

HOW TO *Live Your* FAITH

*SELF-HELP FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES*

*LESSON 6:
HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION
JAMES 1:12-15*



James 1:12-15 NIV

- *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (13) When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; (14) but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. (15) Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

After excursus on wisdom & wealth, James returns to theme of 1st chapter

- *James 1:2-4 NIV Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (3) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

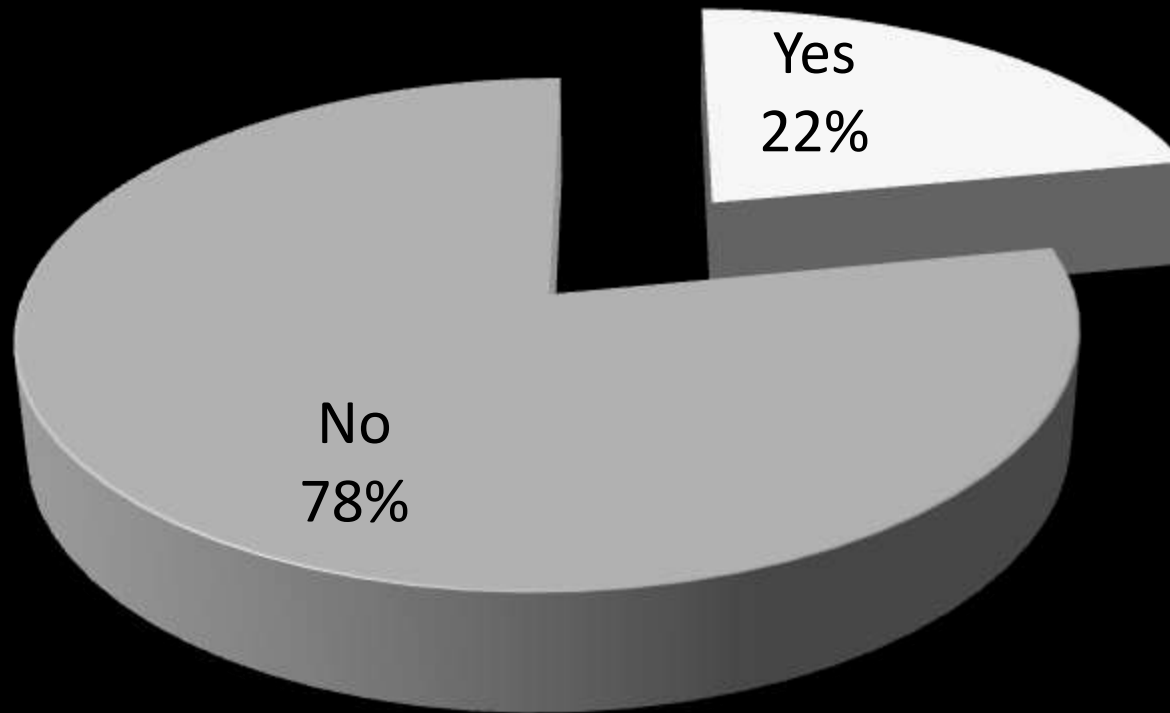


There the focus was how we can benefit from trials/temptations

- Here it is how to overcome temptation
- Gk *peirasmos* – “put to the test”
- Entice, assay, examine, or try
- Good meaning “testing for quality”
- Bad meaning “solicitation to sin”

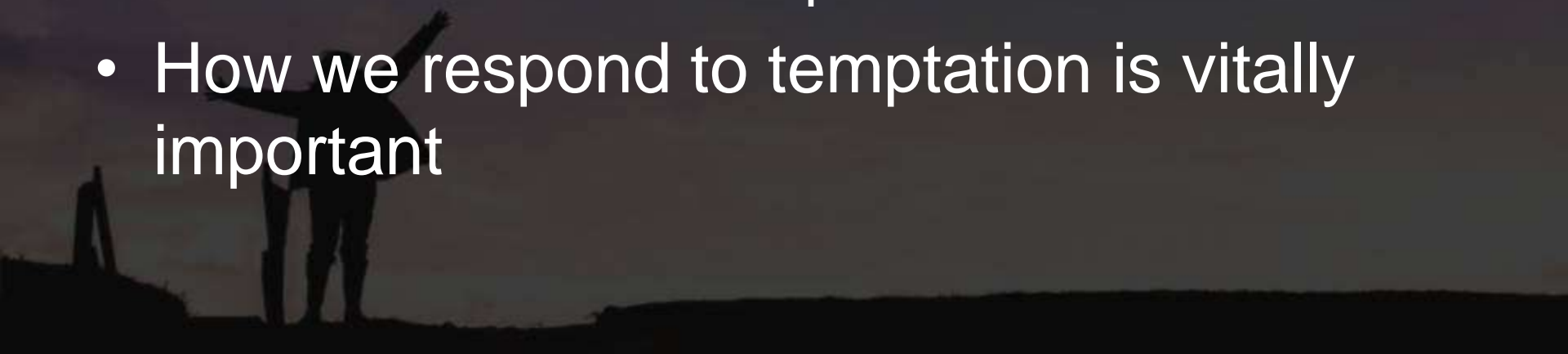


Is temptation a sin?



