

Dealing With Temptation

Everyone faces temptation. But the truth is, very few people deal with it effectively. That shouldn't be the case, and it doesn't have to be the case for believers. There are some very simple and effective ways of dealing with temptation that you should know, and if you'll put them into practice, I guarantee, you'll come out the winner.

It has been said, "Fail to plan and you're planning to fail." That statement could not be truer when it's applied to temptation. I don't know anyone who gets up in the morning and prays to fail when faced with temptation, but I know many people who get up each morning and fail to plan for what the Bible says we will all certainly face. So, first and most important, you must be prepared. That's so simple, you have to have someone's help to misunderstand. But, we must have had a lot of help because very few people have taken the time or made the effort to prepare.

Second Chronicles 12:14 says it this way,

"And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."

This was speaking of Rehoboam, the king of Judah and the son of Solomon. He started off as a good king who was seeking the Lord. But just like many people today, he wasn't prepared for what would inevitably come his way. When Satan throws temptation your way, if you're not already prepared, it's too late. You'll probably lose the fight.

Jesus prepared Himself. He spent thirty years getting ready for His encounter with the devil, and He started preparing early. At the age of twelve, He was asking questions of the doctors of the Law and astounding them with His answers. He had obviously spent many hours reading and studying the Scriptures. I'm sure that study continued all His life, but

even Jesus needed more.

Before He was tempted by Satan face to face, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism by John in the Jordan River. Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, full of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity for overcoming temptation. There are many Christians who received the Holy Spirit years ago and haven't been full of the Holy Spirit a day since. It's not about what happened to us long ago; we have to stay full of the Holy Spirit. One way of doing that is to speak in tongues on a regular basis. Jude 1:20-21 says,

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Praying in tongues builds us up on our most holy faith. How many times have you needed your most holy faith to take you through a certain trial, and yet you haven't used this gift of the Holy Spirit? Verse 21 also says we keep ourselves in the love of God when we speak in tongues. Have you ever asked the Lord to pour out His love on you? I imagine you have, but this doesn't say to pray that way; it says we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. We do that by speaking in tongues. We don't ask God for that which He's already given, we simply stir up the love that has already been commended toward us, by speaking in tongues. This is a powerful gift. Isaiah 28:11-12 says,

"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

Do you ever need rest or refreshing? I guarantee that you do,

and this verse says speaking in tongues is the way to get it. We have a tremendously powerful gift available to us through the Holy Spirit, but few people take advantage of it. Instead, we ask God to do what He told us to do. We need to use this gift of speaking in tongues to stir ourselves up, or we risk sinking to the bottom.

You must also know who you are. Matthew 4 and Luke 4 record the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. One of the most amazing aspects of those temptations was that Satan began two of the three temptations with the words, "If thou be the Son of God." Many people have missed this point. The real temptation was Satan's attempt to get Jesus to doubt who He was. That's the same way he attacked Adam and Eve. The serpent told Eve that if she would eat the forbidden fruit, she would be like God (Gen. 3:5). The truth was that she was already like God, but she didn't know it. The first Adam sinned, because he didn't know who he really was. The second Adam, Jesus, didn't sin, because He did know who he was. Knowing your true identity in Christ is one of the greatest defenses you can possibly have against temptation.

Jesus had just heard His Father speak to Him in an audible voice saying,

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

There was also a visible sign from God when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the shape of a dove. Jesus had to anchor His faith in who His Father said He was. But immediately, Satan came to Him saying,

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3).

The real temptation was never about turning stones into bread. It was Satan's attempt to manipulate Jesus into doubting His Father's Word and doing something to prove who He was. Satan

was trying to find and exploit any insecurity in Jesus.

When you were a kid, I'm sure someone at some time dared you to do something stupid. The real issue wasn't whether or not you could do it but whether you were "afraid" to do it. And sad to say, many of us took the dare and did something that hurt us or shamed us just to prove that we weren't. All we really succeeded in proving was that we feared their disapproval so much that we weren't willing to do what was right. The truly fearless response would have been to walk away, secure in who we were, earning their respect through character rather than performance.

Satan was daring Jesus—"If You're really the Son of God, if what You heard from the Father in an audible voice is really true, then prove it, and turn this stone into bread." Turning a stone into bread would not have been sin. It would have been sin if Jesus had doubted the words of His heavenly Father declaring who He was by placing more faith in what a miracle could say about Him. You must know who you are if you want to overcome temptation. No matter what form Satan's temptations may take, they are all directed at causing us to doubt who we are.

It's also important to understand that all temptation is rooted in selfishness. In fact, our selfishness is really Satan's beachhead. Jesus stripped him of his power two thousand years ago, so the only thing he can really do is deceive us through our own selfish desires. The Bible tells us exactly what they are in 1 John 2:16,

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

And in James 1:14 we read,

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

Satan is not limitless; deception is his only weapon. All he can do is try to deceive us into thinking that God really can't or won't fulfill our lives. Every single temptation of the enemy is packaged in the form of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. But they're all designed to entice us and cause us to doubt that God will meet our needs. Selfishness is always the favorite playground of the devil, and when selfishness rules in our lives, we open the door to his deceptive schemes.

You can't be tempted unless you have first thought about it. All temptation is linked to what you think on. Therefore, control your thoughts, and you will control temptation. This is a simple but profound truth. It's the reason most people fall into temptation. It's like a woman who doesn't want to get pregnant but continues to have sexual relations without any contraception. Sooner or later, she will get pregnant. Think on the wrong things long enough, and sooner or later you will fall into sin when tempted.

Philippians 4:8 says this,

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Temptation will come, but it's hard for the devil to deceive you when your mind is stayed on those things. Satan can only work with what you give him, so don't give him any space in your mind. You'll be able to avoid many of the temptations you face if you will put this into practice.

The Word is powerful—use it. Jesus countered every temptation of the devil with the Word. Think about it, Jesus was the Word, and everything He said would have been Scripture and more than sufficient to rebuke the devil. Yet He would say,

“It is written” then He quoted God’s Word. If it was important for Jesus to quote the Word, it’s even more important for us to do the same. We must know God’s Word to effectively overcome temptation. That goes back to being prepared; you can’t quote scripture you haven’t learned, and there isn’t any power in what you don’t know or understand.

Don’t wait till you’re in the middle of a huge temptation to start thinking about how to deal with it; it will be too late. Take the time now to prepare yourself for those temptations that will inevitably come your way. To help, I produced a five-part album entitled *How To Deal With Temptation*. In this album, I teach on: being prepared, knowing who you are, how selfishness is the beachhead of Satan, why speaking the Word is so important, and how temptation is tied to your thought life. These are all vital to understanding and overcoming temptation. {eoa}

*March 23, 1968, was the day that **Andrew Wommack’s** life changed forever. God showed him just what supernatural love was really about, and Andrew’s theology transformed. God was a loving father that accepted him unconditionally and desired genuine fellowship with him. Ever since that day, Andrew has been taking the love of God as far and as deep as he can. He has written nearly forty books and hundreds of lessons. He began broadcasting the Gospel of grace and healing through his Gospel Truth television program and expanded in the digital age with his internet television network and his website, . In 1994, he founded Charis Bible College. What started as a vision in a small building has grown to more than fifty campuses around the world and thousands of students learning to walk in the power of God. In 2016, he established the Truth & Liberty Coalition, an organization dedicated to mobilizing the church to engage in public discourse. Andrew and his wife, Jamie, have been married for nearly fifty years.*

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