

How to Effectively Resist Temptation

by Greg Laurie

The key to resisting temptation is to stay in the will of God and to use the word of God to overcome it.

Duration: 50:45

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:3, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:1-14, Colossians 2:14-15, James 1:22

Topics: "Temptation", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Greg Glory teaches on how to effectively resist temptation, using Luke chapter 4 verses 1-14 as the basis for his message. He begins by acknowledging that temptation is prevalent in the world and that we need God's help to resist it. Pastor Greg then explores four key questions: when does temptation come, who does it come to, where is the best place to be when temptation comes, and what is the primary weapon to use when tempted. He emphasizes that everyone, regardless of their spiritual maturity, will face temptation and provides practical guidance on how to effectively resist it.

Transcript

This is tape number G613 by Pastor Greg Laurie with the message entitled, How to Effectively Resist Temptation. We'll be teaching from Luke chapter 4, verses 1 through 14. Title of this message is, How to Effectively Resist Temptation.

Luke chapter 4. How many of you are visiting Calvary Chapel tonight for the first time? Raise up your hand if you've never been here before. Great, welcome to all of you. Glad you could come.

Let's have a word of prayer. Lord, we believe that we're about to read your very word. And we know that it has so much to say to each of us.

And Lord, we live in a world where temptation is all around us. And we need your help. We need your power to effectively resist it.

So as we look in scripture tonight, we pray that your Holy Spirit would speak to our hearts. That we would come closer to you as a result. And for any that may be struggling with even some of the things that we're going to talk about.

Help them, Lord, to see that and help them to find the victory that is theirs in Jesus Christ. And Lord, we would also pray for those that have joined us tonight, who may not yet know you. They're a visitor here this

evening, or maybe they've been here before, but they've not yet made that commitment to you.

Lord, would you help them to see their spiritual need. And before the night is over, we pray that they will have committed their life to follow you. So we ask your blessing on this time.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, tonight I want to talk to you about a topic we're all very familiar with.

And that is, of course, the topic of temptation. Something that we all wish we did not have to contend with. But it is a reality that is not going to go away.

But you might be surprised to know that temptation can have a positive effect on our life as a believer. It's been said, Christians are a lot like tea bags. You don't know what they're made of until you put them in hot water.

And it's sometimes in the hot waters of temptation that we find out what we're really made of. You know, it's one thing to sit here in church with your fellow believers, singing to the Lord, having a Bible study together and talking about how good God is. But it's another thing to go back out there to work or to go out there to school or go out there in the real world and know what it's like to be tempted and then to effectively resist it.

So our desire here tonight is not only that you would have a time where you would be encouraged and built up, but that you would find some helpful resources and information that you can apply because no matter what, you're going to be tempted. I don't care who you are. I don't care how long you've known the Lord.

I don't care how many Bible verses you've committed to memory or how mature you may be spiritually. You're going to be tempted. Everyone is tempted.

Even ministers get tempted. I told you the story of a pastor that was out trying to make a call on someone downtown. And he was circling the block looking for a place to park his car and all the spaces were filled.

And he just knew he had to get in and visit this person. So he decided to double park and he pulled out one of his little clergy cards, or rather his business card that identified him as a clergyman, as a minister, as a reverend. And so he wrote down on the back of this card, in case an officer came to ticket him, Dear officer, I circled this block 10 times and I could not find a place to park.

And then he cited a little verse, please forgive us our trespasses. Put it under the windshield wiper, hoping if a cop came along, you'd see that and have a little, you know, extra forgiveness for the reverend. Well, as the minister went and made his call, he came back about an hour later and underneath this windshield wiper was a citation.

He had been ticketed. So he pulled it out and there was a citation for double parking and a note from the police officer, which said, dear reverend, I have been working this block for 10 years. And if I don't give you a ticket, I'm going to lose my job.

And then the police officer quoted a verse that said, lead us not into temptation. You've probably heard that expression, lead me not into temptation. I can find it myself.

