

# Facing Temptation Like Jesus

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## God's Word for Our Victory Over Temptation

### Doubt God's Love:

#### **Romans 5:6-8 (New International Version)**

**6**You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7**Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. **8**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### **1 John 3:16 (New International Version)**

**16**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

#### **2 Samuel 23:5 (New International Version)**

**5** "Is not my house right with God?  
Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant,  
arranged and secured in every part?  
Will he not bring to fruition my salvation  
and grant me my every desire?"

#### **Psalms 57:2-3 (New International Version)**

**2** I cry out to God Most High,  
to God, who fulfills {his purpose} for me.  
**3** He sends from heaven and saves me,  
rebuking those who hotly pursue me;  
Selah  
God sends his love and his faithfulness.

#### **Isaiah 43:1-3 (New International Version) *Israel's Only Savior***

**1** But now, this is what the LORD says—  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have summoned you by name; you are mine."  
**2** When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and when you pass through the rivers,  
they will not sweep over you.  
When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;  
the flames will not set you ablaze.

**3** For I am the LORD, your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;  
I give Egypt for your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in your stead.

## **Disciples' Strength Against Temptation:**

### **1 Corinthians 10:13 (New International Version)**

**13**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.

### **James 4:7 (New International Version)**

**7**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

### **Psalms 119:11 (New International Version)**

**11** I have hidden your word in my heart  
that I might not sin against you.

## **Doubt God's Goodness or Care:**

### **Jeremiah 31:3 (New International Version)**

**3** The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying:  
"I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

### **Psalms 103:1-5 (New International Version) *Of David.***

- 1** Praise the LORD, O my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- 2** Praise the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits-
- 3** who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases,
- 4** who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and compassion,
- 5** who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

### **Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)**

**8**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9**not by works, so that no one can boast.

### **Matthew 7:11 (New International Version)**

**11**If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

### **Against Fear:**

#### **Psalm 27:1 (New International Version) *Of David.***

**1** The LORD is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?

#### **Isaiah 41:10 (New International Version)**

**10** So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

#### **Romans 8:15 (New International Version)**

**15**For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

#### **Hebrews 13:5-6 (New International Version)**

**5**Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,  
"Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you."**6**So we say with confidence,  
"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.  
What can man do to me?"

### **Against Greed:**

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:10 (New International Version)**

**10** Whoever loves money never has money enough;  
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.  
This too is meaningless.

#### **1 Timothy 6:6-10 (New International Version)**

**6**But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7**For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8**But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **9**People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

### **Luke 12:15 (New International Version)**

**15**Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

### **Against Sexual Promiscuity:**

#### **Proverbs 6:23-35 (New International Version)**

- 23** For these commands are a lamp,  
this teaching is a light,  
and the corrections of discipline  
are the way to life,  
**24** keeping you from the immoral woman,  
from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.  
**25** Do not lust in your heart after her beauty  
or let her captivate you with her eyes,  
**26** for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread,  
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.  
**27** Can a man scoop fire into his lap  
without his clothes being burned?  
**28** Can a man walk on hot coals  
without his feet being scorched?  
**29** So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;  
no one who touches her will go unpunished.  
**30** Men do not despise a thief if he steals  
to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.  
**31** Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,  
though it costs him all the wealth of his house.  
**32** But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment;  
whoever does so destroys himself.  
**33** Blows and disgrace are his lot,  
and his shame will never be wiped away;  
**34** for jealousy arouses a husband's fury,  
and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.  
**35** He will not accept any compensation;  
he will refuse the bribe, however great it is.

#### **1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (New International Version)**

**18**Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. **19**Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20**you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

### **Against Anger:**

#### **Proverbs 29:11 (New International Version)**

- 11** A fool gives full vent to his anger,  
but a wise man keeps himself under control.

