

Our Best Defense against Temptation

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Introduction: "What do you do when you are tempted?"

- A. Sometimes we forget that we have a choice!
 - 1. As strong as temptation can be, we do have the power in Christ to choose not to sin.
 - 2. Yet, sometimes we act powerless, as if we have no choice but to submit!
 - 3. Too often, we don't stop to recognize it for what it really is; a temptation from the devil himself!
- B. We must prepare ahead of time how we will respond to temptation.
 - 1. To be tempted, one must have the desire and the opportunity to sin (**James 1:14-15**).
 - 2. What we do when confronted with evil depends upon our spiritual preparation in understanding what the will of the Lord is (**Eph. 5:15-17**).
 - 3. Rather than decide your course of action against temptation as you go along, God's path of wisdom must be chosen ahead of time.

I. The Temptations of Christ.

- A. Jesus resisted the Tempter (**Mat. 4:1-11**).
 - 1. These temptations could represent all of the temptations of Jesus.
 - 2. They represent the temptations we go through today (**1 John 2:16**).
 - 3. Jesus resisted the lust of the flesh to turn stones into bread (**Mt. 4:1-4**)
 - a. Jesus had been fasting for 40 days; he was "hungry"!
 - b. He did not yield to the temptation to misuse His powers nor did he fail to put his trust in God who would take care of his needs.
 - 4. Jesus resisted selfish pride, refusing to cast Himself down from the temple in a vain glorious display (**Mat. 4:5-7**).
 - a. Jesus was tempted by Satan by his misuse of Scripture (**Ps. 91**).
 - b. Yet Jesus did not yield, for such an act would have been a boastful claim of sonship and a needless test of God's power.
 - 5. Jesus resisted the lust of the eyes in not compromising to bow before Satan (**Mat. 4:8-11**).
 - a. Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, yet He would not worship Satan for any price.
 - b. He would not trade the Creator for the created (cf. **Rom. 1:23**).
- B. Jesus is our example on how to handle temptation!
 - 1. He was tempted in all points as we are, *yet did not sin* (**Heb 4:15**). Thus, He is especially worthy of our imitation.
 - 2. We are called to follow His example (**1 Pet 2:21-23**) and we must if we are to be victorious over the devil and the temptations of sin.

II. Disciples of Christ are also tempted by the Tempter.

- A. Just as the Tempter tempted Jesus, we too are attacked by the devil.
 - 1. Satan always stands ready to "pounce" and destroy us (**1 Pet. 5:8**).

2. Just as it seems we have put away a sin, the Tempter comes “knocking at our door” with other kinds of temptations (cf. **Mat. 12:43-45**).
 3. Things not sinful in and of themselves can lead to temptations to sin (e.g., **1 Tim. 6:9-10**).
 4. Satan will try to tempt us to sin in *any and every* circumstance of life.
 - a. Satan sought to influence Peter in the presence of Jesus! (**Mat. 16:22-23; Luke 22:31**).
- B. As he did with Jesus, the Tempter preys upon us when we are weak.
1. Jesus no doubt was very weak physically from 40 days of fasting and Satan took advantage of this opportunity.
 2. We can be an easy target of Satan if we do not beware (**Mt 26:40-41**).

III. The Word of God is Our Best Defense.

- A. Certainly, prayer is very important to fighting off temptation.
1. We are to pray for God’s help so we will not yield to sin (**Mat. 6:13**).
 2. Prayer helps prevent us from entering into temptation (**Mat. 26:41**).
 3. Only by the power of God’s grace can we overcome temptation when we are weak (**2 Cor 12:7-10**).
 4. Even in difficult situations, there is a way of escape (**1 Cor. 10:13**).
- B. Yet, to overcome temptation, we must be able to recall Scripture.
1. Jesus countered every temptation by quoting Scripture: “*It is written*” (**Mat 4:4 / Deut. 8:3; Mat. 4:7 / Deut. 6:16; Mat. 4:10 / Deut. 6:13**).
 2. We too need to remember Scripture and put our faith in the power of the gospel that gives us victory over temptation and sin (**Eph. 6:17**).
 3. We need to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will so we will conduct ourselves in a pleasing manner before God (**Col. 1:9-10**).
- C. Prepare for battle with the word of God.
1. We are commanded: “*Take up the full armor of God*” (**Eph. 6:13-17**).
 2. Every part of the armor is related to the word of God in some way (cf. **John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Eph. 1:13; Heb. 4:12**).
 3. Our ability to “*withstand in the evil day*” or fight off temptations when they arise depends on our wearing “the armor of God.”
 4. Faithfulness is a fight, not something we do lying down (**1 Tim 6:12**).
 5. By storing God’s word in our hearts, we keep ourselves from sinning (**Ps. 37:31; 119:11**).
 6. God’s word should be ever present in our hearts that when temptation arises, we are ready to counter it with God’s word (e.g., **Prov. 7:1-5**).
 7. We need to saturate our hearts on a continual basis with God’s word (**Ps. 1:2; 119:97-98, 101-104**) (e.g., memorization, meditation, daily readings, personal Bible studies, Bible classes, gospel meetings, etc.).
 8. If you are discouraged and struggling to hold on, if you feel like a failure in your fight against sin, *you need to get back to the word of God!*

Conclusion: Just Like Our Lord Jesus, We Can Overcome the Temptations of Sin When We Yield the Powerful Gospel Against the Devil!