things that He has planned for us!</p> <p>Right now, simply pray this one sentence prayer: Thank you God, for helping me when I face temptation.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.</p> <p>PSALM 51:10 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 7</p> <p>Fun fact: Jesus Himself memorized God's Word! He knew it and used it to help Him remember what God said was important. And when we memorize it for ourselves, we're following Jesus' example! This week, try writing this verse down every day. Each time you write it, try to do just a little more from memory until you're able to write the whole verse without help because you've got it in your mind!</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



WHAT I REALLY WANT / WEEK 2

MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.</p> <p>PSALM 40:8 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>One of the best tools we have to beat temptation is the Bible. Even Jesus turned to Scripture when He was tempted on Earth to help Him stand strong against it. When we read and even work to memorize verses in the Bible, we're writing God's Word—His instructions for how we choose His best for our lives—on our hearts. And then, when we're struggling or dealing with temptation, it's there ready to help us when we need it.</p> <p>Today, spend just five minutes reading your Bible. Maybe even start to memorize this verse. It's a great way to start a habit of learning and memorizing Scripture that will help you know God's best for your life.</p>
<p>For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.</p> <p>PHILIPPIANS 2:13 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Sometimes doing the right thing is hard. While we all may <i>want</i> to do what's right, sometimes we feel like we can't do it on our own. Choosing what's right can feel like a constant struggle, but God hasn't left us to struggle alone. When we're fighting to stay on the right path and make the right choices, we can turn to God to help us. He's at work in you to help you know what's right and find the courage to choose it!</p> <p>Is there an area of your life where you're struggling to choose what's right? Write down a prayer about it, asking God to help you know what's right and choose it for yourself.</p>

<p>He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.</p> <p>PSALM 23:3 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 3</p> <p>Sometimes doing the right thing is lonely. When everyone else is doing the thing we know isn't right or wise, it isn't easy to be the person who makes a different choice. It's hard to feel like the only one missing out, and when we feel that way, it sometimes makes it seem like doing what's right may not be worth it after all. Remember that God promises to give us strength in those moments. He promises to stay with us when we choose His best. Because of Him, we'll never be alone.</p> <p>Talk with your small group leader this week about how you can find God's strength and encouragement to resist temptation—even when it feels like you're the only one.</p>
<p>Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.</p> <p>HEBREWS 2:18 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 4</p> <p>Life can feel pretty messy when we give into temptation. Maybe that's because it comes with feelings of guilt, shame, or regret. Sometimes it leaves us feeling stuck—like there's no way out or no chance to start over. If you've found yourself feeling that way, don't be discouraged. God's forgiveness is available to all of us, and His help and strength is there to give us a chance to start again.</p> <p>One of the best ways we can access that help and strength is through the encouragement of other people. This week, share with your small group about a temptation you're struggling to overcome. Ask for their help and support as you turn to God and choose to start over on the right path.</p>
<p>Look straight ahead and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path.</p> <p>PROVERBS 4:25-26 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 5</p> <p>Have you seen those videos of people so into their phones that they don't see what's right in front of them? They usually end up flat on their faces because they weren't looking where they were going! It's what happens when we take our eyes off of where we're headed; we trip or fall. That's why God says to fix our eyes on Him and the path He's given us. When we do, we can know we're moving in the right direction. And even if we trip or fall, He's there to pick us up.</p> <p>Take time to go for a walk today. Think about the fact that God knows the best path for you to walk in life. When you choose His path, you're choosing what's best.</p>

<p>I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.</p> <p>PSALM 119:11 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 6</p> <p><i>Written by Beatriz, age 16 from Alpharetta, Georgia, USA</i></p> <p>Don't we all secretly want instructions to life? A "how to" when it comes to big decisions, tricky situations, and everyday dilemmas? I think that would make everything a lot easier. Well, lucky for us, God has something pretty similar to instructions for life. It's His Word! The things written in the Bible can help us make the right choice, even when we're tempted to make the wrong ones. And the coolest part is we're able to compile all the advice, encouragement, and guidance God gives us in one safe place: our hearts! Yeah, I know it can be a little weird to think about, but our hearts are what matter most. Our hearts are the most personal and treasured place. So, when we keep God's Word there, it's easy for us to remember and always ready to help us face temptation and make good choices.</p> <p>Going forward, remember that if you know what God says in the Bible, it can help you to do the right thing no matter what you might be tempted by!</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.</p> <p>PSALM 51:10 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 7</p> <p>There's nothing better to think about than God's Word! When we're struggling with negative thoughts or our minds are tempted to think about things we know won't lead to God's best, having Scripture memorized can help us focus on what's true, what's right, and what really is God's best for us. So, try to put this verse to memory this week by setting it to music. It may seem silly at first, but sing it to yourself a few times and see if it helps you memorize it in a fun, new way!</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