### **Proverbs 29:22 (New International Version)**

**22** An angry man stirs up dissension,  
and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

### **Psalm 86:15 (New International Version)**

**15** But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,  
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

### **Ephesians 4:26 (New International Version)**

**26**"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

### **Against Anxiety:**

#### **Isaiah 26:3 (New International Version)**

**3** You will keep in perfect peace  
him whose mind is steadfast,  
because he trusts in you.

#### **John 14:27 (New International Version)**

**27**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

### **Against Financial Trouble:**

#### **Psalm 23:1 (New International Version) *A psalm of David.***

**1** The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

#### **Malachi 3:10 (New International Version)**

**10** Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

#### **Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)**

**33**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

#### **Luke 6:38 (New International Version)**

**38**Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

## Trying to Quit Smoking:

### **1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (New International Version)**

**16**Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?  
**17**If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

## Trying to Quit Drinking:

### **Isaiah 41:10 (New International Version)**

**10** So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

### **Proverbs 23:29-35 (New International Version)**

**29** Who has woe? Who has sorrow?  
Who has strife? Who has complaints?  
Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?

**30** Those who linger over wine,  
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.

**31** Do not gaze at wine when it is red,  
when it sparkles in the cup,  
when it goes down smoothly!

**32** In the end it bites like a snake  
and poisons like a viper.

**33** Your eyes will see strange sights  
and your mind imagine confusing things.

**34** You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,  
lying on top of the rigging.

**35** "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!  
They beat me, but I don't feel it!  
When will I wake up  
so I can find another drink?"

### **Ephesians 5:18 (New International Version)**

**18**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

### **Philippians 3:13-14 (New International Version)**

**13**Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14**I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Do you think, feel, and act like Jesus? This is the theme of our current focus on applying God's truth and Word to life. Last week we looked at Jesus challenge his followers to the difficult exercise of identifying the ways the desires of our hands, feet and eyes cause us to stumble short of the life Jesus intends for us. We heard Jesus call us to take steps of freedom to cut off the influence of those weaknesses, desires, and sins on our lives.

Today Jesus is going to help us meet that challenge. Today we are going to look at the way Jesus won victory in his battle against temptation and evil. Please stand as we learn from Jesus as we read Luke 4:1-13.

1Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. 3The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" 5The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours." 8Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" 9The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 12Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Did he hear the howl of hyenas? Did he go to sleep with the chirp of crickets? Did the sunrise songs of birds serve as his alarm clock? What sounds do you hear when you are all alone for 40 days in the wilderness?

Messages, voices, and words are central to the beginning of the life of Jesus. The night of Jesus' birth God sends angels to proclaim, "God's favor rests on mankind." As teenager when he is questioned by his parents on why he separated himself from them on a trip to Jerusalem he asks them, 'Didn't you know I needed to be in MY Father's house?' Before Jesus begins his public ministry God the Father God sends word to cousin John the Baptist. 'John leave the wilderness. Go to the people of Israel. Preach repentance from and forgiveness for sins. John prepare the people for Jesus' coming. As Jesus steps out of obscurity into public ministry, the Father empowers and speaks to Jesus through baptism with these great words, "You are My Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." What would it do you your heart to hear your Father say, "I love you. I am well pleased with you?"

Jesus moves from the blessing of these great words to 40 days of an intentional time of testing. He is sent for 40 days of solitude in the wilderness. He does not go alone. Luke tells us He is full of the Holy Spirit. He is connected to God. He hears the voice of His Father. The Scripture does not give details about the whole of these 40 days. But I wonder if for a part of that time if the Father let his direct voice go quiet for a time. Did Jesus experience a heavenly silence in the wilderness?

One of the pervasive attitudes of our culture is to quietly “wink wink” at people who hear voices? Though we joke about it let us not forget that persons suffering from some mental disease and disorder have to fight through symptoms of hearing voices. But can we also agree that a great part of mental, emotional and spiritual health is to learn to wisely listen or to not listen to the variety of voices all of us can hear as fully mentally healthy persons. A friend and counselor of mine has given me great help in thinking through the variety of voices that speak in our lives.

One voice we carry is the voice of our heart. The voice of our heart can be full of joy, laughter, curiosity, love, celebration, and peace. The voice of our heart can also break with sadness, pain, bitterness, and hurt. Some find it easy to hear their heart as they listen for the voice of the child in themselves. Seventy year old grandfathers who strip down to their skivvies, jump into the lake, and battle their 12 year grandsons in a water fight listen to the child voice of their heart. Sixty-five year old widows, who dust off an old Chubby Checker album, so they can vacuum the carpet and “Do the Twist” hear the voice of their heart.

