

(Ephesians) Temptations

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and resisting temptation, and the need for God's help and strength to overcome it.

Duration: 55:32

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 6:10, James 4:7

Topics: "Resisting Temptation", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on James chapter four, verse seven, which provides guidance on how to overcome temptation and resist the enemy, Satan. The first step is to submit to God and be obedient to His requirements. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not rebelling against God and becoming desensitized to sin over time. They also highlight the need to recognize our weaknesses and avoid situations that could lead to temptation. The sermon emphasizes the significance of maintaining a strong relationship with God and not allowing the reality of His presence to fade in our lives.

Transcript

Alright, let's turn our Bibles tonight to Ephesians chapter 6. And once again, we take up the subject of spiritual warfare. Looking at yet another facet of Satan's activity here this evening. Ephesians 6.10. We'll read over the verses again that we've been reading over.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray now that you would speak to us. Lord, we know that we have an adversary, the devil.

We know that he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But Lord, we know that you're our defense. You're our shield.

You're our refuge and our strength. And Lord, we take comfort in that tonight. And Lord, we thank you that you've given us your word and in it, you have shown us the path to victory.

So speak to us tonight that we might walk in victory over the enemy. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Ephesians 6.10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. We've come now to a consideration of Satan's most notorious activity. That of tempting mankind, temptation is aimed directly at the spirit of man and is designed specifically to cause a person to sin and to, through sinning, come into bondage to sin.

Temptation can come to us at any time. And I think that to a certain degree, we experience it daily, each and every day, all of us have a barrage of things hurled at us. A number of temptations come our way, sometimes in the realm of morality.

We are tempted to be immoral in our thinking, in our actions. Sometimes it's more in the realm of ethical types of things. We're tempted sometimes to lie or to cheat or to steal.

And those things can come to us frequently throughout the day. But there are special times when we are more vulnerable than others. And it's during those times that temptation takes on heightened degrees of intensity.

Take, for example. If you have experienced some sort of a tragedy in your life or maybe there's been a prolonged period of suffering or maybe some kind of a chronic health problem that plagues you. Quite often when those kinds of things occur in our lives, Satan will come along and tempt us.

He'll tempt us, as he did Job, to curse God and die, to be angry with God, to rebel against God. But you see, because of the circumstance, the temptation is intensified. Sometimes when we're suffering from perhaps loneliness or some sort of emotional heartache, we're tempted to meet our needs outside of God's plan or God's will for our lives.

We're tempted sometimes into wrong relationships. We're tempted to get involved with a person who's not a believer, perhaps because we have this need and and they seem to be there to meet that need. Sometimes it goes even into the realm of adulterous activity and things like that.

Or let's say, for example, we've been wronged by somebody. The temptation then is to hate that person. The temptation is to somehow seek to take vengeance upon that person for what they've done to us.

And so when we're wrong, Satan comes in immediately and he tries to plant that hatred within us and get us to succumb to that temptation. And then other times when we experience quite the opposite of everything we've been talking about, when we experience success or victory. When we are promoted in some way or exalted, then the devil comes along and he tempts us to be prideful.

He tempts us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. And. Temptation, of course, is something that every one of us experience, but I do think that there is an element of it at times that is so subtle we don't really realize what's going on.

And hopefully tonight, as we consider the subject of temptation, we can get a perspective on some of the subtleties of the enemy so that when we are being tempted like that in the future, we can recognize what's happening, because after all, a lot of times we get tempted. We don't really realize what's going on at the time and then we succumb to it. Then we think, oh, but of course, we want to avoid falling into the snare of the devil.

So there are three important things that we want to discuss tonight in dealing with the subject of temptation. Number one, we want to look at how to recognize temptation, secondly, how to avoid

temptation, and then thirdly, how to overcome temptation. So how do we recognize temptation? How do we know when we are actually being tempted? How do we know when the devil is somehow working behind the scenes to try to lure us into some trap that he set? Well, the first thing we've got to realize about Satan is his subtlety.

He is very, very subtle. He's not blatant most of the time. You know, there are those rare occasions where it's an almost in your face kind of a thing.

And, you know, it's just as clear that Satan is rearing his head. But yet most of the time he doesn't operate that way. He operates very subtly.