Temptation can be used for good or harm

- The outcome depends on our response
- Temptation in itself is not sin
- Jesus was tempted for forty days
 - He did not give in to His temptation
 - He did not sin
 - He overcame the temptations He faced
- How we respond to temptation is vitally important



James presents three vital truths concerning temptation

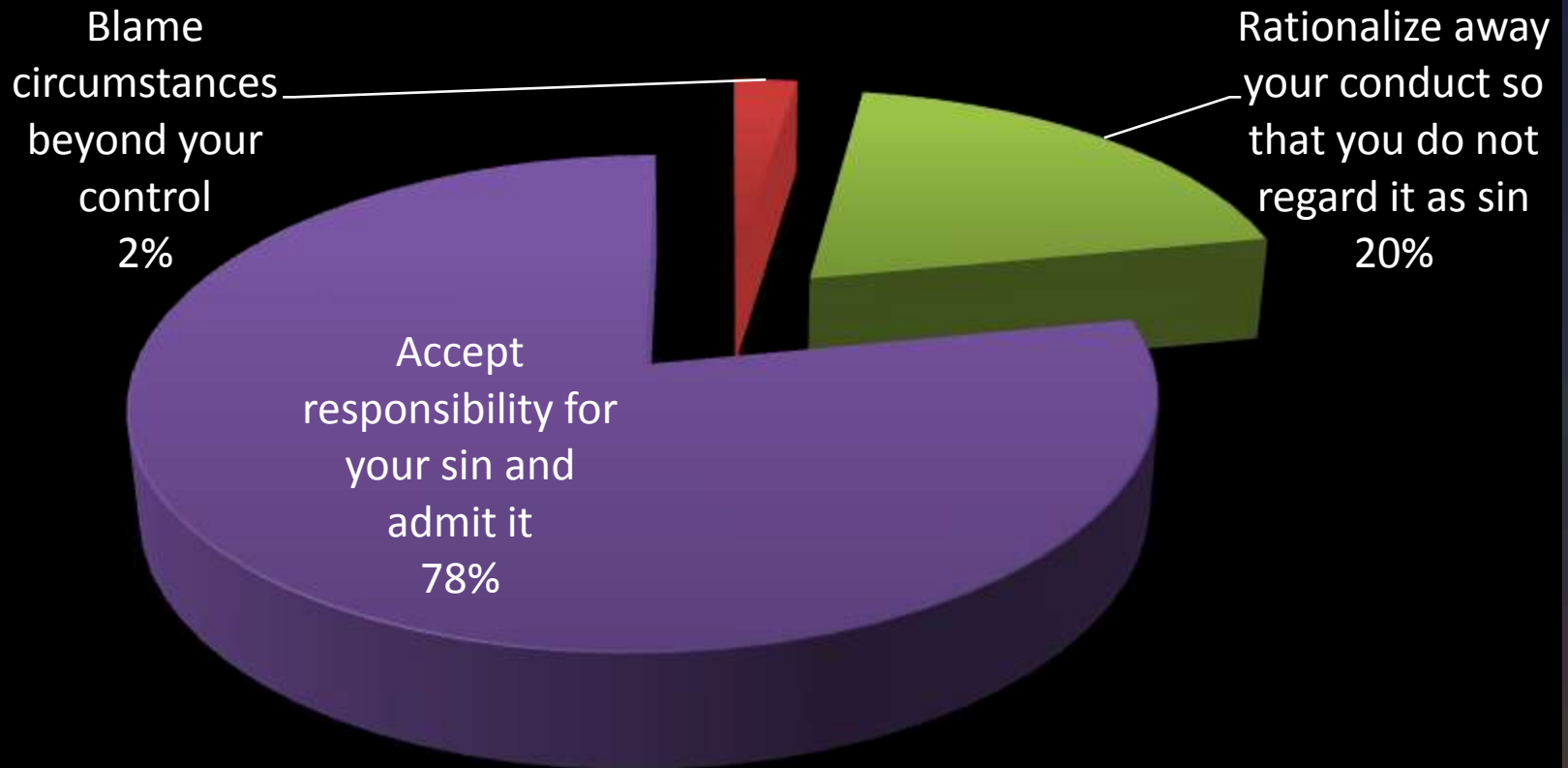


1. What temptation is not

- *James 1:13 NIV When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone*
- That statement presents a temptation to play the “blame game”



When you sin, what do you usually do?

