

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 10: God's People Say "No" to Temptation

Temptation is thinking about doing something wrong. It isn't wrong to be tempted, but it is wrong to say "yes" to temptation and go ahead and do what you are tempted to do. That is sinning. All of God's people are tempted to do wrong. Sin in their hearts whispers to them to disobey God. Sin in the world around them looks attractive to them. Even Satan works to tempt God's people to forget God's good ways and to sin. Jesus, God's very own Son, was tempted to sin in every way as we are, but He never sinned. Sometimes Often it's very hard to say "no" to temptation. God promises to always provide His people a way out of temptation without sinning. He gives them His Word to remind them of Himself, His good commands and His power to help them. He gives them the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and help them to turn away from tempting sin. But even when God's people do give into temptation and sin, He graciously forgives them through Jesus. Praise God for being so merciful!

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 10 Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Courageous Couple.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who were the courageous couple?
2. Who helped them be courageous? What temptations did they have to fight?

This story is not in the Bible. It is a true story about God's people and it starts out long ago in 1293, in Venice, Italy.

Excited and relieved, Marco Polo, his uncle Niccolo, and his father, Maffeo returned home to Venice. Marco had been only seventeen when they left. Now, after twenty-four years of exploring Central Asia and China, he returned home a middle-aged man of forty-one. Oh, what stories he have to tell!

"We saw tall, rugged, snow capped mountains, deep gorges, powerful rivers. Peoples with jet black hair, yellow-toned skin and beautiful, slanted eyelids. And oh, what amazing things they made: gunpowder and firecrackers; coal; shiny silk clothes; fans; umbrellas; and even ice cream! They flavor their foods with the most wonderful spices: ginger, cinnamon, and pepper," Marco told the people of Venice.

"These Chinese may have wonderful things that we don't have, but they don't have the Bible or know the good news of Jesus," Marco continued. "Kubla Khan, the Chinese Emperor, and asked us to send one hundred trained men each them about Jesus."

How wonderful! Surely one hundred Christians would leap at the idea of telling the people of China about Jesus! But it wasn't the case. "We won't survive the long journey! What if the Polos are lying? What if Kublai Khan decides he doesn't like the good news of Jesus, he might kill us?" most men thought.

Instead of saying "no" to their tempting fears and trusting that the Lord could and would take care of them, they refused to go. In the end, only two men went. Soon, even these men gave into fear and returned home without sharing the good news of Jesus with anyone.

The Chinese people had to wait hundreds of years for someone else to come to their country and tell them about Jesus and the Bible. Who were these brave people? The men and women of the China Inland Mission.

"We want two hundred people who will risk their lives for China. Who will go?" asked the China Inland Mission in 1930.

Once more there were great opportunities in China, like in Marco Polo's day. But once more, there were also great dangers that caused many to fear.

"It's too dangerous to go to China now," many said. "The Communists are taking over the country. They want to stamp out all religion, especially Christianity. They are killing Chinese believers as well as missionaries. They will probably kill us if we go," they feared.

These people were right. They would have to risk their lives to go to China. But they were wrong, too: Wrong to give into their temptation to fear. If God wanted them to go, He would take care of them according to His perfect will.

While many refused to go to China, Betty Scott and John Stam chose to go. Why? Betty, herself, said it well: "I want to use this one life of mine however it will produce the most good for God. Where it is, I want it to be God's choice for me and not my own." Betty and John were certain God wanted them to go China. No temptation to fear would keep them away.

Not long after John and Betty were in China, they were married and had a baby girl named Helen. When Helen was just eight weeks old, the Stams prepared to travel to the mountain town of Tsingteh. They would travel there on foot, with little more than Bibles, and whatever food, bedding and clothes they needed for the long, hard journey. They were going there to help the few Chinese Christians who already lived there and share the good news of Jesus with the many who had never heard.

"Don't go there!" they were warned by some. "The Communists are coming! They will kill you."

John and Betty had heard the same frightening rumors, but that did not stop them from going. "We won't give into the temptation to fear," they said. "God has brought us here and wants us to go to Tsingteh. We will trust Him!"

As they traveled to Tsingteh, John and Betty told everyone the wonderful good news of Jesus. Many listened and believed. They eagerly accepted the Chinese Bibles the Stams offered them. How glad Betty and John were that they had not been tempted to give into fear, but had trusted the Lord and had come to China! These new Chinese believers were the very people Betty had longed

to give her life to help!

At last, the Stams arrived at Tsingteh--a walled town with many ancient, crumbling stone palaces, set among towering mountains. There, Betty and John settled happily into encouraging the Chinese Christians and sharing the gospel with many others. They eagerly looked forward to serving the people of Tsingteh for many years to come.

But that was not to be. Just two weeks after the Stams arrived in Tsingteh, Communist soldiers invaded the city in a surprise attack. There was no time to escape. All the fearful things that had kept others from coming to China, began to happen to the Stams.

The soldiers arrested the Stams and said, "Give us \$20,000 or we will kill you!"

John and Betty did not have \$20,000 to give. They were only poor missionaries. Even if they had the money to give, they knew there was little hope that soldiers would really release them. They knew the Stams were Christians. They surely planned to kill them.

What would the Stams do now? It would easy to be overwhelmed with fear for themselves and for their baby girl. Would they give into the temptation to fear? No, they would not. The Lord gave them courage instead to face the situation with peace and kindness, not with fear. With great calmness, John and Betty offered tea and cakes to the soldiers, and tried to talk with them. The soldiers refused to listen and began to plan what to do with the Stams.

