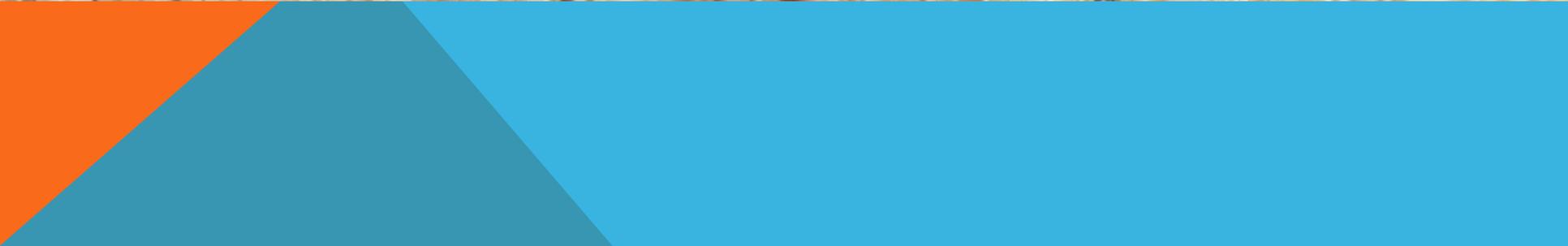
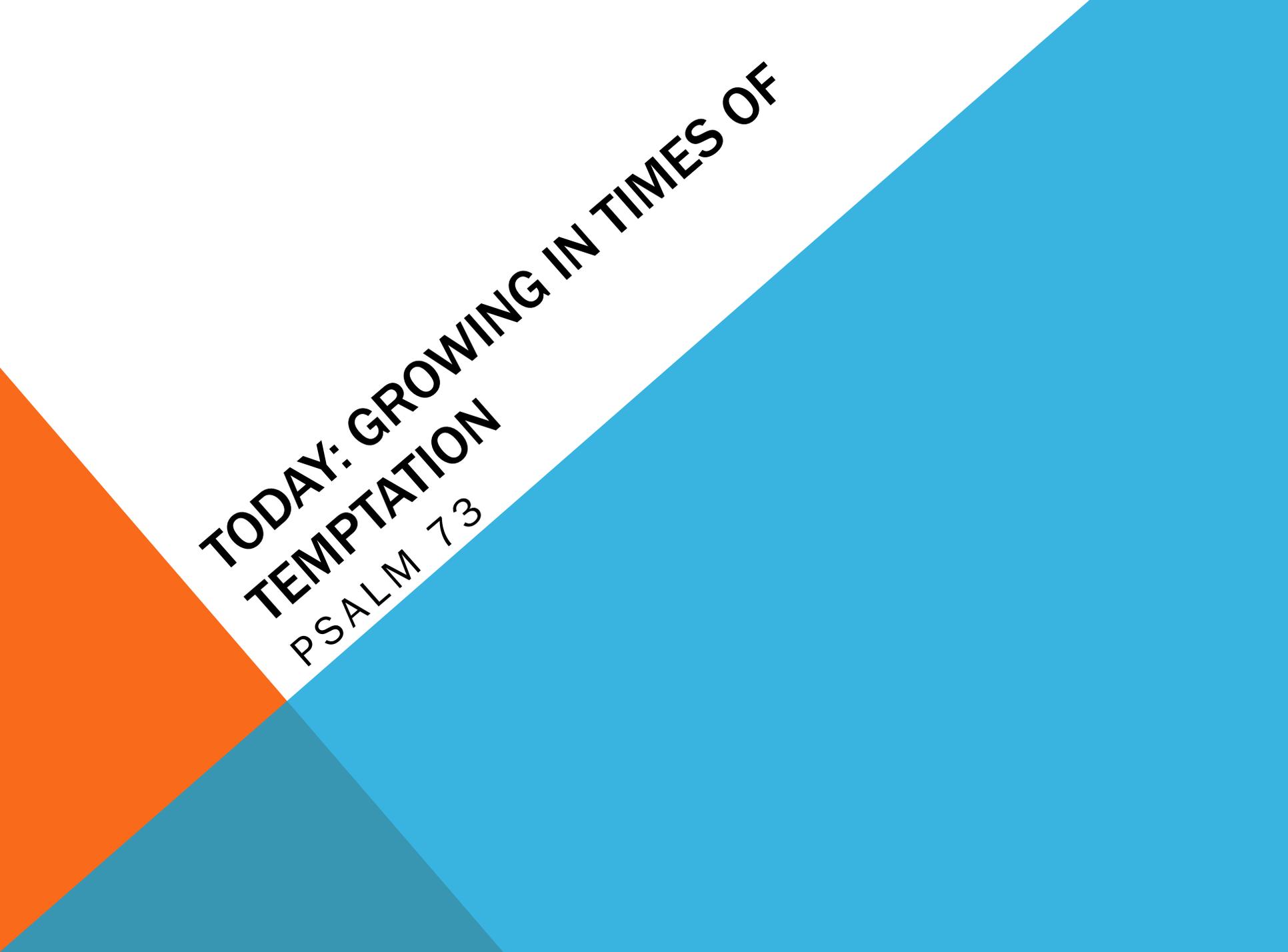