Our heart can help us live in the joy and fun of the moment but our child can impulsively lead us into trouble. Often our child/heart voice is closely tied to our bodies. Sometimes you can’t help but yell loudly as your body is pumped full of adrenaline while you stomp and make noise at Lady Raider Basketball game. If your body and mind are exhausted from pulling an 8 hour study marathon, the voice of your heart will be tired and distracted.

Our heart child has a voice which speaks. Our child also has ears. Our heart is made to listen to God. Our heart loves to hear God say, ‘I love you with an everlasting love.’ ‘Call on me and I will listen.’ ‘Draw near to me and I will draw near to you.’ ‘I am slow to anger.’ ‘I abound with mercy.’ ‘I am faithful.’ ‘I forgive you.’ “I have gifted you to lead.”

Along side the child-like voice of the heart we can also hear the voice of the wise person in us. The wise person sounds like the logical and reasonable thinking of our mind. The wise person strives to make good decisions and manage the complexity of life. My counselor friend sees our wise person as a combination of our mind and spirit. God talks to our wise person with His Spirit.

God speaks in two very important ways to our wise person. Just as he speaks to our heart God speaks words of relationship to our wise person. ‘I am your God. I love you. You are my creation. However, you have rebelled against me. You need my forgiveness. I am a merciful God. I will be faithful. God also speaks commands and truth to our wise person. “Love me with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” ‘The wages of sin is death. ‘The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ “If you love me you will obey me.”

Wise persons discover that God speaks through His written word the Bible. God asks wise persons to learn, meditate and even memorize the Bible. God asks us to discover the power of His word as we apply His truth and directions to the choices and experiences of life.

We can also hear the voice of our conscience. God gives us our conscience as the capacity to hear and respond to the rules of life we hear. “You shall not murder.” ‘Be joyful always and pray continually.” “Love you neighbor.’ ‘Love your enemies.’ “Flee from sexual immorality.’ Our conscience speaks up when we disregard or disobey rules. Our conscience speaks up for those we hurt. Our conscience speaks up to protect our heart. Our conscience speaks along side of God to us.

Jesus enters into the solitude of 40 days in the wilderness listening to his heart, his wise person, his conscience, and the voice of his Father through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine his wise person talking to God? ‘Father, am I hearing you right? You have empowered me to preach good news to the poor. You send me to proclaim freedom for prisoners. Father, am I just to talk with poor people? Father which prison? Father what about those who are walking around but in the jail of their own shame?’ Can you hear his heart talking to his wise person? Did you see the spectacular reds and pinks at sunrise this morning? The Father painted that just for me this morning. Even in the wilderness He is blessing me. Is the Father great or what?

Amidst the wonderful sounds of His creation, Jesus hears an unwelcome voice. Satan shatters the solitude with that accusing question, “If you are the Son of God turn these stones to bread.” Jesus is faced with a critical choice. To which voice will Jesus listen? When you are tempted to which voice do you listen?

The question that Satan uses shows how powerful a force and how tricky a weapon temptation can be as a foe. Temptation speaks to both the heart and the wise person of Jesus. I think the question is first and foremost aimed at Jesus’ heart. He has been without food for 40 days. His body is experiencing a real emptiness at the place of a God-given need. Physical need and emptiness can make the heart vulnerable.

When a God-given need is not being met not only our body but our heart begins to cry out. 'I'm hungry. I am empty. Our heart asks the wise person, "When are you going to paying attention to my need?" The heart can begin to talk to God. 'God why am I having to be empty in this place? God this is hard. I don't like hard.'

Satan, in a sneaky way, tempts Jesus' heart and child to question the care of His Father. Can you hear the subplot behind the question? If you are the son of God why did your loving Father leave you alone for 40 days of starvation? Does he really understand how hungry you are? If he really cared he wouldn't leave you alone. You need to feed that hunger. You can feed that hunger. Stop the pain by turning those stones into bread.

Satan attacks Jesus' wise person by trying to make him doubt the truth that God had already given. The Father clearly proclaimed to Jesus and the world, 'This is my Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.'" The Father had already baptized Jesus into public ministry as His Son sent to save the world.

