

Keys to Break Temptations That Keep You From Your Goals

What goals do you have for your life? Maybe you want a closer relationship with Jesus, better physical health, stronger relationships or a breakthrough in overcoming an issue that you've been battling for years. We all have something we're working toward—or some way we should be growing and developing our potential.

Many people struggle to make good changes on a consistent basis and it causes them to be frustrated or miserable. This is what happens when we don't choose to use discipline and self-control. I say "choose" because if you're a believer in Christ and have made Him the Savior of your life, then you have the fruit of self-control.

Second Timothy 1:7 (ESV) says, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." So you can confidently declare by faith, "*I do* have self-control, and I *can* do whatever I need to do in life through Christ!"

'It's Just Too Hard!'

God has created each person with talents or abilities. But if we don't exercise discipline and self-control to develop those talents and focus on using them, then we won't ever reach the full potential of what we're created to be. I heard someone describe it like this: Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller-skates; there's plenty of movement, but you never know if it will be forward, backward or sideways.

I've often said that wisdom is doing now what you'll be happy with later on. Exercising self-control is always a wise choice; we just have to believe we can do it with God's help.

It's common to hear people say, "It's just too hard!" when

they keep giving in to temptations that hold them back from reaching their goals. But we have to stop saying this, because the truth is God will not lead us to do anything we cannot do. We need to toughen up a little bit and be determined to do what's right even when it's hard or doesn't feel good.

I read that eaglets go through a struggle to break out of their shell, and they need to do this to develop the tenacity and strength to become the majestic eagle they are born to be. It's the same way with us. We need to go through challenges in life to become everything we can be and to do everything God has planned for us to do!

Consider the Consequences

When we're facing temptations—especially in an area that's been a chronic weakness—it's easy to make excuses to justify giving in to them. But if we really considered the consequences of choosing temptation over self-control, we'd discover we can do things we should do if we want to badly enough. Here's a silly illustration to show you what I mean.

Someone says, "Ice cream is my weakness, and I just can't say no to it."

I say, "Yes, you can! And I want to prove to you that you can resist the temptation."

Imagine you're at the largest ice cream parlor in the world. They have every flavor you could possibly want, and it's the creamiest, best ice cream anywhere on the planet. They serve large portions and will make whatever you desire.

So you order the largest, tastiest ice cream delight you could want, and the clerk makes it and hands it to you with a spoon. Do you think you can put that ice cream down?

As you're about to heap a spoonful into your mouth you hear "click." You feel a cold, metal object touch the back of your

head. Out of the corner of your eye, you see a large, hairy hand holding a gun to your temple. A deep voice says, "If you eat that ice cream, I will blow your head off."

Now, let me ask you again: Can you put down that ice cream? (I'm sure that now you're saying, "Yes!")

Here's the point I'm trying to make: You can say no to anything if you know what the consequences are going to be if you don't.

'Yes, I Can!'

No matter how you've been living up to this point, if you'll choose to trust God and ask Him to help you, you can overcome your regrets and get to where you really want to be. First Corinthians 10:13 (ESV) gives us this promise: "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."

Meditate on this verse and commit it to memory so you can quote it in those moments of temptation. Pray for God to help you trust Him to give you the ability to say no to every temptation; focus on making a little more progress in the right direction one day at a time.

God loves you, and He has good plans for your life. He is always for you, and He wants you to succeed in experiencing His best for you. With Him on your side, you can do it!