A small green seedling with two leaves is growing out of a hole in the sand. The sand is light-colored and textured. The seedling is positioned on the right side of the frame. The background is a close-up of the sand.

GROWING THROUGH OUR CHALLENGES





**TODAY: GROWING IN TIMES OF
TEMPTATION**
PSALM 73

PSALM 73

Surely God is good to Israel
to those who are pure in
heart.

² But as for me, my feet had
almost slipped; I had
nearly lost my foothold.

³ For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity
of the wicked...

¹² This is what the wicked are
like—always free of care,
they go on amassing
wealth.

¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my
heart pure and have
washed my hands in
innocence.

¹⁴ All day long I have been
afflicted, and every morning
brings new punishments.

PSALM 73, CONTINUED

15 If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children.

16 When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply

17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

18 Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.

19 How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!

20 They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

PSALM 73, CONTINUED

- 21** When my heart was
grieved and my spirit
embittered,
- 22** I was senseless and
ignorant; I was a brute
beast before you.
- 23** Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right
hand.

- 24** You guide me with your
counsel, and afterward
you will take me into
glory.
- 25** Whom have I in heaven
but you? And earth has
nothing I desire besides
you.
- 26** My flesh and my heart
may fail, but God is the
strength of my heart and
my portion forever.

PSALM 73, CONTINUED

- 27** Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.
- 28** But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.



TEMPTATION AT WORSHIP

- The psalmist Asaph was tempted to be envious of others – some rich people who were immoral.
 - He also introduces us to the third book of Psalms, that is about holiness, God's and ours.
 - He paints a true-to-life picture of the inner conflict of the worshiper, who brings into the presence of God impure thoughts.
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A STORY OF JEALOUSY: WANDA HOLLOWAY



AP

- 1991, Channelview, Texas, Wanda's daughter lost election to be cheerleader.
- Wanda tried to hire a hit man to kill the mother of the girl who won the election.
- Jealousy is dangerous

HOW CAN WE GROW IN TIMES OF TEMPTATION?

Avoid deception: A dangerous deception to avoid

Receive the honest evaluation from God of the true condition of our hearts: A revealing discovery about ourselves to experience