WHAT I REALLY WANT / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>So, don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.</p> <p>JAMES 1:16-17 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>What's the most perfect gift that anyone has ever given you? That one thing that made you feel like that person really knows you? God gives us perfect gifts like that all the time. They aren't like the video game you got for your birthday, or the fuzzy blanket that you got for Christmas last year, but they are the kind of gifts that are made just for you. Whenever something good happens, that's a gift from God. When your friend is there for you in a time of need, when someone shows you kindness when you don't deserve it, when you're able to make a wise choice that helps you resist temptation—those are gifts from God.</p> <p>Take a moment to write down the good things in your life and thank God for the gifts He's given you.</p>
<p>There he told them, "Pray that you will not give in to temptation."</p> <p>LUKE 22:40 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Battling temptation is not something you can do completely on your own. You need back-up! The good news is, we can find that kind of back-up from God Himself! But in order to get it, you've got to be willing to ask for His help. The words from this verse were spoken by Jesus Himself to His closest friends. And if anyone knew what temptation was like in a difficult situation, it was them. Whenever you experience temptation, there's always an opportunity to stop and pray for God to help you deal with the situation. When you ask, you can know that He will show up and give you the help you need.</p> <p>Is there a temptation you're facing now? Pray that God would help you just as He promised to do!</p>

<p>But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.</p> <p>1 JOHN 4:4 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 3</p> <p>Think about the last time you won something. Maybe it was a big game or a really cool prize in a contest. Winning is a fantastic feeling because it comes with a sense of joy and freedom. When we choose to follow Jesus, we are promised victory over the temptations, struggles, and difficult things we face in this life. Basically, when you have a relationship with Jesus, you can trust that you're already a winner no matter what!</p> <p>Take a moment to listen to the song "See a Victory" by Elevation Worship. Write down the lyrics that mean the most to you. As you go about your day, think about those lyrics as a reminder that God helps us have victory over temptation.</p>
<p>For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.</p> <p>1 JOHN 2:16 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 4</p> <p>Wanting something isn't wrong, but sometimes, we have to think about <i>why</i> we want that thing. Often, it comes down to pride. We think we deserve that thing or should have a right to it. Eventually, that pride can tempt us to believe we should do something we know we probably shouldn't in order to get it. In those moments, it's important to remember that God really does want what's best for us. And when we want the things He has for us most, we can trust we're not being led by our pride, but by God!</p> <p>Talk to your small group leader about some things you really want right now. Ask them to help you see where you're being motivated by something other than God's best for you.</p>
<p>Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation.</p> <p>LUKE 11:3-4 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 5</p> <p>God promises to provide everything we need. Temptation can lead us to think that God isn't good or that He won't provide for us. It can lead us to believe that getting what we need is up to us! But as this verse reminds us, we don't want to give in to that temptation. Instead, we want to remember the truth that we can trust God to provide what we need. That will help us resist temptation!</p> <p>Get out and go for a walk today. As you walk, think about the things God has given you. Things like good friends, a home, a family, a great small group! Let those things remind you of His promise to provide what you need.</p>

<p>When I said, “My foot is slipping,” your unfailing love, Lord, supported me.</p> <p>PSALM 94:18 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 6</p> <p><i>Written by Emma, age 20 from Rome, Georgia, USA</i></p> <p>Fun fact: When it rains, things get slippery. Who knew?! But did you know it can rain in your life, too? When you are in your darkest, saddest, and hardest moments, things can feel slippery. It’s easier to fall and get hurt in those moments. And it’s in those moments temptation can grow. Chances are when we’re tempted in the moments we’re slipping, we’ll fall down a lot more than we would in the brighter moments.</p> <p>The difference between real rain and the rain in your life is that God is there to catch you before you fall and get hurt. He loves you and wants to help you. He wants to be there to catch you before you fall. Think about a time when you were slipping—when you were struggling and really needed someone to pick you up.</p> <p>This week, invite God into those moments when you are struggling. Ask Him to be with you and guide you through your tough times.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.</p> <p>PSALM 51:10 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 7</p> <p>Memorizing Scripture is like remembering an important message from a friend. God sees us that way—as His friends! And the words He shares with us are like words from a friend who wants to love us, encourage us, and help us choose what’s best for us. Try listening to this verse this week. Play the verse on the Bible app, read it out loud to yourself, or even look up someone else reading it on YouTube. As you listen, work to commit a little more of it to memory each time!</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