In other words, he doesn't manifest himself to you in all of his hideousness and say, I'm the devil. I'm here to tempt you and ultimately destroy you. Now, watch what I do.

He doesn't do that. No, he hides in the shadows. He's there behind the scenes, pulling strings at times, and we don't even realize he's there.

In the Garden of Eden, where his whole career and tempting man began, we see that subtlety. As a matter of fact, we're told now the serpent was more subtle than all the beast of the field. And it wasn't the serpent, you know, the creature, but it was the the power there controlling this creature, whatever the creature was, whatever kind of a serpent that was, we don't know.

But we do know that Satan was the one who was in control of that creature. And he was more subtle. And so you remember, perhaps when he comes to Eve.

He comes as though he's very concerned about her well-being. Of course, his motivation was to deceive her and get her to comply with his wishes so he could destroy her and Adam and subsequently the rest of the human race. He succeeded, but he didn't come off like that, did he? He came off as one who was really concerned about her situation.

And the first thing he said was, has God really said that you're not to eat from the trees in the garden? I mean, now, you know, is that a fair. Restriction by God, don't you think that God's a little bit of a killjoy, don't you think that he's a little bit of a quench? I mean, come on. And his initial approach to Eve was as though he was concerned, a concerned person.

Don't bother to ask who I am. It doesn't really matter. I'm just concerned about your welfare.

You see the subtlety there? He was hiding behind a concerned individual. She didn't know he was the devil. She didn't know who she was having this conversation with.

He was hidden. We see the same sort of subtlety manifested in his temptation of Jesus. You remember Jesus in his wilderness experience, fasting 40 days and 40 nights and being hungry and so forth.

And then Satan comes to him and again. He comes sort of, you know, disguised as someone who is concerned about his well-being. Now, if you're the son of God, you shouldn't be starving to death out here.

I mean, is that any way for the son of God to be living? No. Now, why don't you take these stones over here and turn them into bread? Satisfy yourself. You deserve it.

After all, you're the son of God. And so he comes subtly. And that's how he comes to us.

He comes in a very subtle form, and there he is behind the scenes, and oftentimes he comes with that same sort of approach that, you know, I've been thinking about you and, you know, you're really not doing what's best for you right now. And he'll try to appeal to us. By showing some sort of a concern for us and get us into a place of self-focus or self-pity or something like that, so we start to say, hey, that's true, that's right, like Eve did.

That's right, what is with God trying to restrict us from this fruit, trying to keep us back from this wonderful knowledge, that's not fair. And she succumbed to the temptation. And so in recognizing temptation, first of all, we've got to realize that Satan is very subtle.

Secondly, we need to realize that Satan is an opportunist. He strikes at the right moment. He watches, he observes us.

We learn this from the life of Job. The Lord said to Satan when he appeared before God, he said, have you considered my servant Job? And Job said, as a matter of fact, I have. Yes, I've been analyzing him.

And what we see there is that Satan was studying Job. He was analyzing his life, he was looking for the weakness. He was looking for the entrance in.

He was looking for the place of vulnerability. And that's how Satan operates. He's an opportunist and he looks for that place of vulnerability.

Remember, it says concerning his attack against Jesus that he came to him after he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights. Now, after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, you're in a weakened condition. And that's when he comes when the weakness is there.

Remember how he attacked Eve? He did not come to Eve when she was with Adam, but rather he waited till she was alone by herself, defenseless, vulnerable. And then he struck. And that's how he works with us as well.

He comes at the opportune moment when we're vulnerable. When we're lonely, perhaps when we're feeling sorry for ourselves. When something, you know, has gone wrong, that's upset us, and then he comes in and he tries to take advantage of that opportunity.

Satan. Is persistent, he is persistent, he doesn't give up when he sees an area of vulnerability or any place of weakness that he senses, he just keeps on. Hammering on that particular area.

He just keeps on needling. Again, we see that. In the situation with Job, he first of all attacks Job.

And he doesn't succeed in accomplishing his desire of getting Job to curse God. Instead, Job just says, you know, naked, I came into the world naked. I will leave.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, God is good and Satan's plan was temporarily foiled, but he was right back at it. He didn't stop and he came back and he said, let me get at his. Let me get at him physically.