Recommit ourselves to Him: A comforting truth about God to take to heart



1. DANGEROUS DECEPTIONS

- Distortion – his jealousy led him to have a distorted view of the situation. Temptation always seeks to deceive us and twist reality.
 - Disdain – he developed disdain and hatred toward others. He was becoming arrogant and was in danger of becoming worse than them!
 - Denial – he denied that this was wrong or that he personally had a problem. Others had a problem, but not him!
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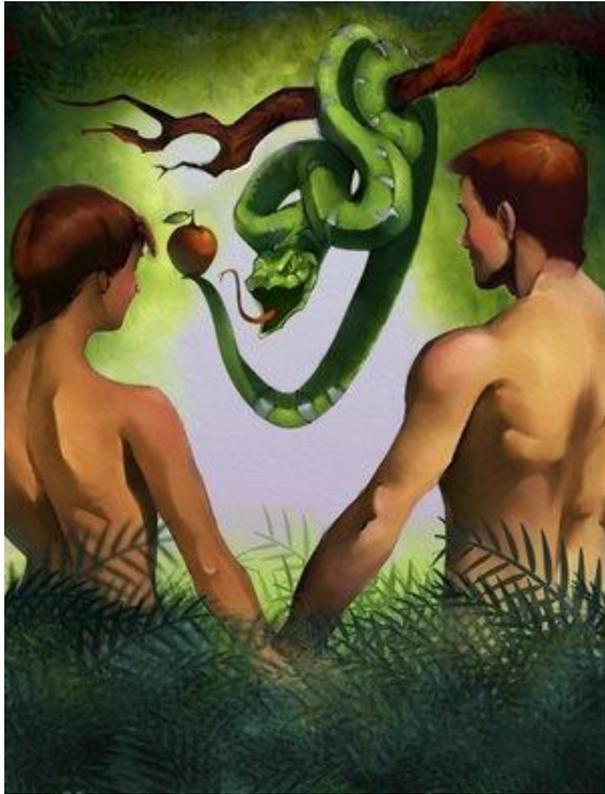
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT TEMPTATION

- Genesis 3: The serpent planted doubt about God's Word, "Did God really say...?" Eve added to God's Word, further distorting the truth.
- Psalm 119:11: *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*
- James 1:14-15: ... each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.
¹⁵ *Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

TWO ESSENTIAL PROMISES TO KNOW

- **At Temptation:** “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And 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 endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - **At Confession:** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- 

APPLYING THIS IN REAL LIFE



- The deceiving influences around us: Distortion today; Selfishness and pride today; Denial today
- Let your need drive you to a deeper knowledge about God and about sin. Do not be content to remain in the shadows, ignorant of the cost of sin and of the pain it causes others.

2. A REVEALING DISCOVERY

- “...I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood...”
 - He was probably not referring to Solomon’s temple, but to the place he personally worshiped
 - True Christian worship is seeking to understand the will and the ways of God
 - It requires time, attention, and surrender to worship like this.
- 

HIS CLARITY OF THOUGHT

- He realized the people he was envious of were going to face the judgment of God.
 - He realized also the sad condition of his own heart – a “brute beast before you.”
 - He repented and returned to God
 - Worship is about gaining God’s perspective and committing ourselves to follow His will.
- 

HOW TO HANDLE JEALOUSY



- Peter asked Jesus about John. Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me” (John 21:22).
- Give the person you are jealous of to God. You do not know everything about their life. God’s judgment about sin is much stricter than ours, but it is also infinitely fairer.
- Follow Christ in your life and expect God to bless you.

PSALM 37:1-4

Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong;

² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

³ Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.



3. WONDERFUL TRUTHS TO TAKE TO HEART

- God was always with him
 - God was all he needed and all he truly wanted
 - God could strengthen his heart and his life
 - God could become his refuge amid the injustices of life on earth, his friend in good times, his hope in trouble, his comfort in sorrow. Every situation in life could find in it the possibility for him to grow closer to God.
- 

THE FINAL REALIZATION

- ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.
- ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you
- ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.
- 

WE CAN GROW THROUGH TEMPTATION

- **Recognize your need of God's help**
 - **Do not buy into the deception of the world and the devil, or give into your own lusts**
 - **Be proactive: seek God early and daily. Don't wait to seek Him, because when temptation comes you will be confused.**
 - **Avoid self-pity, that leads to envy and anger**
 - **Know His Word and commit it to your heart**
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