



The Good News

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Remaining Faithful through Personal Temptation

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As Christians, we face trials and temptations every day from many different areas of our lives. We may deal with trials involving our family, friends, work, congregation, or even our own mind that could present potential temptation. Amid all these day-to-day sources of trials, we must deal with the ever-present holes in our armor that often provides a gap for temptation to squeeze through. Sometimes, due to our focus on staying strong through all the “life” issues, we don’t think about or focus on the issues of our character. It’s at moments like these when we are weak and weary from all the issues we deal with daily, that we can be the most vulnerable to our own weaknesses. The question we ask today is: How can I stay faithful through personal temptation?

We are told in **James 1:12-15** that each one of us “*is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;*” James is very careful to make sure we understand that God is not the source of any temptation, nor is it just “the devil’s fault”, but rather that we are ultimately responsible. We have all been down that path of temptation, and we are all painfully aware of how hard it is to stop from sinning once we have been “enticed” to think about sin. James goes on to say that “*...sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*” When we let ourselves slip, we damage and fracture that perfect communion and fellowship we have with the Father and the Son. We know from **I John 1:8-10** that we can receive forgiveness for the sins that we commit, but we cannot allow a moment of weakness to “bring forth death” for our souls. We must grow to the point that we do not allow ourselves to sin, even once the temptation has weaseled its way into our heads.

The next logical question is, what is the best way for me to avoid temptation? The answer: **Don’t think about it!** This is, of course, far easier to say than to put into practice but it is also, by far, the

easiest way to avoid sin. If we can train our thoughts and discipline our minds well enough, then we can teach ourselves to never let evil thoughts or temptations to enter in. Paul gives a list of topics in **Phil. 4:8** that the brethren were to “meditate” on, thoughts that are “just” and “pure” and godly. If we are constantly thinking of godly topics, Satan will have a much harder time trying to “entice” us. Amid a long, grueling day of dealing with life, we must keep a firewall on our thoughts. If we begin to feel a sinful thought cross our minds, we must put it out as quickly as possible, before we become enticed.

What happens if I become enticed? Read your Bible!!! I was once told by a faithful Christian that this is the best way to pull yourself out of a temptation to which you are about to fall. Specifically, read a text like **Matt. 27** (the crucifixion), or **Rom. 6** (we are not to sin), or **I Cor. 10:12-13** (God will provide a way of escape). This will help serve to re-center yourself on serving God.

The most important aspect of remaining faithful through temptation is establishing consistency. If we defeat the temptation once, but then fall to it the next time, we can’t develop the strength to be consistent. We must establish a means of defeating temptation that works for us. In the end, however, the only true means of defeating temptation is to repair the holes in our armor. We must resolve the issues in our character that are susceptible to temptation. Identify them, and then work on them daily. If you know you are vulnerable in a certain area, avoid any situation that would compromise that area. Understand that the devil knows our weaknesses and strengths. He will sometimes attack us where we are strong just to test us, but he is especially going to target the areas where we are weak. The sooner we identify and fortify those weak areas, the closer we will come to truly defeating temptation in our lives.