I've I've had freedom to, you know, get at those things that are dear to him, but now let me get at him because skin for skin, all that a man has, he'll give for his life. And if I can just touch his body, if I can just lay my hand upon him and afflict him, then he'll curse you to your face, Satan said to God. But you see, he was persistent, he wanted to keep at it until he could accomplish his goal there.

And we see that again with the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Remember, he didn't just attempt one time to get Jesus to stumble. Nor did he just attempt it twice, but three times he came to Jesus.

And there was obviously a period of time between each of those temptations, but he would come back over and over again. And then after that was accomplished, we read that the devil departed from him until he could find an opportune time. The persistence, he departed from him for a while, but with a plan to come back with a new strategy and a new approach, and that's how Satan operates, he is persistent.

And if he finds a weakness in your life, if he finds a place of vulnerability, boy, that's a place you need to really gear up in. That's a place where you need to really get in tune with God on because that's the very place he's going to come back and attack over and over and over again. And he does that and he succeeds quite often.

Gets people caught up in certain things and they just go into these cycles where over and over again, they're falling into the same thing. That's the area of vulnerability. And he comes back to that same place and so often, for whatever reason, we don't gear up in that place.

So remember that he's subtle, that he's an opportunist, that he's persistent. How do we recognize when we're being tempted? Well, whenever you are faced with a suggestion to ignore what God might have to say about a situation or whenever you begin to question God's word on an issue. Or whenever you have the thought to rationalize what God has said in order to carry out your own desires, you're being tempted.

But. But again, there's that subtlety that sometimes masks the temptation, we don't realize what's happening, but there it is. Suddenly we're faced with something and as our mind immediately perhaps goes to what God might have said about something to do with that, we just there's that suggestion, very subtle, but it's just there.

It just comes like lightning into our mind. Oh, don't think about that. No, don't worry.

Just leave that. Look at this. And that's what he will do quite often to suggest to us to ignore what God perhaps has said or when we're faced with some sort of an issue and we know what God has said about that, but he comes along and he starts to question, well, now, is that really fair? What God has said about that? I mean, come on.

You know, you have a right. To feel the way you do, you have a right to pursue this particular course, because after all, you have suffered or you have earned it or you have whatever, and he'll come and start reasoning with us and try to get us to question God's word on an issue to come to a point and say, well, I don't think God was fair when he said that or I don't think God would have said that really, you know, after all, come on. And he has been so successful.

By using these kind of tactics or again, as we rationalize certain things. Because suddenly we're overwhelmed with a strong desire and we know what God's word is said about it, but then we start to rationalize. These are all manifestations of temptations, and when that kind of thing is going on, no, this the devil is right there whispering in your ear, suggesting in your mind, planting desires and things in your heart.

You know, this is a strange thing. We talked about it in our last study on the wiles of the devil. I really don't understand.

And, you know, I know for sure nobody does really. We don't understand how it is the enemy has the ability to do some of the things he can do, like suggest things to our mind. But I believe that he even has an ability to impose upon us at times certain sorts of feelings and things.

He, of course, is able to work together with our sinful nature, so that gives him an advantage. But there are times when suddenly you're overwhelmed with sort of an urge or an impulse or a feeling to do something, but at the same time you go, oh, that's sick or no, I would never do that. I'll never forget that this is totally bizarre.

Don't think I'm totally nuts when I tell you this story. But one time, years and years ago, when I was pastoring in Vista one morning after the you know, between one of the services, I was walking out into the parking lot and there was a new couple coming to the church. And this is the strangest thing as they're walking up, I had this sudden, overwhelming impulse to just punch the guy in the face.

And I thought, what in the world is that? You know, welcome to Calvary Chapel, you know. But but I remember it was so powerful of an impulse and it was it was bizarre to say the least, you know, I just like down. And but, you know, how would you explain that? You know, I I don't know.

I I don't buy any of the psychology. Rap, I think it's all bogus. I believe that those kinds of things.

Are of the devil. They're demonic, I don't know how that kind of thing can happen, I don't know the, you know, the process that. Works in order for that sort of thing, but I've had those kinds of experiences and I know others have had the same sort of thing, and this is what Satan will do.

And he will influence us in these ways and try to get us to move in a direction and to do certain things, that's temptation. Now, the second issue here is, how do we avoid temptation and let me say that in one sense, we can't really avoid it in one sense, and what I mean by that is, you know, there are just times when we're going to be tempted, we are to pray, Jesus said to the father, lead us not into temptation. But temptation is inevitable, it's going to come, and so in one sense, we can't avoid it.