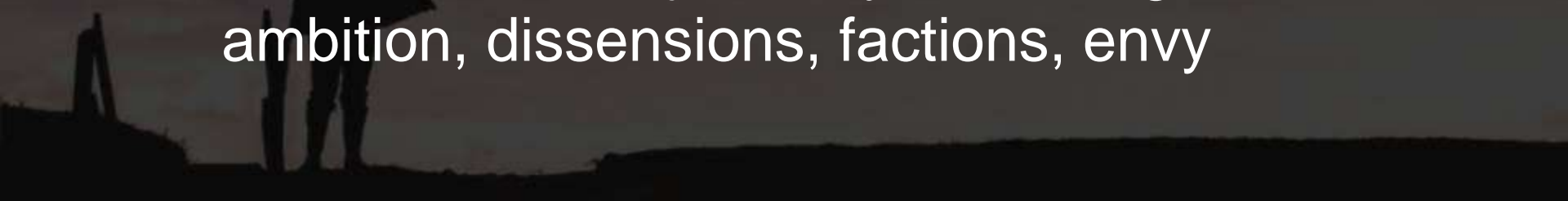


Your answers may reflect too narrow a view of sin

- *Galatians 5:19-21 NIV The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; (20) idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions (21) and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*

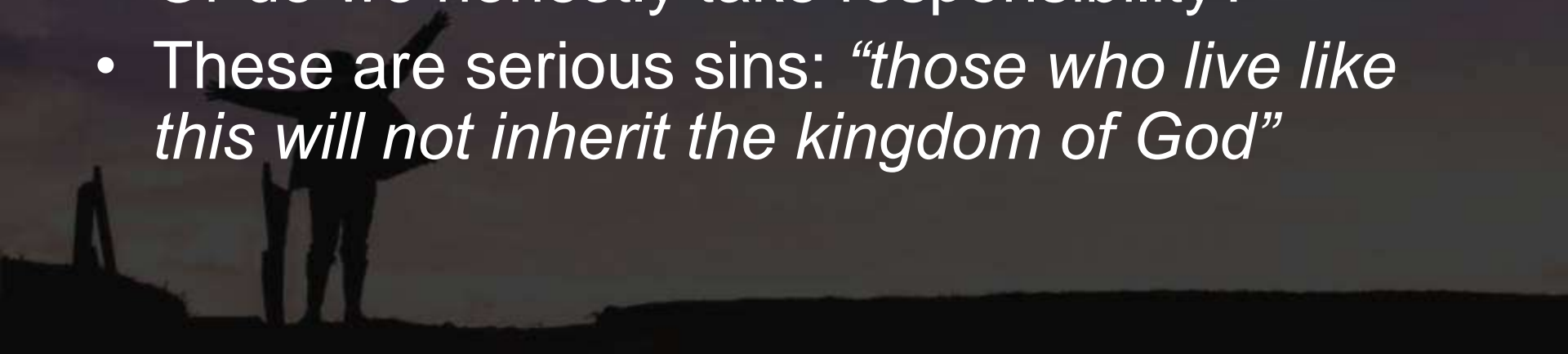
What is sin?

- Sins against God are easy enough to spot
 - Idolatry, witchcraft
- Sins of conduct are also easy to identify
 - Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, drunkenness, orgies
- But what about sins within our own hearts
 - Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy



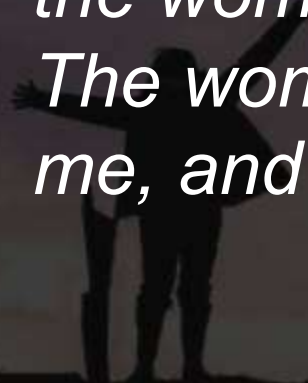
When we see sinful attitudes within ourselves, what do we do?

