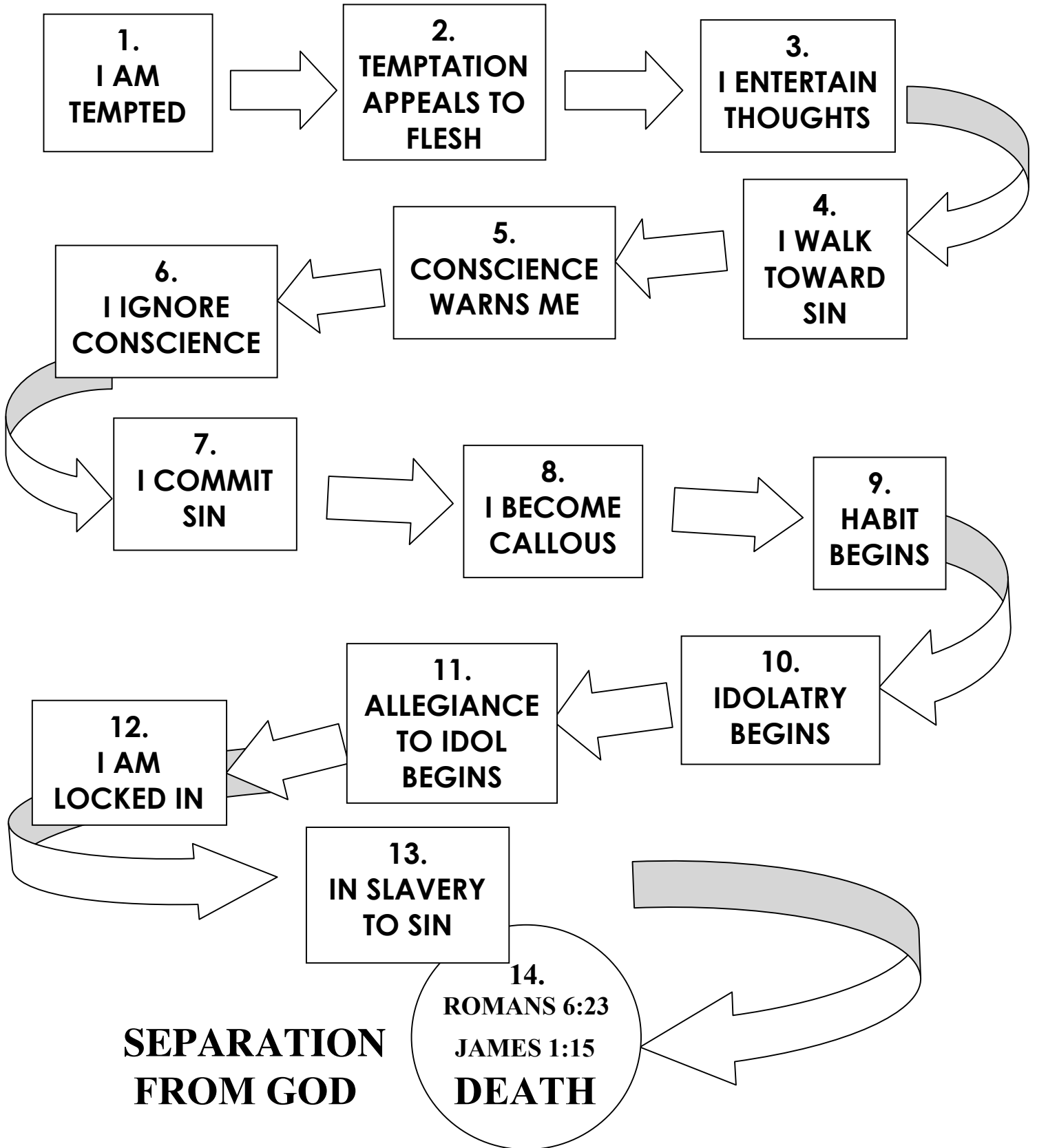


Lesson 5 Part 1
The Cycle of Sin



One Step to Freedom

Chapter 1: Planning for Victory

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God;’ for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:13-15).

The purpose of this chart is to show how we enter into the bondage of sin by personal choice. For the unsaved, it helps to understand God’s perspective on the nature and development of their problem. They need liberation from this vicious cycle, to which they are bound as slaves (John 8:34). This liberation comes only by personally receiving Christ as Master in the place of where sin and self are masters leading to destruction.

For the Christian who is living in defeat, it helps him to understand how he is actually yielding to sin’s control. He can learn how to recognize the cycle of sin as it relates to his struggles. As he recognizes the process, he can begin to break it through God’s strength (Philippians 4:13).

1. **I am tempted.** Satan and his host of wicked spirits initiate the temptation. They have access to our minds to place a thought there. See Genesis 3:1-6, 1 Chronicles 21:1, Matthew 4:1, 16:13-23, John 13:2 and Ephesians 6:11-12.
2. **Temptation appeals to my fleshly desires.** We are enticed by our own desire to please our flesh. See James 1:14 and Galatians 5:16-17.
3. **I begin to entertain thoughts, thus making a choice for sin.** These thoughts fuel those desires for the sinful action into flame (adding gasoline to the fire). The Christian must learn to “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). Jesus said that if you look at a woman to lust for her (entertain lustful thoughts in your mind), you have committed adultery in your heart (Matthew 5:28). Confession and repentance can take place here, which would stop the person from “falling into the act itself.”
4. **I am now walking in the direction of sin.** The first level of involvement with sin begins (see Psalms 1:1a). I have turned and started walking in the counsel of sin.
5. **Conscience warns me that this is wrong.** The law of God is still written on the consciences of men, even unsaved men (Romans 2:14-15). This is because though sin has marred the image of God in man, that sense of right and wrong still remains in all men. For the Christian, we have the Holy Spirit to convict us when we begin to stray (Galatians 5:17-18). The wise thing to do is listen and respond God’s way. See 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Peter 2:11. There is still a way of escape provided by God (1 Corinthians 10:13).
6. **I suppress (ignore) what I know to be right.** I suppress the truth to pursue my desires. I begin to follow the lie (i.e. “Go ahead, you deserve it”). See Romans 1:19. Whenever I ignore what is right and pursue what is wrong, I start to become “self-deceived.” In other words, in my mind I have thought of a way to justify what I am doing. The more I push aside my convictions of right and wrong, the duller I become to responding to those convictions.