But yet, in another sense, we can avoid bringing unnecessary temptation into our lives. By. Having a, you know, a proper perspective on certain things, so there's temptation is going to come, there's no way around it.

But what my point is here, let's make sure we're not bringing it on ourselves. That's what we've got to be careful not to do. If it comes unsolicited on my part, what can I do about it? It's just that's what Satan does.

And at times God allows them to do it for the greater purpose of him, you know, working in our lives and making us stronger and so forth. But that's the only kind of temptation I want to be subject to. I don't want to go about creating opportunities to fall into temptation, and that's what I want to talk about here and talking about how to avoid temptation.

We want to avoid putting ourselves in a position where we would be unnecessarily tempted. So how do we do that? Well, I think there's two things to think about here. Number one, we need to have a realistic view of ourselves.

In other words, we need to know our own weaknesses. We need to know our areas of vulnerability. Remember what it says in First Corinthians 10, 13.

It says it says something really good, and as soon as my mind is cleared, I'll remember what it says. It says, if any man thinks he stands, that's it. If any man thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.

You see, quite often people fall into temptation because they think they're above it. They think, oh, I'm stronger than that. That's never going to be a problem for me.

And then they plop themselves right in the middle of some tempting situation and they fall because they thought they could stand. So we have got to be aware of our own weaknesses and our areas of vulnerability. And of course, we've got to stay as far away from situations that will provoke us.

In those areas, as we possibly can, you know. If you have a problem with lust, you just need to fess up to the fact that you have a problem there and you need to do everything you can to stay away from situations that are going to provoke that in you or arouse that in you. And, you know, there is no measure in resisting temptation that's too great.

In other words, you can't go to an extreme in resisting temptation. Paul said to Timothy, he said, flee youthful lust, run away from these things if you have to. I think of the example of Joseph back in Genesis when he was in Egypt.

And Pharaoh's wife was seeking to seduce him or not Pharaoh's wife, excuse me, Potiphar's wife was seeking to seduce Joseph. And it says that Joseph fled, he ran away from the situation, and that's not too extreme under those kinds of circumstances. That's what you need to do.

You need to run away from it. You need to get away from it. You need to take action against allowing yourself to succumb to that sort of stuff.

If you have a problem in that area, then you shouldn't have anything at your disposal that can lead you into that. Internet access and so forth. Those are things that we need to just stand against that kind of thing and say, you know, it's not worth it.

It's not worth falling prey. I know that I'm weak in this area and I'm not going to even give the enemy an opportunity. I'm not going to have this available to myself.

I'm not going to have any access to it. Some people say, oh, that's awfully extreme. Well, Jesus said, if your right hand offends you, cut it off.

That's extreme. If your eye offends you, pluck it out. But the point is this, that sin is so severe.

That we need to take every possible measure to avoid it. So if we have a problem with substance abuse, that sort of thing, drugs, alcohol, that kind of thing, we've got to disconnect ourselves completely, entirely from that. Lifestyle and those people that are involved in those kinds of things, we just got to make that clean break.

So many people fall back into sin over and over again because they don't face up to their own weaknesses. They don't have a proper view of themselves and they put themselves back in places of temptation over and over again. You just can't do it.

We've got to stay as far away from compromising situations as possible. If you have a drinking problem, if you've had a struggle with that in the past, then you obviously don't want to be anywhere where you're going to be tempted by that sort of thing. Or whatever it might be, you know, these are just a couple of

examples, there are so many different things that we can have vulnerabilities toward.

But the important thing is that we realize our weakness and take the wise step to avoid putting ourselves in those kinds of circumstances. We just cannot afford to do that because, of course, when we fall back into sin and we're at a fellowship with God and we're doing damage to our own lives in a variety of ways, and we're really sending out a bad, bad message to people about what Christians are like and so forth. And there's just so many things at stake.

And so we've got to realize these things, we've got to recognize our weaknesses and we've got to stay as far away from any compromising situation as possible. But, you know, again, the enemy's subtle and he's persistent and he will come and he will suggest and sometimes it'll even be through other people that he will entice you and they'll call you up. Oh, come on.

