

And Lead Us Not Into Temptation

When I walk into the grocery store I consciously ignore the fattening foods strategically placed in my line of sight. If I were to look at the cookies, chips and cakes I would start to crave those items. I don't need them. To get your



attention store owners even display them as being on sale. They don't call them "impulse" items for nothing. It appears to be a bargain – for my wallet, but not for my health. My defense mechanism is to look the other way.

What are temptations for you? Do find yourself looking at suggestive advertising, either in print or on television? Marketing executives have found that sex sells. We want to look like the person in the ad, or perhaps we just want to look. If we give in, even just a little, our mind starts to play tricks on us. Our will

power lessens, so it takes even more effort to fight off the chemical reaction in the brain. If you can distract yourself from it, focusing on something else, you can stop your mind from trying to justify giving in. Move forward and don't look back. Don't second guess yourself.

According to the dictionary, temptation is "something that causes a strong urge or desire to have or do something and especially something that is bad, wrong, or unwise." With that definition, obviously Satan is at the center of it. His goal is to corrupt us. Temptation is an unrelenting part of human life, and has been since the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden. We can quickly remember the biblical example when Jesus was tempted by Satan, at the end of his 40 day fast in the desert. Jesus was hungry and Satan suggested He turn stones into bread, to satisfy His hunger. Secondly, Satan tested God's power by suggesting that Jesus throw himself down from the highest point of the temple, testing God. Thirdly, Satan asked Jesus to bow down and worship the devil so that all the kingdoms of the world would be given to Jesus.

Jesus showed us how to deal with temptation. In his rebuke of the devil, each time Jesus quoted scripture, showing his unwavering allegiance to God. Use God as your strength against the temptations of life. *Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11).*

Don't let the devil catch you when you are weak, and don't let him wear you down. In the Lord's Prayer we ask God that we not be led to temptation, but kept away from evil (Matthew 6:13).

It is not easy. The devil is the second most powerful force in the universe. God is first. So, who are *you* going to listen to? You can't do it alone. Our own resolve pales in comparison with the devil, so you need God's strength to overcome the temptations of life. *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33).* Order the devil away – don't even look at what he is offering you, and seek the Lord's strength.

With the Lord's help, you can do this. *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:13).* The very last words of the story of Jesus withstanding the devil's attacks are

comforting: *Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him (Matthew 4:11).* God made sure Jesus was OK, and he will do that for you, too.

Question: When the devil comes against you, how do you stand up to his temptations?

Using Scripture as Your Armor:

When confronted with health decisions: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own (1 Corinthians 6:19).*

When confronted with decisions on morality: *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).*

When tempted to say things in anger: *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name (Exodus 20:7).*

When tempted to want something that belongs to others: *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17).*

When tempted with unclean thoughts: *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he... (Proverbs 23:7).*

Overlooking God and trying to fight the devil yourself: *Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe (Proverbs 28:26).*

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord. In the face of temptations let us focus our eyes on you, and let us use your word as the guiding force to not give in to our desires. Amen.

For Further Study – Jesus' Temptation in the Desert

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. *"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' "* Jesus answered him, *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "* Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. *"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."* Jesus said to him, *"Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' "* Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him (Matthew 4:1-11).