Satan shoots an arrow of doubt at the mind of Jesus. He hopes to shatter his confidence in His Father's truthfulness. Satan knows that if Jesus doubts the word of His Father he will question whether he can trust His Father. If Jesus loses trust in His Father He will turn to his own choice and own action to met the need of his hunger.

How does Jesus respond to the arrow of doubt and accusation from Satan? The simple answer is that Jesus quotes Scripture to Satan. Jesus' response is deeper and stronger than just simply quoting Scripture.

Jesus, in his heart, chooses to trust His Father's love and care. Jesus, in the mind of his wise person, chooses to believe the voice of His Father rather than the voice of Satan. He so trusts and believes that Jesus lets His Father speak for him. Satan if you want an answer to your question talk to my Father. The Father tells Jesus and Satan, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'

How does quoting that verse show us that Jesus' heart and mind are choosing to trust the Father? Jesus quotes from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. This is the story of the journey of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt through the wilderness of Sinai to the Promised Land of Israel. Just like Jesus, the people were in the wilderness, they were hungry and without food. Jesus read that they cried out to God. Jesus read that the next morning and every morning while they were in the wilderness they awoke to see the desert floor covered with that strange morning bread called manna. Jesus read that if the manna was not eaten in the day that it was gathered it would spoil and be inedible. Jesus read that the need of God's sons and daughters was met with provision from the

mysterious unseen hand of God. Yet the Father asked them to trust that in the next and the next and the next days their need for that day would be met.

Jesus, though he does not see it in the moment of his temptation, trusts His Father to meet the need of His hunger. I believe that Jesus trusts so deeply that even if the physical hunger remains He believes the fullness of the Spirit of His Father will meet His need.

Jesus is a great model for how we can respond to the temptations of the flesh we face. What are temptations of the flesh? These are the choices we face when a God-given human need expresses itself in our heart and our body. Will we meet this need in the manner and the timing that God has set or will we meet the need in the manner and timing we choose?

What do we do when we are hungry? Do we learn God to eat a sensible variety of foods in amounts that meet the basic physical needs of our body? Do we discover from God's word the freedom to joyfully throw a big party to celebrate people, relationships, and the goodness of God? Does food become for us the way we try to fill up emotional or spiritual holes in our heart? Do we use food to extravagantly prove to ourselves and others how wealthy and successful we have made ourselves?

What do we do with the need for emotional and physical intimacy? Do we protect and honor God, others and ourselves by developing healthy friendships with both men and women? Do we celebrate our sexuality in the life giving bonds of a committed one man and one woman marriage? Do we cheapen and use sex and others by acting out before we are married? Do we divorce the physical from spiritual and relational and get lost in the pit of sexual fantasy? Do we put self above God's call for faithfulness as we step outside our marriage for what we call a little fun on the side?

No matter the temptation. No matter the severity of the need. No matter how deep the pain in the heart of the child. No matter the question of the temptation. Victory is won as we make two choices. We choose to trust God's love. We choose to walk the path that God has laid out to meet the need of our bodies, heart and soul. Are you making these two choices in life?

Jesus example of quoting Scripture also gives us a usable tool in the face of temptation. Remembering and quoting Scripture actually has two dynamics of power. First Scripture empowers us to trust because scripture teaches us what God has already said and shown to be true about our life and the choice of the temptation. Jesus learned from God's wisdom and God's history that "Man does not live by bread alone" because the God's men eat not because they provide and make their food. God's men eat because God provides.

Second the Word of God has power to diminish the strength and control of temptation. As a follower of Jesus, as a pastor, and as one who faces my own temptations, I cannot really explain nor do I fully understand how but I can attest that thinking on and speaking the word of God into the face of temptation can break the allure and the lie of that temptation. In Ephesians 6 the Word of God is described as the sword of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul, in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:4-5 the Apostle Paul describes the power of the Word of God with this description. “<sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Satan asked Jesus a question full of pretention and full of arguments against the Father. Jesus took up the sword of the Word of God and demolished the power of the temptation.

What temptations place you in the wilderness of choice? Does your heart need to hear the truth that God loves and cares for you? Does your mind need to hear what God has said about you and your choice? What Scripture verse is your sword to break the power of temptation?