We all do a pretty good job of leading ourselves into temptation. Well, I want to talk to you about how to effectively resist it and know this temptation can be resisted. First Corinthians 10, 13 says, God will not

allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will the temptation also make a way of escape for you that you may be able to bear it.

Simple translation of that. God won't give you more than you can handle. God knows your breaking point.

He knows where you're the weakest. He'll never allow you to be tempted above your capacity to resist. Now, with that said, let's consider four principles together.

Among other things, as we look at Luke chapter four, we're going to answer the following four questions. Number one, when does temptation come? When does temptation come? Number two, who does temptation come to? Who does it come to? Number three, where is the best place to be when temptation comes? And fourth and lastly, what is the primary weapon we should use when we are tempted? Our text is Luke chapter four, where we're going to look at the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. And he gives us an example that we can follow on how to effectively resist.

So let's read it together. Luke four, starting in verse one. We read these words.

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days he ate nothing, and afterwards, when they had ended, he was hungry. And the devil said to him, If you're the Son of God, command the stone to become bread.

But Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Then the devil, taking him up to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to him, All this authority will I give you in their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I can give it to whomever I wish.

Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be yours. And Jesus answered and said, Get behind me, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. Then he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, He will give his angels charge over you to keep you, and in their hands they'll bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

And Jesus answered and said to him, It has been said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God. And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of him went through all the surrounding region, and he taught in the synagogues, being glorified by all.

We'll stop there. Now let's set the scene so we can understand what's taking place here. Jesus was now officially ready to begin his public ministry, but before that could take place, a couple of important steps had to happen first.

Number one, he needed to be baptized, and number two, he had to go through this temptation in the wilderness. You remember that John the Baptist was a cousin of our Lord, and he was out there fulfilling his ministry, preparing the people for the arrival of the Messiah. Well, John's ministry was now coming to a conclusion.

It was now ready to close out, because John's primary ministry had been to prepare the people for the Messiah, and then to present the Messiah to them. So Jesus shows up at the Jordan River, and here's

John with crowds present, as they always were, because he was quite a public figure. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus actually devoted more of his writing to the ministry of John than he did to Jesus.

John made a terrific impact on the people of this day, preaching his message of repentance, fearlessly telling the people to turn from their sin. So now Jesus shows up, and it's clear that Jesus wants John to baptize him. John's reluctant.

Why would he baptize Jesus? The reason being was baptism was a right that would be undergone by a person who was repenting of their sins. Jesus, needless to say, had no sins to repent of, yet he was insistent that John would baptize him. Why? Well, obviously he didn't need to do it because he had any sin to turn from, but he was setting an example for us to follow because Jesus came into the world to identify with men, and to do that he had to identify with sin.

So John, reluctantly but obediently, baptizes the Lord. And as Jesus is being baptized in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit comes upon him in the form of a dove, the Bible says, and a voice comes from heaven saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. By the way, a dramatic demonstration of the Trinity in action.

God the Father speaking from heaven, God the Son being baptized, God the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove. So now Jesus went through this incredible act of baptism, this great blessing takes place, and it is worth noting that he immediately was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, which brings us to the first question I raised about temptation, which was, when does temptation generally come? Answer, often after great times of blessing. Did you know that? Often after great times of blessing.

For Jesus, after the dove, came the devil. And we see this throughout Scripture, times when God would bless in a wonderful way, and there would be the devil ready to challenge it. That's why you shouldn't be surprised if after you leave church tonight, the devil would be waiting there with a temptation for you, to bring you down, to catch you up, and sometimes, check this out, you can even get tempted in church.

Oh sure, you can be there singing to the Lord, or praying, and suddenly some wicked, vile thought comes and knocks at the door of your imagination. It's a temptation. But understand something, it is not the bait that constitutes temptation, it's the bite.

Nothing wrong if Satan tempts you. It's not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted.

It's a sin when you take hold of it, and you let that thought become your thought, when you pull that thing into your own life. But if you resist it, there's a blessing that's attached to it, for the Bible says, blessed is the man that endures temptation. But when does it come? Often after times of great blessing.