You know, you don't have to get involved in any of this stuff, but let's just hang out like old times. And you're like, OK, well, I'll just go, I won't do anything. And then you find yourself back in that environment that God had delivered you from and you're with those people and, you know, the night goes on and pretty soon the temptation has become overwhelming and, you know, they're putting this.

Come on, just just take one hit, you know, it won't hurt. It will, you know, OK. And you give in and.

There you are. Satan's got you right back where he wanted you. And then you come out and you're all condemned and you can't believe you did it, and that's unnecessary.

We can avoid it by just staying away. From those things that we know we are vulnerable toward and keeping out of compromising situations, you know, there's a lot of sexual sin in the world today and a lot of it in the church. And, you know, you hear stories all the time about people who fall in love with somebody they work with who's, you know, having marital problems and then they get involved and they leave their families.

And, you know, all of this kind of stuff, it just happens so frequently these days. Some woman goes off to the gym to work out and get in shape, and some guy comes along and offers to be her personal trainer. And pretty soon, you know, they're often having an affair or something.

And, you know, this kind of thing is just it's happening so often. But these are these are sins waiting to happen. We've got to see them for what they are.

We've got to stay away from these things. And again, the person who says, oh, that's no problem for me, I can go into that, you know, that's not going to bother me. That's self-deception.

You're a sinful person by nature. And so there's an automatic gravitation towards sinful things. And that's why God tells us to stay away from these things, because he knows the danger.

You know, I've had people tell me some of the stupidest things over the years, you know, people watching videos and things that they shouldn't be watching as Christians. And there's, you know, sexual promiscuity, nudity and these sorts of things. And I've had people say, oh, that stuff doesn't bother me.

You know, I'm not tempted by that. Give me a break. What are you, a robot or something? You might think you could handle it.

But you know what? You can't because you're a sinner. And at some point in time, remember, we talked about Satan is an opportunity, an opportunist. He's strategic.

He doesn't necessarily come with both barrels the first time. Oh, he comes with just a little shot here and a little one there. And just, you know, so often it's that's the way it works.

It's little things here and there, here and there over a period of time. And then finally he set you up. Now you're vulnerable.

And now he pulls out the double barrel shotgun and boom, he just blows you away right into sin. But it didn't start with that. It started with the little compromises.

Because, you know, little sins or seemingly little sins, you know what they do? They desensitize us. They harden our heart. They build up an indifference in us and a resistance to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

And then what happens over a process of time is you become desensitized, you become hardened, you become blinded. And things that at one time you would have never even thought to think of or observe or be involved in or talk about, you find that you're able to participate in them without any real feeling of guilt or anything. You're on your road to a major.

Crash and burn situation right there, but it didn't happen overnight. It's been a very strategic, but certain. Breaking down of your strengths and bringing you to a place of susceptibility.

That's how the devil works, so we can't give him any. Advantage over us at all. Realize where you're weak, realize the areas of vulnerability that you have and do everything you can to stay out of situations that could set you up for a fall.

Remember, if any man thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall. Now, thirdly, how do we overcome temptation when we are tempted, which we will be, as we've already pointed out, hopefully not self induced. But when we are tempted, well, we need to remember this and this again is first Corinthians 10, 13, that no temptation is overtaken you, but such as is common to man.

We need to remember that because a lot of times what Satan wants to do is sort of get us in an isolated state of thinking and a feeling that no one else has ever experienced this kind of a thing before. But it's not true. Everyone is tempted.

And so there's no temptation that's overtaking you, that's not common to man. In other words, you're not going to be tempted in a way that nobody else has ever been tempted. So how could you be expected to stand against it? After all, nobody's been through anything like this before.

That'll never happen. We all are subject to. The same kinds of things, but here's what we remember, no temptation has overtaken us, but such as is common to man and.

Here's the great part, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. You never have to succumb to temptation.

That's something that we need to realize. You know, a lot of times people just said, you know, I couldn't do anything about it, I just was there and the temptation overwhelmed me and I had to sin. No, even when you have been stupid enough to put yourself in a situation like that, you still didn't have to sin.

You could have resisted that. Because God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able and with the temptation. It says there in first Corinthians 10, 13, he will make a way of escape.