WHAT I REALLY WANT / WEEK 4

MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.</p> <p>1 JOHN 1:9 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>How would you describe the feeling that comes from doing something wrong? It's not a good feeling, is it? Well, the good news is that no matter how much guilt, or regret, or shame we feel from our mistakes, God promises that He is willing to forgive us. His forgiveness is so powerful that it can even change the way we feel after we mess up! And all we have to do to receive that forgiveness is to confess. When we admit our mistakes and mess ups to God, the only thing He'll offer us in return is His love and forgiveness.</p> <p>So, give it a try! Take time to tell God about your mistakes. Ask for His forgiveness and receive His love today.</p>
<p>Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"</p> <p>MATTHEW 26:41 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>When you're playing a game, it's important to keep your eyes on what your opponent is doing. If you're paying attention to how the other team is playing, you're ready for what they're going to try to do to defeat you. The same is true with temptation. When we keep our eyes open for things that might tempt us away from God's best, we're less likely to be surprised by them when they show up. Instead, we can be prepared and ready to resist temptation when it comes our way.</p> <p>Ask a close friend or small group leader about how to look out for temptation in your life. Ask them to help you see it and encourage you to choose God's best for your life when you face it.</p>

<p>The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.</p> <p>PSALM 28:7 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 3</p> <p>If you've ever seen the old school armor of a soldier, you know that a shield was a very important piece of the outfit. It helped guard the soldier from oncoming attacks and could even serve as a weapon in battle. This verse tells us that this is the kind of defense that God is for us when we battle temptation. God gives us the strength we need to turn away from temptation and toward His best for our lives. He uses things like His word, His love, and even other people in our lives to protect us from temptation.</p> <p>Draw a picture of a shield. Put it somewhere you can see it often to remind you of the strength and protection God gives us when we're faced with temptation.</p>
<p>You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock.</p> <p>ISAIAH 26:3-4 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 4</p> <p>Have you ever thought about what it really means to have peace? In Hebrew, the word for peace is "shalom." It basically means to be complete or whole. Nothing is missing, and nothing is broken. If we want to truly have peace, then we have to believe that nothing is missing from our lives. God has given us all we need, and because of that, we don't have to be tempted to believe anything else. Instead, we can have peace.</p> <p>What's the most peaceful place you can think of? Maybe it's a spot in your home or somewhere outside. If you can, go there to spend time with God. Think about the peace He promises to give us when we trust that He is all we need.</p>
<p>Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow.</p> <p>PSALM 25:4 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 5</p> <p>It can be difficult to know which direction to go in life sometimes. Maybe we're totally lost as to what we should do or maybe we're even tempted to go in a direction we know is wrong! One of the ways God helps us find the right path is by placing wise people in our lives.</p> <p>Think about an adult you trust. Maybe it's a parent, teacher, leader from church, or even an older sibling. Ask that person if you can take a few minutes to talk through some of the decisions you have on your plate right now. Talk to them about how you can make the best choices and determine the right path for your life in those areas.</p>

<p>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.</p> <p>JAMES 1:2 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 6</p> <p><i>Written by Taylor, age 11 from Rochester, New York, USA</i></p> <p>What is a trial really? A trial is a difficult obstacle in your life that you have to overcome. For example, you may have been bullied some time in your life. If you've been bullied, you probably felt lonely or sad. And when that happened, you might've even thought, "How is there anything joyful here?" In moments like that, you can remember that God is always with you. This verse is talking about the pure joy in your trials. Maybe your trial is feeling lonely. Pure joy can be remembering that God is right there next to you. Or if you're getting bullied, pure joy can be realizing that you have more strength than you thought. Finding the pure joy in things can be very difficult.</p> <p>Next time you go through a trial of some sort, remember you can always talk to God, family, friends, a small group leader, or someone you trust for help.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.</p> <p>PSALM 51:10 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 7</p> <p>One of the best tools we have for overcoming temptation is Scripture. The Bible gives us what we need to see temptation and resist it in our lives. But we can't do that easily if we don't know what the Bible says! So this week, work on memorizing this verse to help you know some of God's Word. Start by talking to your small group leader about what this verse means. Sometimes understanding the point of the verse and what it means for you can help you with remembering what the verse actually says!</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------