History tells us, that during the early years of World War II, that Hitler would invade the European nations on weekends, because he knew their parliaments would not be in session, that they would not be able to get together and react swiftly. So on a number of occasions, he invaded when parliaments were not meeting. He waited for an opportune time, and he struck, and the devil will do the same.

He'll size you up. He'll find out where you're weak, and that's where he'll hit you. You know, whenever I play any competitive sport, I try to win.

I don't usually win, but I try anyway. I have a friend I play tennis with on Saturdays, and I'm figuring out how to beat him now, you know, and I don't want to tell him all that I know, but I do want to beat him, and I want to beat him good. And we've been going back and forth now for a number of weeks, and first he was killing me, and then I started to catch up, and the last time we were neck and neck the whole way.

I'm trying to size up his weakness, and if I know that he's weak in a certain spot, that's where I'm going to serve that ball. Why? Because winning is more fun than losing. That's why.

The devil's going to size you up. He's going to find out where your vulnerability is, where your Achilles heel is, so to speak, and everyone has one. Everyone is weak in some area of their life, and sometimes in the areas we think we're the strongest, we're potentially the weakest.

That's why the Bible says, Take heed lest ye fall. Question number two. Who does temptation come to? In a broad sense, everyone is tempted, but at the same time, without question, the enemy will focus his attacks on those who are young in the faith and those who are making a difference in the kingdom.

Let me repeat that. The enemy will focus his attacks on those who are young in the faith and those who are making a difference for the kingdom of God. When you've made a commitment to Christ, the devil is going to be there to oppose it.

In the parable of the sower in Mark 4 15, Jesus talked about the seed of the word of God being sown. And he said, And those are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately to take away the word that was sown in their hearts.

And you can remember, after you asked Christ to come into your life, there was a devil whispering in your ear, Do you think you're really saved? Do you think God has come into your life? You just psyched yourself into that. In fact, it's mass hypnotism. That's what it is.

It's a weird cult. What are you getting yourself into? Oh yeah, I don't know, you know. And you begin to doubt the word of God.

Doubt what God has done for you. Satan will be there to oppose it. And he'll be there with some heavy duty temptations.

I remember, right after I became a Christian, the other Christians came up to me and said, Now Greg, Brother Greg, be careful. You're going to be tempted. And I said, What? You're going to be tempted? What do you mean tempted? You know, tempted to do the wrong thing.

Well, I didn't really know much about temptation because when it came, I just gave in to it, you know. It wasn't a struggle. I just did it, you know.

What's to resist? Looks good to me. Oh no, you're going to be tempted to do the wrong thing. Okay, well, I'll take your word for it.

Yes, because there's a devil out there. Oh, is that so, a devil? Okay. And I was a little, you know, doubtful.

Devil, come on, these guys are getting a little carried away. And sure enough, right after I became a Christian, I don't remember if it was the next day or the day of it, but I remember it was immediately afterwards. I was in high school at this time.

This was a long time ago. And there was this really cute girl in our class. And I wanted to talk to this girl, but I was too embarrassed to walk up to her.

So I'd never said a word to her. She'd never said a word to me. And she walked up to me out of the clear blue and says, Hi, what's your name? I said, Greg.

She goes, You're cute. Oh, dude, thanks. She says, Hey, my parents have this cabin up in the mountains, and they're going to be gone.

I was wondering if you'd like to go up there with me for the weekend. I thought, This is a temptation, definitely. Because you have to understand, beautiful women never came up and said stuff like that to me, okay? It just didn't happen.

Now, it happens to some guys. It never happened to me. Out of the clear blue, this girl comes up to me, asks me to go up for the weekend with her.

I thought, Okay, this is the devil for sure. This is it. And I was kind of excited.

Not about her asking me to go to the mountains, but I thought, You know what? I'm convinced there's a devil now, and I'm convinced that whatever I've done has to be real. Otherwise, he wouldn't be pulling out stuff like this and offering it to me. It confirmed me in my commitment.