Boy, there's always a way out right up to the last second. If you're dumb enough to get yourself right there to the chopping block, you know, just before the ax falls, you can still get out. But the you know, the better thing is never to get there in the first place.

But if you get there. Know this, that you don't you don't have to submit to it at that instant, you can just call on God, say, Lord, get me out of here and the Lord will show you the way out. Another translation of that latter part of the verses and God will make an end of it.

And that's a good thing to know as well. That God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able and God will bring the temptation to an end, it's not going to go on endlessly. It will come to an end.

James, chapter four, verse seven, let's turn over to James. Here's where. We have a great bit of instruction.

On how to overcome. Temptation, how to overcome. Our enemy, Satan.

James, chapter four, verse seven. Listen to this, it's almost just, you know, sort of a line by line prescription. OK, question is, how do we overcome temptation? Here's the answer.

Number one, submit to God. Our vulnerability toward temptation only comes when we're unsubmitive to God, when we're rebelling against him in some way, when we're refusing to comply to his requirement for our life. So number one way to have guaranteed victory over temptation is to, first of all, submit to God.

I'm submitted to God. I'm not submitted to my own desire. I'm not submitted to the desire of this other person.

I'm submitted first and foremost to God. Secondly, resist the devil. We've got to resist the devil over the devil will come on with such pressure.

And sometimes with such appeal. It seems sometimes almost irresistible. You know, you're just being sucked into this thing that you it just seems like I've got no control, but you can resist the devil and you are to resist the devil.

And here's the promise when you resist the devil, he will flee from you. As often as he comes, we just have to say, no, I'm not interested. No, thank you.

Get behind me, Satan, depart from me, just never open the door for conversation, never open the door for contemplation of his suggestions, just as quick as it comes, just shut the door right on it. That's resisting the devil. And you know what happens after a while? He just goes and looks for somebody else, resist the devil and he will flee.

He's not going to stick around forever, wasting his time with somebody who's not interested. But oh, if he sees a little bit of interest there. Oh, then he'll come back as frequently as he can.

We've got to resist, resist the devil and he will flee drawn near to God. And he will draw near to you a wonderful step by step procedure, submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God, those temptations come our way. First of all, we're submitted to God.

No, I'm submitted to God. And you look back at Joseph again as a great example. Here's a guy who he really was in a vulnerable place in a lot of ways because he was away from his home.

He was. Separated from his family and that parental authority and, you know, that sense of obligation to his dad's wishes. He was in a really.

Bum situation in the sense that, you know. Seem like God had forgotten about him after all, how could God let him get sold into slavery and be in this adversity? He was in a very vulnerable place in so many ways, and he was a young man full of passion at the time, I'm sure. So in a sense, he had everything going against him.

But the amazing thing is he was victorious. And, you know, as you look at it and analyze the story, what you find that the victory was based upon. His submission to God and when Potiphar's wife came and she said, lie with me, go to bed with me.

My husband's gone, nobody's going to know it's just between us. He said this, how can I do this great evil and sin against my God? See, here was a guy who he was submitted to God. God was a reality in his life.

And I think what I've seen in people falling into sin and succumbing to temptation, the first thing that generally goes is the reality of God in their life. God is not a reality in their life at that time. Somehow it's just suddenly there's a blindness that comes upon the mind and God is just not in the picture.

But if we're submitted to God, if our lives are just completely dedicated to him, then like Joseph, when the temptation comes, we've got as a foundation. No, I'm submitted to God. How could I do this great evil before God? You know, it's amazing.

What people will do before God that they would never think to do before other people. And it just shows a lack of consciousness of the reality of God. I mean, let's just say.

You've been dabbling in pornography. Now, let me ask you this, would you do that in front of your wife? I would imagine you probably wouldn't you, of course, you wouldn't even want her to know that you're doing it, you'd be so absolutely ashamed. Would you do it in front of your Christian friends? I'm sure you wouldn't.

If Pastor Chuck said, I want to come and visit you this week and when he came in, would you say, check, check out some of this material I've been reading this week? What do you think? Would you do that? Of course you wouldn't. That's ridiculous. You shatter at the thought, but you'll do it before God.

See what happens, we lose the consciousness of God, God's watching and it's sad, but it just betrays the fact that there's not a submission to God in the first place, but we've got to be submitted to God and resist the devil. He's persistent, he'll come over and over and over again, but as often as he comes, you just got to slam the door in his face. Just refuse.