- Blame God?
- Blame circumstances beyond our control?
- Blame those on whom our attitudes are focused?
- Rationalize away our conduct so we don't regard it as sin?
- Or do we honestly take responsibility?
- These are serious sins: *“those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God”*



As humans, we're tempted to blame others for our failures

- Adam began by blaming Eve for his sin
 - *Genesis 3:12 NIV The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”*
- In turn, Eve blamed the serpent for her sin
 - *Genesis 3:13 NIV Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*



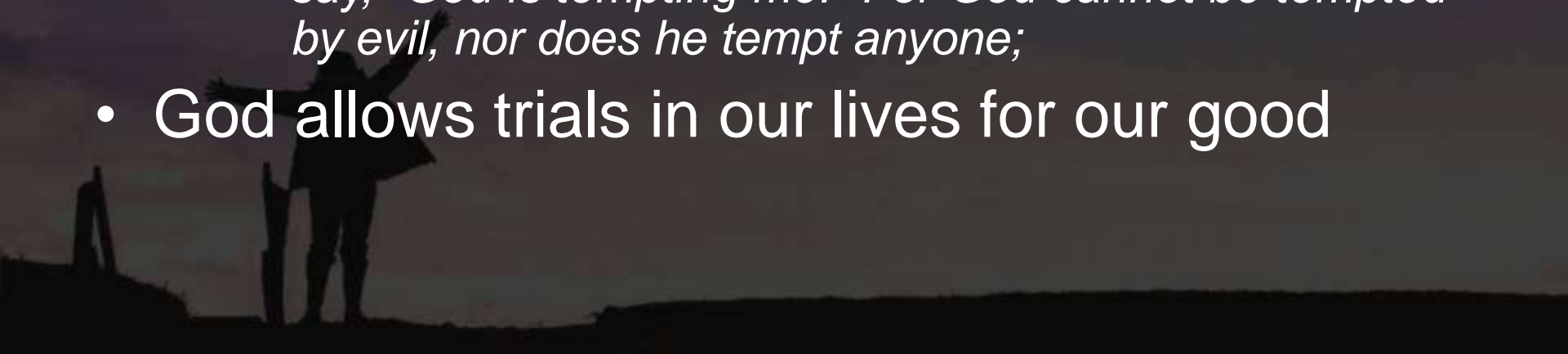
Flip Wilson: “The devil made me do it!”

- We are responsible for our own actions
 - *Romans 14:12 NIV So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*



2. What God is

- God is good & He is the source of all good
 - Evil is contrary to God's nature
 - *1 John 2:16 NIV For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.*
 - God cannot be tempted with evil
 - *James 1:13 NIV When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;*
- God allows trials in our lives for our good



Does God tempt us to sin or does he allow us to be tempted to sin?



The Book of Job is a prime example of this truth

- God allowed Satan to tempt Job
- But He stood available to help Job endure the temptations & grow spiritually
- That is exactly what ultimately happened
- Job did trust in the Lord & did commit his way to God

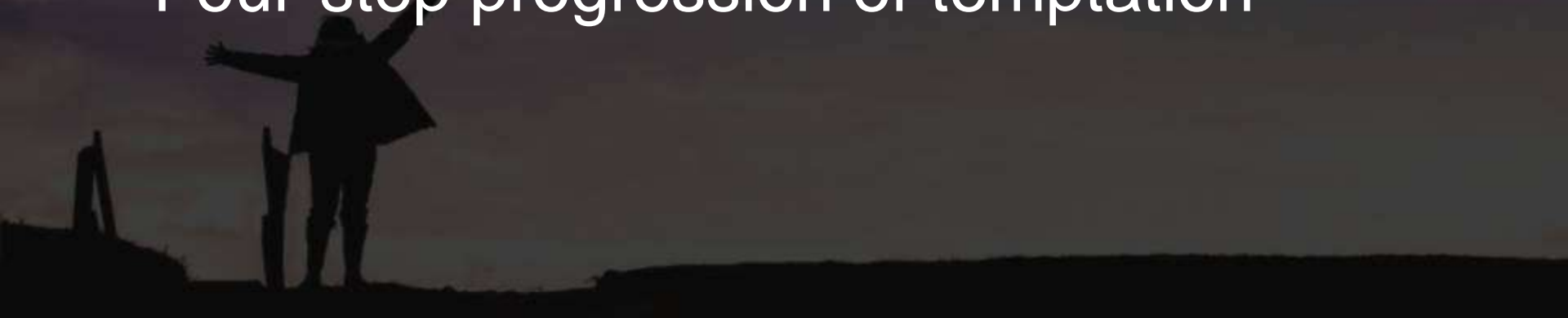


As a result, he not only overcame
the temptation, but

- *Job 42:12 NIV The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys.*
- Means more to us if we think in terms of
 - 14,000 shares of Microsoft stock
 - 6,000 shares of Apple stock
 - 1,000 houses
 - 1,000 cars

