

What to Do When Temptation Calls

“A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless” (Prov. 14:16, NASB).

It's common sense that if you don't want to get stung, stay away from the bees. If you don't want to get burned, don't get close to the fire. If you don't want to fall off the cliff, don't hang off the ledge.

The goal is not to see how close you can get to temptation but rather how far away from it you can stay.

Proverbs 14:16 (NASB) says, “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless.” A fool thinks he can handle temptation, but who is he kidding? You don't go to a bar just to eat pretzels! You need to do a frank assessment. You need to analyze when and where you are most tempted and vulnerable. Then, you need to stay away from those situations as much as you can.

The Bible says to run from temptation: “I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws” (Psalm 119:59, NLT). If you have to physically remove yourself, do it! When Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, he left his coat and split. Sometimes you may have to leave your coat. Get out of the situation. Run from it. Don't stick around. When you're tempted, get up and change the channel. Or turn on music. Go for a walk. Read the Bible. Call a Christian friend in your small group. Do something to break the spell.

Here is some practical advice: Don't ever try to argue with the devil. You'll lose every time. He's had thousands of years to think up lines to counter anything you could come up with. Don't rationalize it. Don't justify it. Don't argue it. The key thing to do is break the focus. Don't look at the cookies

and repeat, “I don’t want them! I don’t want them!” Who are you kidding? Turn around! The more you fight a feeling, the more it grows in intensity.

When temptation calls you on the phone, don’t try to argue. Just hang up, and go do something else.

Talk It Over

- Where are you most tempted? Is it in airports? On business trips? At home when you’re alone and the kids are at school? During the weekend? When you’re watching television?
 - What changes do you need to make in your schedule or lifestyle to minimize your exposure to these situations?
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