And I would suggest that you become more and more adamant in your refusal as he persist. His desire is to get you to weaken. And start to give in a little bit.

But no, become more adamant. And refuse to have any thing to do. Any thought, anything like that drawn near to God.

And he will draw near to you, cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts, you double minded. Lament and mourn and weep. You know, when we fall into sin, when we succumb to temptation, God is merciful and he forgives us.

But we really do need to repent and lamenting, mourning and weeping. That's a good indication that we are repenting. Let your laughter return to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up. That's the way to victory. Humbling ourselves before God.

And I think, again, we would be greatly helped. In our battle against temptation. If we really understood how much God hates sin, and I think that today we somehow lost the sense that that is the case.

We emphasize so much the love of God, which is a good and a right emphasis to a certain extent. But yet we really do miss this other aspect of God's nature, which is just as much a reality as the fact that he's loved. And that's that he's holy.

And that's that he hates sin. He absolutely hates it. He's repulsed, repulsed by it.

He's disgusted by it. He's angered by it even. And I think today in our mind, somehow we've just convinced ourselves that because God is full of grace and love and mercy, that, you know, these things aren't that big of a deal.

They are a big deal with God. They're a big deal. Not to say he won't forgive.

He will. But we can arouse the anger of God against us if we persist in sin and we need to get back to the realization that God hates him. He loathes it.

He despises it. And if you ever doubt that God hates sin, all you have to do is go to Isaiah 53. Or Matthew 26 or Matthew or Mark 15 or Luke 23.

And what do you have in each one of those chapters I just mentioned, you have the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. You have the brutal crucifixion of the Son of God and the beating, the marring that he received, the crushing. All of that was because he was being punished for sin.

And if you think sin is a light matter with God, then you've got to take another look at Jesus on the cross. Because the brutal torment that Jesus received on the cross is what sin deserves. And so let us not think lightly of sin.

Let's not toy around with it, thinking that, oh, God will forgive. It's OK. God will forgive.

But there is a cost. There was a cost, the death of the Son of God and temptation, although it comes our way. We don't have to give in to it.

We can walk in victory over it. Let's submit to God. Let's resist the devil and he will flee.

Father, we thank you that there is victory over sin. We thank you, Lord, that we are not under the control of Satan unless we allow ourselves to be. But we certainly don't have to be because you've freed us and you've given us the power by your Holy Spirit to walk in victory.

And Lord, as we talk about temptation here this evening, it's a reality for each and every one of us. Each and every day of our lives. Some of it, Lord, is unsolicited and beyond our control.

Thank you that we can depend on you to give us a victory. Lord, help us not to bring temptation upon ourselves. Help us, Lord, to have a realistic perspective on who we are and what our weaknesses are.

And help us, Lord, to be wise in choosing our friends, our close relationships, the places that we frequent, the things that we're involved in. Help us, Lord, so we don't get caught in the trap of sin. We know the devil wants to trap us and entangle us in a web of sin that would just ruin our lives and our testimonies and everything else.

And, God, we thank you that that doesn't have to happen. So help us, Lord, to be fully submitted to you. Help us, Lord, to resist the devil.

Thank you, Lord, for the promise that he will flee. Thank you, Lord, that when we draw near to you, you draw near to us. And we pray, Lord, that you would.

Walk closely with us. Protecting us and empowering us to glorify you in Jesus name, amen. Let's stand.

May the Lord bless you tonight. And if you need some prayer, some guys up front here that would be happy to pray with you. And once again, I would just ask you to keep our outreach teams in prayer, got a report from France this morning and things are going well.

I don't know if you've heard, but they've had real wild weather. And the other night in Nice, they had thunder and rain and hail and everything else. And and yet they had beautiful blue skies today and they've already had the opportunity to lead some people to Christ and just some great things are going on.

So keep them in prayer. And then this Tuesday, we head off for the European pastors and missionaries conference. And we're looking forward to a great time of building up the missionaries and just strengthening them for the work in Europe.

So please keep us in prayer with that as well. God bless you. My strength.

You are the treasure that I see. You are my all and all. I'm seeking you as a precious jewel.

Love to give without fear of pain. You are my all and all. Jesus is your name.

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