3. Where temptation comes from

- *James 1:14-15 NIV but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. (15) Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*
- Four-step progression of temptation

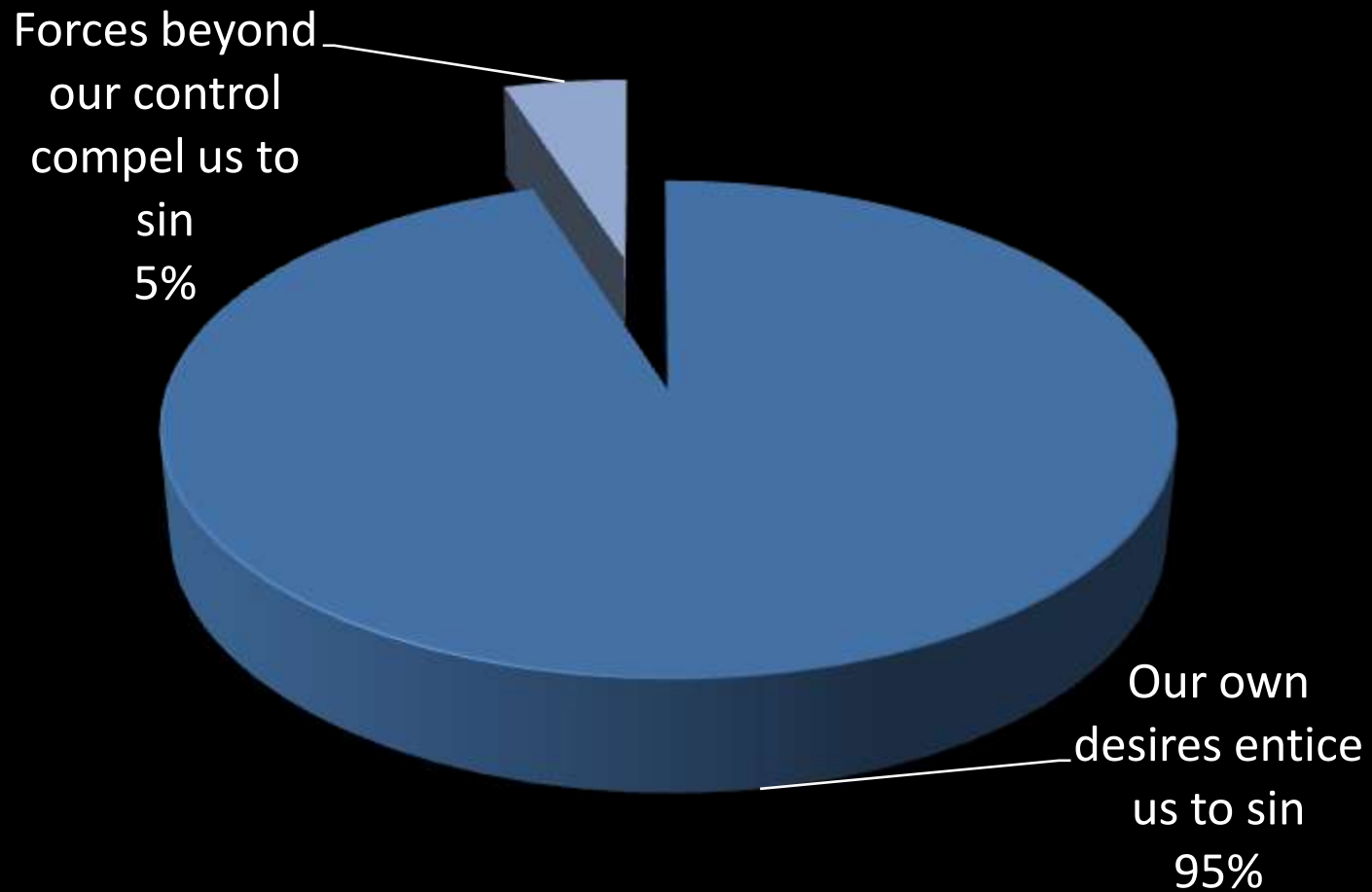


1. We are drawn away by our own desires

James 1:14 NIV ... each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.



How are we tempted to sin?