And instead of wanting to do it, I thought, No, no. Now I want to see what this Christianity is all about. Now I'm even more into it, you see.

Now I want to know what God has in store for me. And you know, the devil will tempt you. He'll go after those that are new in the faith, and he'll go after those that are making a difference for the kingdom of God.

You see? When you say, Lord, use me. Lord, I want to win others to you. I want to make a difference.

You think the devil's going to stand up and give you an ovation? Come on, demons. Let's have a standing O right now. Hey, all right.

Hey, listen. He's going to pull out all the stops and go for you. He's going to try to bring you down, because he hates it when you try to reach others for Christ.

Who's going to be tempted? Everyone. But as I said, often those who are new in the faith and those who are making a difference for the kingdom. You know, if you're just relatively complacent and not going anywhere as a Christian, the devil doesn't have to do much to you, because you're pretty much where he wants you.

Immobilized, sitting on a fence. You don't kick a dead horse now, do you? It's those that are making the difference. Number three, where is the best place to be when temptation comes? Where is the best place to be? Answer, in the will of God.

Scripture tells us that Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness. Now that's interesting. He was led by the spirit, and what was waiting for him? The devil.

That means that God led Jesus into a place where he knew temptation would come. Not that God led him into temptation, but he led him, but in the process of leading him, temptation was there. The best place to be is in the will of God, and too often we're out of the will of God, essentially bringing temptation upon ourselves.

And what makes resisting temptation difficult for many people is they don't want to discourage it completely. Many people want to be delivered from temptation, but at the same time they would like to keep in touch. They want to sort of flirt with it, play around with it, and they put themselves unnecessarily in the place of spiritual danger.

Listen, to pray against temptation, yet to rush into a place of vulnerability is like thrusting your fingers into the fire and then praying that they won't be burnt. Many times we do it to ourselves, and then we have the audacity to blame it on God. God, why did you let this happen to me? He's saying, what? You did a pretty good job on your own there, buckaroo.

In fact, I was warning you to stay away from that thing. Peter, of course, fell into sin and denied the Lord three times, but where was he when that first denial took place? Warming himself at the enemy's fire, so to speak. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time, hanging out with the wrong people, ultimately resulting in him doing the wrong thing.

We all know that Eve, of course, ate of the forbidden fruit. Well, what was she hanging out? Around the tree God told her to stay away from. The one tree God says, whatever you do, stay away from this tree.

There's Eve hanging around by the tree. Okay, so, what's up? She unnecessarily put herself in a place of temptation. Now let's look at the temptations that Satan brought to Jesus.

Look at verse three. If you're the son of God, command the stone to become bread. Satan is essentially saying, look, I've been hanging around here and listening, and noticed your father said to you, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

Well, seeing you are who you are, seeing that you're the son of God, prove it. Turn a stone into bread. This phrase, if you are the son of God, could also be trying to censure the son of God.

I don't think there was any doubt on the devil's part that Jesus was who he claimed to be. Know this, the devil is orthodox in many of his beliefs in one sense. The Bible says the demons believe in tremble.

No one has to convince Satan that Jesus Christ is the son of God. He hates him, he opposes him, but he knows that's true. Okay, Satan's saying, since you're the son of God, prove it.

Turn a rock into a piece of bread. Why would this be a potential temptation to Jesus? Because he had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, and the Bible says afterwards he was hungry. This would have been a ravenous hunger, a hunger for your very survival.

Hey, do a miracle for your own benefit. Pull a rabbit out of a hat. Do something new, impress me.

Come on, you're the son of God, prove it. Take that rock and turn it into a piece of bread right now. Isn't it interesting to note that Jesus never did a miracle for his own benefit? Did you ever notice that? I would have if I were Jesus.

I mean, one thing for sure, I wouldn't have done all that walking, you know. I would have said, guys, we need to go to Jerusalem. I'm just going to kind of, you know, transport over there.

I'll be waiting for you, okay? Have fun, God bless. You know, if it was time to eat, I wouldn't have made a meal. I would have spoken it into existence.

