

MINISTERIO LA FUENTE



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PETER BELLINGHAM

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HOW TO DEAL WITH TEMPTATION

How many of you are tempted at times? Everyone? Good, that means you are all alive and you are all human beings and you are all being honest. Is it a sin to be tempted? No. But do any of you ever feel like a failure at times just because you are being tempted? Today that is going to change. Do you feel powerless when confronted with a strong temptation? There is no need to live that way. Today we're going to get free of that trap. We're going to look at what temptation is, and we're going to see how to deal with it.

"God has given us free will to choose whether to follow Him or not, but at times temptations are so strong that it seems we really don't have free will because we cannot help but give in to the temptation..." Have you ever felt that way? Last week someone in this meeting made that statement, and it is a very true statement.

In other words, sometimes temptation is so strong that it feels like we have no choice, we have to sin. Let's see what God says about this.

YOU'VE GOT TO SERVE SOMEBODY

Before you are saved, before you accept Jesus as your savior and make him the Lord of your life, you are a slave to sin. Sin is your master. *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?* ¹⁷*But thanks be to God that **though you were slaves of sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed...* (Romans 6:16-17 NASB) Before you become obedient to the gospel, you are continually obedient to sin. It calls you, and you answer obediently. You may believe you are a free man or woman, but the truth is that you are a slave. A slave has to obey his master, right? Before you are saved, you have a master, and that master is called sin. In fact that master is called satan, and he keeps you captive through the power of sin.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4 KJV) The "god of this world", satan, is an evil master who has you as his slave. He doesn't want you to get free. So, he lies to you and deceives you so that you will not obey the gospel- because he knows that if you obey the gospel you will be set free from his power and from the power of sin.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and **were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.** (Ephesians 2:1-3) Before you are saved, you cannot be successfully "taught" not to sin. You are a sinner by nature. To be set free from the power of sin, your nature needs to be changed.*

When you become obedient to the gospel, you are saved and you become a new creation. God gives you a new, holy nature and you are set free from the power of sin. You are no longer a slave to sin.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV)

Before you are saved, you are a slave to sin.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18 KJV)

Sin is always destructive. There are always consequences to pay.

Have you become obedient to the gospel? Have you accepted Christ as your Savior and Lord? If not, then you are a slave to sin and to Satan. Today you can be free. Just ask Jesus.

If you have accepted Jesus, you are a new creation. Like we just read, you have been set free from sin and you are now a servant of righteousness, a servant of God. Sin is no longer your master. Satan is no longer your master. Jesus is now your master. However, you are still tempted, right?

Does being tempted mean you are not saved? No. It is normal for a believer to be tempted. That old master still wants to try to control you and destroy your life. And you still have the ability to choose to accept that temptation and sin. So he tempts you, to try to make you a slave again.

So the important question is:

How should you deal with temptation?

1.) ADMIT THAT IT IS REAL

Temptation is very real. It can be incredibly strong. We are new creations but sin is always crouching at our door, wanting to drag us down. And that sin can be very seductive. The writer of Hebrews, writing to believers, speaks of *“the sin which doth so easily beset us”* (Hebrews 12:1) He also says, *“exhort one another daily... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* (Hebrews 3:13)

Some believers don't want to admit that they are tempted, because they think that it will make them look less holy. I admit freely that I am tempted. I am tempted frequently. Sometimes that temptation is incredibly strong. Will you admit that you too are tempted frequently? It is no use pretending that you are not tempted. You are tempted. You will be tempted until the day you go to heaven. That is normal. Learn to deal with it.

2) REMEMBER WHERE TEMPTATION COMES FROM

What is temptation and where does it come from?

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:13-15 KJV) God does not tempt you. The Bible says you are tempted by your own lusts. What does that mean? It means this. You are a new creation; you have a new, clean, pure heart and spirit. When you go to heaven, you will receive a new, transformed body. But meanwhile you live in a body which has not yet been redeemed, and which still contains carnal sinful desires. These carnal desires are what the Bible means when it says, “your own lusts”. It also calls them, “the law of sin”.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²²For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:21-23) The law of sin still lives in your members. It wants to seduce you and take you captive. Enter Satan. He desires to destroy you. He hates the fact that you love God and that your life speaks to others of the reality of God. So he tempts you to sin by trying to entice you to indulge the carnal sinful desires of your flesh.