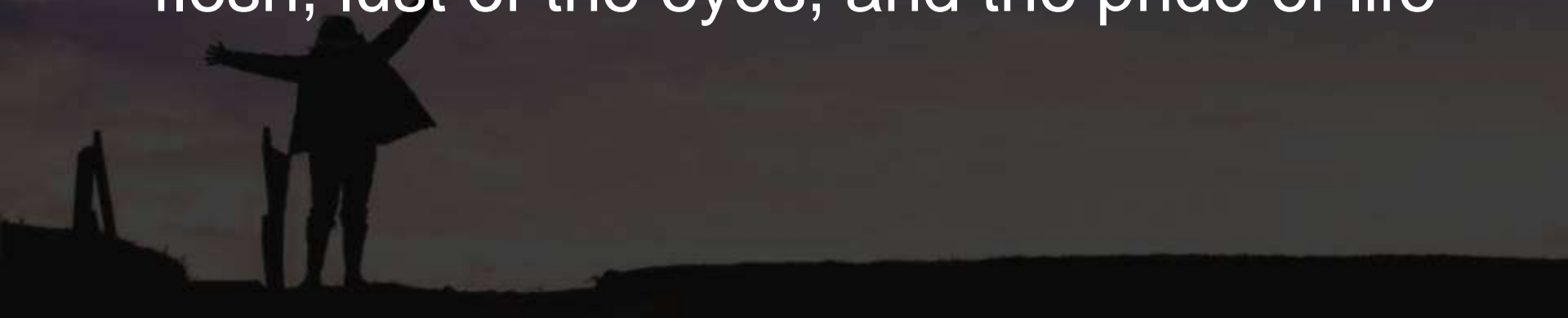


John reminds us not to be in love with the world

- *1 John 2:15-17 NIV Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. (17) The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*
- The world is attractive & there's the temptation

Jesus faced the same temptations, yet without sin

- *Hebrews 4:15 NIV For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.*
- He faced the temptations of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life



Luke 4:1-13 NIV

- *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, (2) where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. (3) The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” (4) Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’” (5) The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. (6) And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. (7) So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”*

Luke 4:1-13 NIV

- *(8) Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” (9) The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. (10) For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; (11) they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” (12) Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (13) When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.*



Temptation always begins with us and our tendency to sin

- We face the constant temptation to be drawn away by our own lusts & desires rather than to live and to walk in the Spirit
- Walking in the Spirit with our eyes fixed intently on Jesus is a vital first step in overcoming temptation



2. We are enticed by sin

James 1:14 NIV but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.



“Entice” is *deleazo* – “to entrap”

- It means to allure or beguile
- It is Satan who would tempt us with evil
- He is the source of all evil just as God is the source of all good



Satan knows our strengths & weaknesses

- He always attacks us at our weakest point – never at our strongest
- He knows the “bait” that will most readily entice us
- He offers us that bait just as surely as he offered forbidden fruit to Eve