There it is. You see, why do all that when you could just perform a miracle? But no, Jesus never did a miracle for his own benefit, only for the benefit of others. Even when he hung on the cross of Calvary and cried out, I thirst.

He could have spoken a word and just a gusher of water would have broken out of the ground. But no, he never did a miracle for his own benefit. It's a temptation that we face when those enticements come to just, you know, go for the moment, man.

Just, if it feels good, do it. You know, play now, pay later. Don't worry about ramifications.

Don't worry about repercussions. Don't worry about what can happen, man. Just go for it.

Enjoy the moment. And a lot of people live like this. Jesus comes back and says, it is written, man, shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Now the second temptation comes, an interesting one. The devil takes him in verse five to a high mountain, shows him all the kingdoms of the world. In a moment of time, it says, all this authority I will give to you and their glory for it's been delivered to me.

I can give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if you will worship me, all will be yours. I want you to notice something.

Jesus did not refute this statement of Satan. And the reason he did not refute it is because the devil was right in what he asserted. All the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time, he showed him, I'll give it to you if you will worship me.

The reason this is true is because Satan is, the Bible says, the god of this world. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. As we look at how wicked our world can be, as we look at the horrible things that people are capable of, things like these horrible shootings at a place called Columbine that we've never heard of before, and other school campuses across our nation.

And I'm sure we'll hear more things like this in the days ahead. And we'll hear of horrific acts of terrorism. We'll ask ourselves the question, how could people be capable of such a thing? And oh, how we want to scapegoat.

Some would say it's the fault of the conservatives. And others would say it's the fault of the liberals. And some would say it's the fault of guns.

And others would say it's the NRA. It's Marilyn Manson. It's this.

It's that. And meanwhile, the culprit who's behind it all usually gets away without ever getting blamed. I'm talking about Satan.

Well isn't that convenient? The devil made them do it? You don't think he did? You don't think that the devil is behind some of these things that we're seeing in our culture right now? Of course he is. And then the greatest deception that he's pulled off is convincing people he does not even exist while he is manipulating so many lives. And that is why any attempt to reform our culture apart from the power of Jesus Christ will ultimately end in failure.

Politics can't change our culture. Religion in itself cannot change our culture. Morality can't change our culture.

Technology can't change our culture. Only the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God can change the heart of a man or a woman. But Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world because he is essentially over it.

He's saying, Jesus, here's the deal. I know why you've come. I know that you've come to purchase back that which was lost in the Garden of Eden.

I know that you're after the title deed of the earth. I know that you're going to buy it back in the cross and I'm going to make you a deal you cannot refuse. If you will give me the momentary satisfaction of falling down before me and worshiping me, I'll give this all to you.

In other words, no cross, no pain, no suffering. It's yours. I'll give it to you.

Just fall down and worship me. Why would that be a potential temptation to our Lord? Because Satan was offering him a way around the cross. And make no mistake about it.

The last thing Jesus wanted to do was go to the cross. He knew the pain he would suffer there. He knew that he would have to take all the sin of the world upon himself.

And you remember that. Simon Peter was at a place called Caesarea Philippi once. And Jesus said to the boys, hey, who do men say that I am? One person said, well, some say you're John the Baptist.

Come back from the dead. Others say you're Jeremiah. Well, who do you say that I am? Peter said, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus said, hey, did you guys hear that? Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you, Peter, but my Father who is in heaven. Boy, Peter was feeling good. Hello.

If he had suspenders, he'd have been pulling on them right then. Did you hear that, guys? Singled me out. Peter was feeling good.

Then Jesus continues on. He says, I, the Son of Man, am going to be betrayed. I'll be crucified, but I'll rise again on the third day.

Peter, apparently thinking he was on some kind of a roll, said, Lord, be it far from you, and began to rebuke Jesus. And Jesus said to Peter, get behind me, Satan, for you are an offense unto me. Whoa.