Satan hates you. **You must understand that.** Jesus said that Satan is a thief who has one purpose in your life- to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10) It is important to realize that Satan is the author of every temptation. He is the one who whispers in your ear that it would be just fine to have sex outside of your marriage. He is the one who tells you that it won't do you any harm to get a little drunk and forget about your worries for a time. He is the one who lies to you that it is OK to hear God's will and then disobey it. Remember, he is the father of lies, so he is very talented at lying and cheating and deceiving you. He seductively presents you with a sin that you have the ability to commit, and he tries to make that sin look so enjoyable and wonderful so that you will do it and not think about the consequences or think about the destructiveness of what you are doing. But sin is always destructive. There are always consequences to pay. It can destroy your walk with God, your peace, your family, your health, even your life. Temptation is like a candy coating on a deadly poisonous pill.

When you are tempted, don't be flattered. Remember who is the author of the temptation. Satan absolutely hates you.

He is a liar and a thief, and he comes only to kill, steal, and destroy. The word, "temptation" basically means, Satan trying to persuade you to sin so that he can steal from you. The temptation is very attractive (that is why it is called temptation) but the sin is incredibly destructive. Satan fears the power of your testimony so he will send temptations to try to destroy your testimony, destroy your peace and joy, destroy your family, and destroy you.

3) REMEMBER THAT IT IS NORMAL TO BE TEMPTED

One of Satan's biggest lies is to make you think that if you are being tempted, there is something wrong with you and that you are sinning by being tempted. Then you feel discouraged and defeated and want to give up the fight, because you feel like you have already failed. Please understand that being tempted does not mean you are sinning.

Remember, "temptation" means satan trying to persuade you to sin so that he can steal from you. He does this by putting all kinds of thoughts and ideas in your head. Those are temptations. Temptation only becomes sin when you begin to begin to accept those ideas and enjoy them and indulge them. Learn to draw the line between temptation and sin.

It is normal to be tempted. It is not something strange or rare. Paul tells us, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man* (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV) In other words, whatever temptation you are experiencing, some other believer has already experienced.

Jesus was the perfect son of God. He was also human and had the ability to sin. He never did sin, but he was tempted in every way, like us. *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* (Hebrews 4:15 KJV) Jesus was tempted in every way, but remained without sin, so obviously temptation and sin are two different things. It is normal for believers to be tempted. Remember that everything that you are tempted by, Jesus was also tempted by.

4) REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:11 KJV)

We are in a war, correct? We have an enemy who wants to destroy us and one of his most powerful weapons is temptation. Don't wait for the temptations to come before you start preparing yourself for battle. Like a good soldier, prepare yourself beforehand. Do this by remembering who you are. Remind yourself often that you are a new creation in Christ and that you are no longer a slave to sin. You do not have to obey the temptation. Renew your mind with these truths constantly and you will find that you are stronger when temptation comes.

Of course satan will lie to you and tell you that you are not a new creation and that you are still a slave to sin. He does this to weaken you so that you will give up and sin. Fight those lies by reminding yourself of who you are in Christ.

5) BE IN FELLOWSHIP

You will be strengthened in the fight through your fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³*But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* (Hebrews 3:12-13 KJV) *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:* ²⁵*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* (Hebrews 10:24-25 KJV) We need each other. We are all tempted. We need to help each other overcome temptation by exhorting, encouraging and challenging one another daily to keep trusting and obeying God. We can only do that if we are in each other's lives.

6) SAY NO TO THE FLESH and OFFER YOURSELF TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

You are a new creation and you now live by God's life. However, for that life to express itself in your life, you have to die daily to your carnal will and desires. This is what Jesus meant when He said that if you want to be His disciple, you have to daily pick up your cross and follow Him. Again, like a good soldier, you have to obey your commander, who is Jesus.