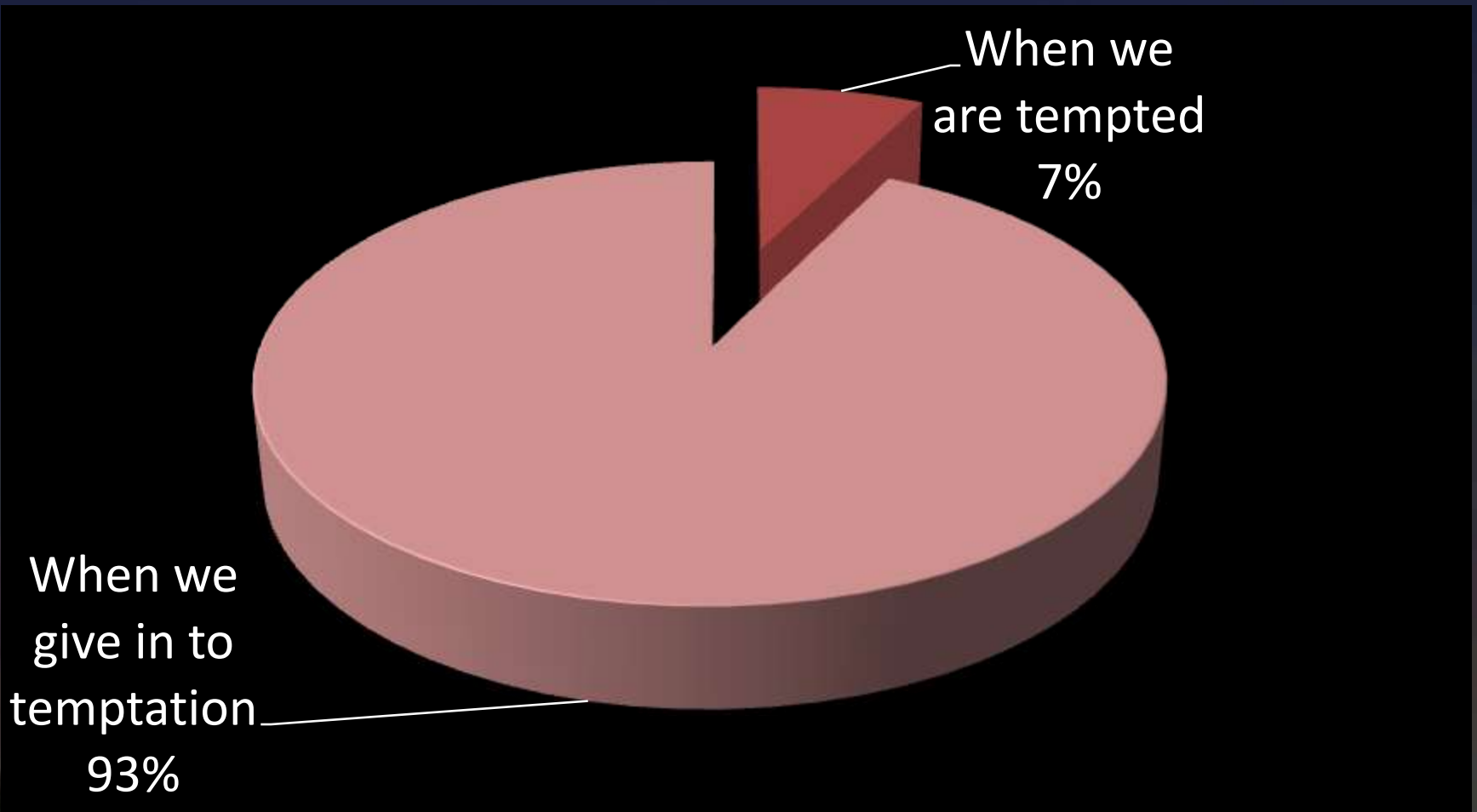


3. When desire conceives, it gives birth to sin

James 1:15 NIV Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin ...

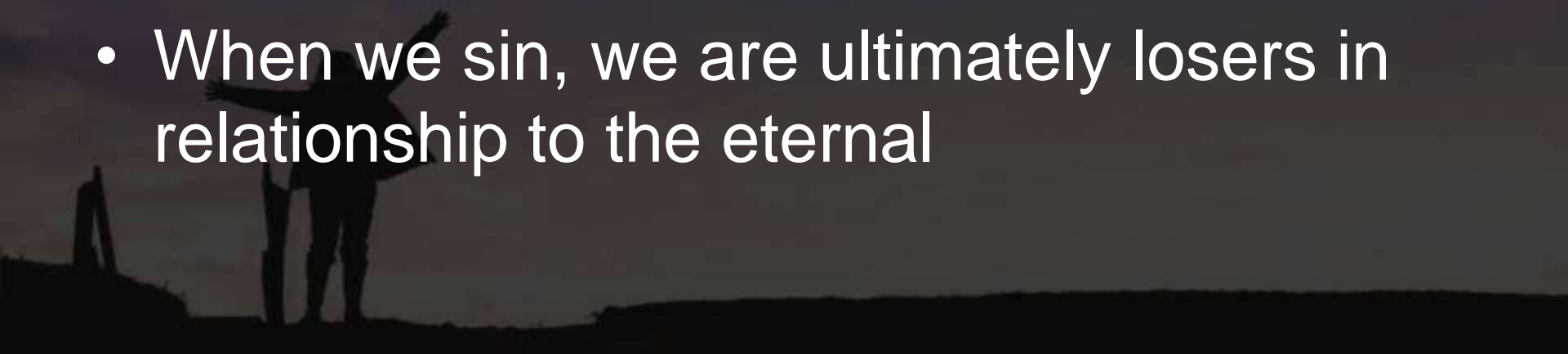


When does temptation become a sin?



Submitting to lust always leads to sin

- The way of the flesh always results in evil just as certainly as the way of the Spirit always leads to good
- Sin never adds quality to our lives
- There are momentary pleasures of sin, but sin ultimately subtracts from our lives
- When we sin, we are ultimately losers in relationship to the eternal



4. When sin is full-grown, it gives birth to death

James 1:15 NIV ... and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.



