

Overcoming Temptation

Lesson 02 of the series, "Spiritual Warfare"

A. We will all be tempted by the devil.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Matthew 6:13 (NIV)

1. The devil tempted Eve.

"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees." Genesis 3:1-8 (NLT)

2. The devil tempted Jesus.

"Then Jesus... was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, change this stone into a loaf of bread." But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me." Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'" When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came. Luke 4:1-13 (NLT)

B. We must learn Satan's strategies so we can be prepared for his temptations.

"... so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes." 2 Corinthians 2:11 (NLT)

1. Satan tempts us to satisfy legitimate desires in the wrong way or at the wrong time.

"Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death." James 1:14-15 (NLT)

2. Satan lies to us to help us rationalize sin and he also accuses us after we sin to keep us from God.

"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John 8:44 (NIV)

"...the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan ...the accuser of our brothers and sisters... accuses them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:9-10 (NLT)

3. Satan is always waiting for his next opportunity to tempt us.

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

C. We must put on God's spiritual armor so we can resist the devil and stand firm.

"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." Ephesians 6:13-18 (NLT)

1. We must put on the belt of truth.

"I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one... Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:15,17 (NLT)

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32 (NLT)

2. We must pick up the shield of faith.

"...faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love." Romans 8:38 (NLT)

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

3. We must use the sword of the Spirit, the Bible.

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

4. We must pray.

"Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Mark 14:38 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Describe a time in your life when God showed you a way out of a tempting situation.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-7. If you could talk to Eve face to face what would you say to her? Do you condemn her for eating the forbidden fruit? Why? Why not?
3. Read Luke 4:1-13. How did Jesus resist the temptations of the devil? What can we learn from his experience in the wilderness?
4. Read Philippians 4:8 & John 8:31-32. Why is truth so important in resisting temptation?
5. What is faith? How does our faith shield us from the attacks and temptations of Satan?
6. Why do we often blame others when we sin? Why is it hard for most of us to admit that we give in to temptations?
7. Read Ephesians 6:18-19. Spend some time as a group praying for each other. Share with each other some areas of temptation in which you feel vulnerable.
8. Discuss the following quotations:

"And then she understood the devilish cunning of the enemy's plan. By mixing a little truth with it they had made their lie far stronger." C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*

"There will be no "knights in shining armor" in God's kingdom; our armor will have many dings and dents. No, no perfect Hollywood heroes will ride to save the day; just wearied saints to look to God and, in weakness, find Christ's strength. This, indeed, is the essence of God's kingdom: divine greatness manifest in common people." Francis Frangipane