



The Good News

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Understanding and Fighting Temptation

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Since the beginning of time, man has been at the mercy of his own impulses and deepest desires. Ever since Adam and Eve, man has known what temptation is and how difficult it can be to overcome. Two thousand years ago the Word came and delivered to man not only the means of obtaining forgiveness from the countless falls to temptation, but also the knowledge of how to conquer temptation. Temptations come in many shapes and sizes, assorted flavors and aromas, yet God's Word has equipped us with the knowledge and ability to see past the temptation and root out the strength of temptation – our own sinful desires. In purifying our heart and seeking God's righteousness, we negate the strength of temptation – a gullible and disloyal heart. Let us consider the following points about temptation and take from them the knowledge that will always help us to overcome temptation.

Never become overconfident – I Cor. 10:11-12 – Our context is communicating the sins and mistakes of the Israelites as they often tested God by worshipping idols and falling to sexual immorality. Paul says that *"...these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition..."* The term *"admonition"* literally means *"instruction"* but carries with it a serious undertone more properly defined as *"warning"*. Paul then extends the warning by saying, *"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."* It is important to never become over-confident, thinking that temptation cannot find root in our hearts and minds. The moment that we think we are impervious is the moment the devil will find a foothold in our heart. Yet, we must be confident that temptation can be overcome and avoided with God's help.

There is nothing new under the sun – I Cor. 10:13 – *"No temptation has overtaken you except such*

as is common to man..." These words from Paul carry a double application: 1) We will never face a temptation that has never been faced before – this carries its own encouragement as we consider all the ways in which we are tempted every day. While our situations and personal lives are all different, we will never encounter a "new" temptation, which leads to our second application, 2) All temptation can and has been overcome; at some point in the history of God's faithful people, our spiritual ancestors faced and conquered every temptation that we face today. Whether the temptation is sexual, prideful, or hateful in nature, some faithful person has at some point conquered it. Obviously, Christ, who was in all points tempted such as we are, is the ultimate example and motivator of this fact.

God cares! – I Cor. 10:13 – Paul goes on to tell us that God is faithful, and will always provide a way of escape out of every temptation that we may be able to bear it. First, it is important to note that God tempts no man (Jas. 1), but does allow us to be tested that our faith will be made stronger. When we are tested, we are promised that God will provide some avenue to defeat it. It can be very difficult to define this at times, as God's providence, among other means, can be at work without us realizing it. But one thing is certain: we will never escape the temptation if we are not looking for a way out. We must seek out the means of escaping that God provides. Otherwise, we will fall victim to our own desires and lust will bring forth sin.

Let us always seek to overcome temptation, using the knowledge God has given us to strengthen our minds to think through temptations rather than simply falling to them.