When temptation comes, you have a choice to make.

**Being tempted does not mean
you are sinning.**

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Romans 6:12-13)

Remind yourself often that you are a new creation in Christ and that you are no longer a slave to sin.

You are free from the slavery of sin. But daily you must choose to present the members of your body, including your mind, to God, and not to sin. In those moments of temptation, make the right choice. Yield to God and not to the sin.

But perhaps you are thinking, "Oh, but it is so difficult to do that!" It is difficult. But not impossible.

7) NO TEMPTATION HAS SEIZED YOU THAT YOU CANNOT BEAR

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18 KJV) You are not alone. You may suffer while being tempted, it may feel like agony, having to resist and say no. But Jesus understands how tough it is to resist the temptation, because He also suffered while being tempted. Therefore He is able to help you when you are tempted.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV) God says that he will not allow us to be tempted more than we can bear. You are never tempted more than you can bear. God understands your weaknesses. He allows you to be tempted. But never more than you personally can bear. How does he ensure that you can bear the temptation? He **always, always** gives you a way out, a way to escape. If you do not take that way of escape, you will fall into sin. Look for the way of escape, and take it.

8) FLEE, RUN AWAY!

Sometimes we just have to flee. The Bible uses the word "Flee" a number of times in connection with temptation and sin.

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22 KJV)

*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹But **flee** from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:10-11 NASB)*

*Wherefore, my dearly beloved, **flee** from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14)*

***Flee** fornication. (1 Corinthians 6:18)*

What does "flee" mean? It means to escape out of danger, to swiftly run away from something without stopping to ponder or think it through. This is what Joseph did when presented with temptation:

*And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. ²And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. ⁵And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. ⁶And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured. ⁷And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. ⁸But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; ⁹There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? ¹⁰And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. ¹¹And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. ¹²And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and **fled**, and got him out. (Genesis 39:1-12 KJV)*

This is how we should respond when we are in a place of strong temptation. We should simply flee.

9) BE WISE ABOUT WHAT SITUATIONS YOU PUT YOURSELF IN

Satan will always find ways to tempt us. But there are some temptations that we can and should avoid.

We all have different strengths and weaknesses. Some of these depend on things like our gender, our personal past, the kind of society we live in, our characters, and our level of maturity in Christ. Satan will play on our weaknesses and tempt us according to our weaknesses.

For example, if you were an alcoholic before coming to Christ, you will be strongly tempted to drink. Satan will tell you, "Just a little won't hurt you..."

If you never felt accepted as a child, you will be tempted to seek approval from others no matter what you have to do to earn it.

If you are a man, no matter how mature you are in Christ, at some time you will be tempted to sexually desire a woman you are not married to.

If you are a woman, you will be tempted to look for a sense of security in something or someone outside of God, and if you are married, outside of your relationship with your husband.

You know what your areas of weakness are. Don't deliberately put yourself in situations where you know you will be tempted in ways that will be difficult to handle.

For example, the Bible says *Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."* (1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV) There are certain people you should not spend time with. Equally, there are certain things you should not watch on television. There are certain places you should not go to. . There are certain thoughts that you should not dwell upon. Be wise. Know your weaknesses, trust God to lead you into strength in those areas, and meanwhile, don't court temptation.

10) AND IF YOU FAIL

If you fail, repent, get up and go on. Your failure need not destroy you. Repentance means that you recognize your sin, you admit where you failed, and you trust God to enable you to overcome that temptation in the future.

As a servant of Christ, you are a new creation. You have been set free from the power of sin. Keep reminding yourself of that. Satan will tempt you, but you have the freedom and the ability to overcome that temptation. Encourage each other in the Lord. Feed on His word. Moment by moment, make those right choices. Remember, you are not alone.

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MINISTERIO LA FUENTE

PO Box 690726
HOUSTON
TX 77269-0726, USA

Telephone: 1-281-733-2496

Email: info@ministeriolafuente.org

Website: www.ministeriolafuente.org



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"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK" - JESUS (JOHN 7:37)