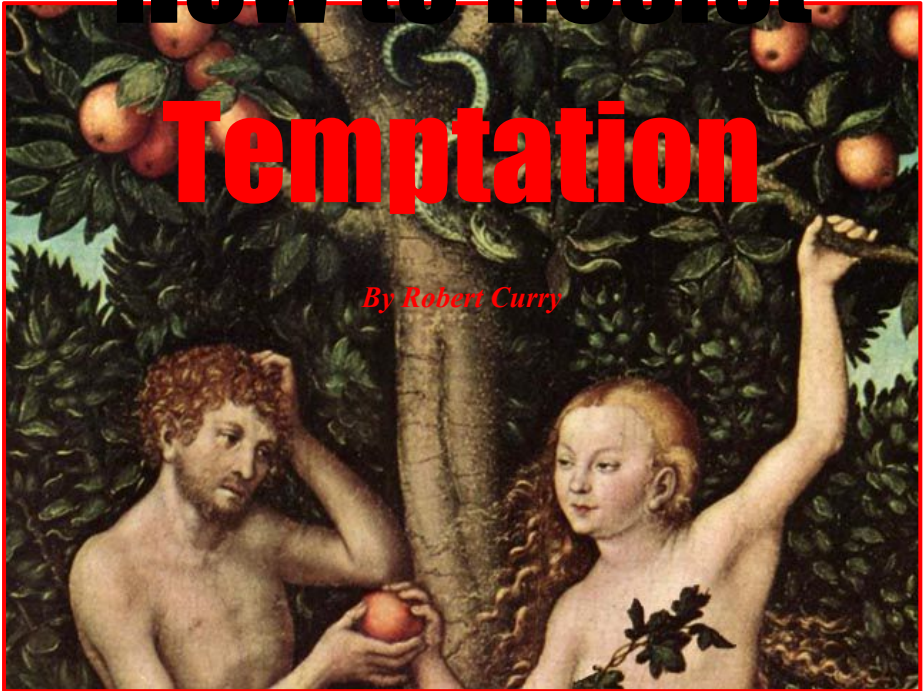


# How to Resist

# Temptation

*By Robert Curry*





“I can resist anything except temptation.” That candid admission of how easy we slip into sin’s commission is famously attributed to Oscar Wilde, an Irish playwright.

His solution to get rid of temptation: “give in to it!”

How can we resist temptation? It’s too important to settle for a Wilde guess!

What’s the answer to temptation? “No.”

Good answer but hope that’s worked better for you than it has for me! You know the feeling ... it gets so discouraging to give in, give in, to the same old sin.

For over a year now I’ve been wanting to piece together

## **The complete process given in the Bible for how to resist temptation**

I did this for myself, but hope I can tempt you to want this information for yourself. We need to study these scriptures, pray about them, meditate on them, fast about them and resolve to do them.

- **Diligent faithful daily mindset**

The foundational key is the regular mindset we have day in and day out. We want the mind of Christ (Php. 4:5). We bring “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

We pray as Jesus taught, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [the evil one]” (Matt. 6:13).

A four-year-old boy learning the Lord’s Prayer recited “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some email.”

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. So he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 100 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES." When he



returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

All of us can say: "Lead us not into temptation. I can find the way myself!"

Being renewed in the Spirit daily (Eph. 4:23) will keep the flesh in check. When we set our heart on the things above (Col. 3:1), then our interests in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16) diminish. Being transformed by the renewing of our minds will help us not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2).

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. Einstein is credited with using his brain capacity more than any other human—about 10%. This seems to be the maximum achievable through the Spirit in Man (1 Cor. 2:11)—the spirit that distinguishes humans from animals and means that we are not animals as is often erroneously claimed. Perhaps the missing 90% will be achieved when we have the "fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19) and are made 100% Spirit in resurrection.

For now daily we need the Spirit-led mindset that makes us so occupied with doing God's ways that we don't have time to be tempted to flout them.

Next we must:

- **Consider the consequences**

Sin caused Jesus to suffer and die and it earns eternal death for us. We'd be doomed if grace were earned!

Sin adds grief, subtracts faith, multiplies trouble and divides brethren! Thanks to thoroughly studying God's law, and having His Holy Spirit to love it and desire to fulfill it even in the Spirit of the law, we know what sin is and passionately want no part of it. To have victory over temptation, we need to consider the negative consequences. Yes, but *far more powerful is dwelling on the wonderful results of doing the right.*

The passing pleasures (Heb. 11:25) of sexual sin cannot compare with the steady day-in, day-out joy of a happy marriage with God at the center of it!

Powerful is *the joy of pleasing God!* We do not want to provoke, grieve, tempt and limit the Holy One of Israel (Psa. 78:40-41)!

When I was going out-of-state to college, my mother was worried about me drinking. I promised her I would wait until age 21 to ever have any alcohol. Doing that to make my mother happy was such a stronger pull than being tempted to drink.

In one class the professor asked for reasons to avoid pre-marital sex, and the class dutifully contributed the usual penalties for messing up. I was barely staying awake. The professor jolted me to attention when he turned the age-old temptation problem in a completely positive direction.

*The reason to avoid pre-marital sex is so you can have a wonderful wedding and night! You would never know what you denied yourself if you didn't make it to that glorious day.*



Our mindset must be to avoid bad consequences and pursue good results that make God, mate, family and others happy. But we also must physically avoid sin.