I mean, one moment it's like flesh and blood didn't give this to you, but my Father, now it's get behind me, Satan. But it just goes to show that Peter, one moment, spoke of the inspiration of God, and the other moment, it was from the devil. And the point of it was, was Peter was saying, Lord, skip the cross.

Don't go and die on the cross. Bad PR move. Not good for your career, Lord.

You're on a roll right now. Things are going your way. You go get yourself crucified.

What good is that? Be it far from you. Listen to me. I am the guy that has all the good ideas.

You said it yourself. Get behind me, Satan. Because any attempt to keep Jesus from going to the cross was from the pit of hell.

Jesus knew he had to go and die on that cross. There was no other way to deal with the sin issue. Satan's saying, I know why you've come, Jesus.

I know why you're here. I know your agenda. I'm offering you a way around it.

Worship me. And that's really what the devil's always wanted. He wanted to be God.

That's why he lost his once exalted position in heaven. Satan is the ultimate disgruntled employee. He wanted to be God.

He wants to be worshipped as God. And now he's just saying, all right, Lord, just worship me and you can have it. I'll give it to you.

Of course, Jesus responds, I'll worship the Lord God. And notice what Jesus says in him. Only show you serve.

Interesting. Satan said nothing about service. He just said, worship me.

But Jesus recognized a moment's worship can lead to a lifetime of service. Let me repeat that. I want you to think about it.

A moment of worship can lead to a lifetime of service. Just a moment, a moment at an altar. The altar of materialism.

You know, I just know if I can reach these certain goals, I'm going to be happy. If I get this certain kind of car and this certain kind of house and this certain kind of position, I'll be happy. You get it.

Okay. Well, now I need a faster car and a bigger house and a higher position. You get it.

Okay. Now I need three faster cars and four bigger houses and this position. You get it.

Okay. Now I need a jet. I need two jets.

And I need, you know, and it just keeps going up and up. You can bow at that altar and never be satisfied. I'll just gamble this one time.

I'll just get this win. Oh, whoa, I won. Oh, I'll just gamble again.

Oh, another time. Just a little time. A moment at that altar can lead to a lifetime of regret.

A moment at the altar of sexual sin can lead to a lifetime of regret. Oh, just this one time. We'll never do it again.

I won't tell anyone if you won't. If you love me, you'll do it. Famous last words.

And then there's maybe pregnancy. Oh, we didn't plan for that. Maybe there's AIDS.

Maybe there's some other problem. Or a moment at the altar of adultery. You know, it's one time.

One night fling. It's okay. It doesn't matter.

She doesn't mean anything to me. He doesn't mean anything to me. A lifetime of regret.

Be careful because where you bow is where you'll end up serving. And Jesus said, You shall worship the Lord God in Him only shall you serve. You see, tonight we're bowing at the altar of Jesus Christ.

And this is also where we are serving. This is the right place to be. This is the altar we've chosen to bow at.

Because everyone bows at some altar. Not me. I don't believe in God.

Doesn't matter. You bow at some altar. No, I don't bow at any altar.

Then you bow at your own altar. You worship yourself. You worship something.

There's something you live for. Something you aim for. Something you get up in the morning for.

Everyone lives for something. Everyone believes in something. We as Christians have chosen to bow at the Lord's altar.

And that's where we end up serving. And so Jesus refutes this temptation. And now, finally, we come to the final temptation of Jesus.

Verses 9 to 11. Satan brings Him to Jerusalem. Sets Him on the pinnacle of the temple and says, If you're the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.

Now, check this out. The devil quotes scripture. For it is written, the devil says, He'll give His angels charge over you to keep you.

And in their hands they'll bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. Now, Satan happened to be quoting from Psalm 91. But he left out a part.

Because Psalm 91, verses 11 to 12 says this. He'll give His angels charge over you to keep you in all of your ways. In their hands they'll bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

The phrase that was left out was to keep you in all of your ways. In other words, Satan said, Go ahead and jump up. The angels will catch you.

And he left out the part. As you're kept in the ways of the Lord. He'll give His angels charge over you to keep you in all of your ways.