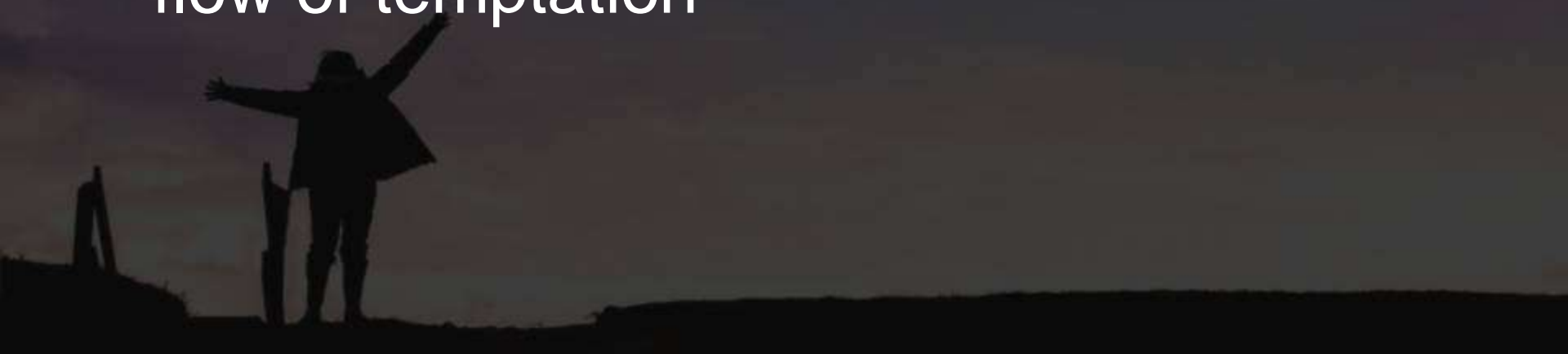
Romans 6:23 NIV

- *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- *Proverbs 14:12 NIV There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*



Temptation that leads to evil

- Begins with lust, which
- Leads to enticement, which
- Points to sin, which
- Results in death
- That is the four-step model of the negative flow of temptation



God has invited us to overcome temptation

James 1:12 NIV Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.



Practical help is found in two other passages

- *James 1:2-4 NIV Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (3) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*



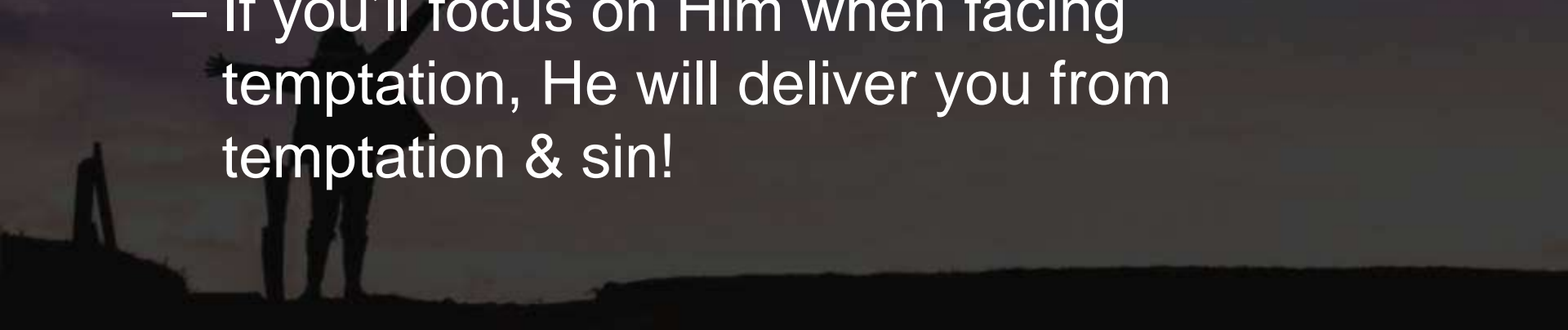
The second helpful passage is found in 1 Corinthians

- *1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it.*



The promises are clear

- Every temptation we face is common
 - We'd like to think our experience is unique & more extreme than others'
 - Not so! That's one of the Devil's lies!
- God is faithful
 - You can trust Him!
 - If you'll focus on Him when facing temptation, He will deliver you from temptation & sin!



The promises are clear

- God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to withstand
 - His strength is greater than the enticement of Satan's bait
- God will give you a way out so that you will be able to withstand the temptation



These promises are only for those who ...

- Fix their eyes & minds on Jesus
- Tune in on His frequency
- Trust Him fully & constantly
- Rely on His strength, wisdom & power
- They are those to whom He gives victory
- Do you know my Jesus?