- **Don't go near her house!**

Proverbs says whatever sin might be the issue, don't go down her path (Prov. 4:14-15).

If we want to be in God's House of resurrected sons, don't go near "The House of the Rising Sun!" We have to choose the right Doors.

Computer users are advised to keep their computers in public areas of the home. Tabloid alert in the grocery checkout lines!



If you can't resist gluttony with ice cream, chuckle when Erma Bombeck says "If I had it to do over, I'd eat more ice cream!" But don't keep Haagen Dazs in your frig!

In spite of all attempts to keep a lid on it, suddenly temptation's in front of you! And starting to melt if you don't lick it!

But when all evasive maneuvers fail and a dogfight ensues:

- **The most important step I keep overlooking**

God's not tempting you (James 1:13-15). We are tempted by the *three hissing S's: Self, Satan and Society*. But we absolutely need God's help to resist temptation from these three sources.

In Matt. 26:41 Jesus advises us to keep watching and praying that we enter not into temptation, and He set the example. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus did not rely on Himself though He was God in the flesh (John 5:30). He prayed for one hour, then He prayed again, and

then again—and He would have kept on praying—until He had His will in total submission to God’s.

Remember the popular TV show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” Regis Philbin would ask at the moment of highest tension: “Is that your final answer?” Jesus’ answer to His final test must be our answer in temptation: *“Your will be done, not mine!”*

On the show, a contestant could call on a lifeline. Jesus is our lifeline, and we must call on Him at the moment of temptation.

What makes us think we can resist on our own power! Too often it’s because we don’t really want to turn away. At this moment of weakness we want to do this! An idol we want to smash when in our diligent faithful mindset—demands we bow down.

It’s sad to admit but sometimes: Yes, I should cry out to God for His help! Wait!—not yet. Let me just stick my toes in the water. I’ll stop when I see the line in the shifting sand. What riptide?

In “The Pattern of Failure—Lessons from 246 Pastors Who Fell Within 2 Year Period,” Garrett Kell warns, “If you flirt with sin, you will fall into sin. Sin’s slope is slippery. The longer you walk along the edge of the abyss, the more likely that your feet will slip.... The men in the study put themselves in dangerous situations again and again.”



At the first hint you are being tempted, immediately cry out to God! This is the step in the temptation process where I usually fail.

## • **What Christ did to resist temptation**

In Matthew 4 when being tempted by Satan, in every case Jesus did not hesitate, reason or listen to angels debating on His shoulder.

There was a poor country pastor dismayed by his wife splurging on a \$350 dress.

--Wife: The Devil whispered to me “You look great in that dress. You should buy it!”

--Pastor: At first temptation you should have commanded “Get behind me, Satan!”

--Wife: I did but then he said it looks great from the back too!

Jesus did not discuss with Satan!

Satan: What’s wrong with you making yourself a little bread? I can rustle you up some Wonder Bread—you wonder if it’s bread!

Jesus decisively answered Satan’s lures with “It is written ...” Jesus knew His Bible! He inspired every word of it (2 Tim. 3:16), He lived it, and He wielded it (Heb. 4:12)!

Psa. 119:11 instructs “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” The Bible notes Satan’s three best shots at Christ. At the end of the third temptation, Jesus commands “away with you Satan!”

But Satan did not wait until the end of 40 days. Luke 4:2 says Jesus was tempted 40 days.

Satan must have thrown some other tempting offers: “Hey, aren’t you the one who said it’s not good for a man to be alone? Three-and-a-half years with those fishermen is gonna get old real fast!”

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was *in all points tempted [tested] as we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-15).





Peter warns us, “Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith knowing that *the same sufferings* are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

Paul warns us, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man but God is faithful, who *will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able*, but with the temptation will also make *the way of escape*, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

It seems like God has more confidence in us than we do! God allowed Satan to tempt Job but with restrictions.

- **Flee!**

In verse 14 above Paul added “Therefore, my beloved, flee from *idolatry*.”

What tempts you regularly ... is it an idol for you? Anything that comes between you and God? Anything you put before God in time, money and priority? We all have some idols to smash!

The classic story about fleeing temptation is in Gen. 39:9. Joseph was stuck in Potiphar’s palace. He did what he could to stay far from Mrs. Potiphar and told her what she had in mind would be sin. When she grabbed him by his tunic, Joseph wriggled out like Houdini and fled!

When you flee, leave no forwarding address!

OK, now you can resist anything!

You can ... but when you fail (1 John 1:8), God is ready to forgive (Psa. 86:5).

So there is one more step in the process the Bible gives for resisting temptation:



- **Yield to God’s forgiveness—never resist Him!**

Temptation exposes our real selves. C.S. Lewis observed “No man knows how bad he is until he has tried very hard to be good.”

Temptation exposes man’s feebleness and discloses God’s faithfulness.

Temptation helps us grow in humility. Turning from self to Christ.


Temptation helps us get stronger. You won’t overcome the full force of temptation until you hang in there long enough.

Tempted is translated from the Greek word *PEIRAZO* meaning “to test, try, prove.”

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to is eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you” (1 Pet. 5:10).

“To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 24 *New International Version*).

**How to resist temptation in a nut shell:** God living in you.

  
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