"Please, before you take us away," John Stam pleaded, "can I write to my boss?" Reluctantly the soldiers agreed to his request. John Stam wrote:

By Life or By Death

Tsingteh, An. Dec. 6, 1934

To the China Inland Mission in Shanghai

Dear Brethren (Brothers),

My wife, baby and myself are today in the hands of the Communists in the city of Tsingteh. Their demand is twenty thousand dollars for our release.

The soldiers have taken everything we have, but we praise God for peace in our hearts and a meal tonight. May God give you wisdom in what you do, and us strength, courage and peace of heart. He is able—and a wonderful Friend in such a time.

Things happened so quickly this morning. They were in the city just a few hours. There was no time to prepare to leave. We were just too late.

The Lord bless and guide you, and as for us, may God be glorified whether by life or by death.

In Him, John C. Stam

Then the soldiers marched the Stams to Miaosheo, another mountain town twelve miles away. There, they planned to kill them. The next day, the soldiers came for the Stams. Betty quickly hid little Helen along with John's letter underneath a blanket, hoping that someone would rescue her before the soldiers found her.

"Come with us," the soldiers commanded John and Betty, never noticing the hidden baby.

The soldiers led the Stams down the street and to a hill outside of town to be killed. The town's people shouted insults at them as they passed by. Surely now the Stams would give in to the temptation to panic! There was so much to fear: How would they die? What would happen to baby Helen Priscilla when they were gone? But no. Not even then did the Stams give in to fear. They trusted the Lord, instead; and, He gave them His peace. They knelt down on that hill and with one swing of a sword, each gave up their lives.

"What peace these Christian have! How mighty must their God be!" thought many of the townspeople who watched the Stams die.

John and Betty Stam exchanged their short, earthly lives that day for marvelous, everlasting ones in heaven with Jesus. God cared for baby Helen, too. She was rescued by Chinese Christians who had been hiding in the hills around Miaosheo, then taken to her grandparents to be cared for. She grew up to be a follower of Jesus, too.

And what of Betty's desire for her life to be used for the most good for God? The Lord answered it in a big way. When the story of how the Stams had said "no" to fearful temptations, but trusted the Lord reached America, many more Christians volunteered to go, serve and even die in China, so that the Chinese people might hear the good news of Jesus.

**Our Bible Truth is: God's People Say "No" to Temptation
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Corinthians 10:13**

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

John and Betty Stam faced great temptations to fear, but they chose to trust the Lord and obey Him instead. Nothing meant more to them than to serve Him and let others know about Him--not even their earthly lives, themselves. With joy they endured suffering, know that the Lord was with them through it all and would soon welcome them into His heavenly kingdom forever.

What about God's people today? What should they think about when faced with temptation? Will they give into it? They don't have to. Instead, they can ask God to provide a way out of it so they can stand up under it. He will help them, just like He helped the Stams.

How can we become God's people and know His help in temptation? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.

Let's praise God for being great enough to help the Stams keep trusting Him, even in death...and for being great enough to do that for His people today, too. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to think of Him when faced with temptation. Let's ask Him to help us stand up under every temptation and trial we face, even death itself. Let's ask Him to give us willing hearts to be used wherever and however we can be of the most heavenly good to this world, without giving into fear.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: Jesus was never tempted to sin at all. <i>Answer: False. Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are, but He never sinned.</i></p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who were the courageous couple? <i>Answer: John and Betty Stam.</i></p> <p>b. Who helped them be courageous? What temptations did they have to fight? <i>Answer: God helped them, by His Holy Spirit, to be courageous. They had to fight the temptation to be afraid of what might happen to them if they went to China...and while they lived in China.</i></p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not ___ to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ___, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to ___ it.” <i>Answers: common; ability; endure.</i></p>	<p>Sweet Hour of Prayer <i>PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 34</i></p> <p>Verse 1 Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care And bids me at my Father’s throne Make all my wants and wishes known! In seasons of distress and grief, My soul has often found relief, And oft escaped the tempter’s snare By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.</p> <p><i>Words: William Walford Music: William B. Bradbury</i></p> <p>God’s people know that they don’t have the strength to face the hard things of this world alone. Many sad things, many scary things, many tempting things may come their way. When they do, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. The temptation to turn away from God and do things their own way may be strong. But, God’s people know who to go to receive the strength they need. They pray to their Heavenly Father who loves them so much! They tell Him all their problems. They ask for His help. He comforts them and gives them what they need to keep trusting in Him and to turn away from the temptation to sin.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Strength to Fight Temptation, even when we face death!</p> <p>C God, we confess that often we choose to fear instead of trust You to help us do whatever You want us to do. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for always being worthy of our trust. Thank You that You are always with us. Thank You that we can always cry out to You and ask for Your help.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us not to let fear keep us from doing whatever You want us to do. Use us to tell others about Jesus that they might come to know Him as their Savior.</p>	<p>No Temptation <i>PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 35</i></p> <p>No temptation has overtaken you, That is not, Common to man, God is faithful, He will not let you be, Tempted beyond, Your ability, But with the temptation He will also provide, The way of escape, So that you might be able to endure it. First Corinthians Chapter Ten, verse thirteen.</p> <p><i>Words: 1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011</i></p> <p>God’s people will face temptations to sin every day. Their temptations are common to man--that is, they will be tempted to sin against God, just like every human. But, God’s people can be encouraged that God is always there to help them say “no.” He promises that will never let them be tempted more than they can bear. With any temptation they face, He promises to be with them. He promises to provide a way of escape so they can endure the temptation with sinning. How good, merciful and powerful is the LORD!</p>