Now, if the devil leaves something out, I want to know what it is. Because if he omitted it, it must be significant. And it is.

Because if you read the context of Psalm 91, it's a psalm of God's protection and blessing for His children. And it's contingent upon us doing certain things. Walking with the Lord.

Staying close to the Lord. Essentially, it's saying if you walk in the ways of the Lord, He'll keep you. That means, as a Christian, you don't have to be afraid of stuff, you know.

With all this Y2K stuff. You know, I never bought into that. Embedded chips.

Be careful. The airplanes will fall out of the air. The world's going to end.

Buy gold. Stock up on water. You know, all the hype was out there.

And some well-meaning people propagated this. And others who maybe wanted to make a few bucks for themselves propagated it. And some people bought into it.

What if the world ends? What if this happens? What if that happens? Oh, there's so many things you can be afraid of. But it's so great to know that when you're walking with Jesus Christ, you can get up in the morning and face each day knowing that God is in control. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Bible says. Now, that doesn't mean that I take unnecessary chances and do stupid things. But what it does mean is I know that God's protection is going to be in my life.

And nothing's going to happen to me until God's done with me. It means that I, as a Christian, realize that I am indestructible until the Lord is done with me. Even kryptonite can't stop me.

But when my number's up, it's up. You see. So that means I can just go through life saying, don't worry about it, man.

You know, each day is in the hands of the Lord. To live is Christ. To die is gain.

It's in God's hands. I don't know. I'm not going to worry about it.

I mean, you can be paralyzed by fear, can't you? But here's what Satan is saying. Hey, jump off a cliff, man. You know, the angels will catch you.

No, there's a big difference between trusting the Lord and testing the Lord. And Satan was advocating that Jesus prove his divinity by taking a foolish chance and the Lord was unwilling to do it. And I want you to notice the way the Lord responded to Satan each time.

He came back with the Word of God. And this brings me to my fifth and last point, and that is how do we resist Satan's attacks? That is primarily through the Word of God. Listen to me now.

Jesus faced Satan as a man. And by that I mean he did not use his divine privileges. He could have said, Satan, get lost.

You're making me sick, all right? Satan would have had to leave. You know, this is Christ speaking. Greater than the devil.

Far greater. But he didn't do that. He faced Satan as a man and occupied ground that we can occupy, thus setting an example for us to follow in the day of temptation.

How did he resist? By quoting the Word of God. He didn't there left himself out of there. I am leaving.

I'm gone, okay? I don't have to put up with this. I'm God. Bye.

No. He stood there and he faced him and he resisted with the Word of God and it shows us how to fight when we're attacked using the Word. It is written.

He wants you to turn this rock into a piece of bread. It is written. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

He wanted to fall down and worship me. It is written. You shall worship the Lord God and Him only shall you serve.

Hey, why don't you jump off this high point here because it is written. He'll give his angels charge of you. Ah, but it's also written.

You shall not tempt the Lord your God. It is written. It is written.

It's the sword of the Spirit. In Ephesians 6 we're told of the various pieces of spiritual armor that God has given that we're to use when we come into spiritual battle. There's the helmet of salvation.

There's the shield of faith. There's the breastplate of righteousness. Having your feet shot in the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Having your belt, gird about with the, or your waist belt, or gird with the belt of truth. Okay? Now of all those pieces of weaponry, there's only one that's potentially defensive and offensive. It's a sword of the Spirit.

Which is what? The word of God. Okay, now. If you're in a battle, you're like a Roman soldier, and your enemy's coming at you, you see him running your way, what do you do? You throw your helmet at him.

Get back! You know? Do you fling your shield at him, or try to beat him to death with your sandal? Get back! This is a lethal sandal. I'll use it. No, of course not.

A shield is for deflecting a blow. A breastplate is to protect your vital organs. No, the sword is what you attack with.

You use the word of God. So when Satan comes to you and says, I'm taking you down. You're history.

I'm going to wipe... No, it is written. There's no temptation in taking me, but such as is common to man. God, who is faithful, will not allow me to be tempted above which I am able.

Oh yeah, well I'm greater than Christ. No, no. It is written.

Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. Oh yeah, well... And he'll fire these things at you, and you come back to the word of God. You understand? That's why you need to commit Scripture to memory.

It's good to keep a Bible in your briefcase or in your purse, but the best place to hide the word of God is in your heart. Why? Because the Bible says, Psalm is speaking, Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you. And when you get the word of God deeply embedded in your heart and mind, it will

give you the resources you need in the day of temptation.

Check this out. Success or failure in the Christian life is dependent on how much of the Bible you get into your heart and mind on a regular basis, and how obedient you are to it. Let me repeat that.

Success or failure in the Christian life is dependent on how much of the Bible you get into your heart and mind on a regular basis, and how obedient you are to it. Because if you neglect the study of Scripture, your spiritual life will ultimately unravel. Because everything we need to know about God is taught in the Bible.

Therefore, as believers, we must make it a priority to memorize the word of God. Because Jesus gave us that example. It is written.

It is written. You know, I committed verses to memory when I was just a kid that are still with me today. And I'm so thankful for that.

I mean, verses I memorized so long ago, and they're still there. And I can still draw upon them. You never waste your time when you commit the Bible to memory.

I mean, I have all these other things committed to memory that I'm amazed ever got in there, and they're still there. I never even took the time to memorize them, but I remember stupid lyrics from 50s commercials on television, you know, that I never sat down and said, okay, I'm now going to memorize this commercial, you know. But somehow it's there, and boy, that little thing of trigger, oh, there it is again, you know.

The word of God, that takes a commitment to memorize it. It won't just jump in your head, you know. You don't go to bed at night and say, Lord, just let the Bible jump in my head.

You've got to take the time to read it and to memorize it, to get it in your mind, to get it in your heart, to lay up His Word in your heart. Deuteronomy 11, 18 to 20 says, lay these words in your heart, teach them to your children, and you shall write them. I found an excellent way to get the Bible in my memory banks is to write it down or to type it out.

I don't know what it is about doing that, but it helps me personally. I know you all have photographic memories, and you don't have to do that, but I do. And writing something down certainly is a helpful way to memorize it.

And you know, that's, by the way, why I often give you references for verses. I'm not doing that to impress you. Hint, hint.

The idea is so you might write those down and then look them up later and better yet, commit those verses to memory that you might draw upon them in your day of temptation, because I don't know who you are, or I don't care who you are. I don't know who you are either, but that's... Everyone's going to face temptation one way, shape, or form. But the good news, as I said in the beginning, is God won't give me more than I can handle.

You see, because when Jesus went to the cross of Calvary, He dealt a decisive blow against Satan and his followers. In fact, the Bible says that the cross, Jesus obliterated the handwritten document of ordinances that was against us, and He nailed it to the cross, having stripped off and away from Himself

the principalities and authorities and made an example of them. In other words, at the cross of Calvary, Jesus purchased back that which was lost in the Garden of Eden, the title deed of the earth, which simply means that now, when the man or the woman, the boy or the girl, puts their faith in Jesus Christ, they're no longer under Satan's power.

They come under the protection of Jesus Christ. But let me add this. If you're not a Christian, you're very vulnerable.

The devil can pretty much do what he wants in the life of the non-believer. There are certainly ways we can open the door in our lives to satanic influence without question. Dabbling in occultism would open the door.

Opening the door to drugs, dabbling with those things can do it as well. But the point is, if you have not put your faith in Christ, Satan can come and manipulate your life and even take control of a life. You say, no, he won't take control of my life.

Why is that? Because I have garlic around my neck. Ooh. Yeah, that scares him.

If that fails, get out the silver bullets. And if all else fails, pull out a crucifix. Crucifix and holy water.

Man, he hates the holy water. Let me tell you something. You've been watching too many movies, okay? Satan's not afraid of garlic.

You'll just stink, that's all. Silver bullets won't stop him. Holy water won't stop him.

Crucifixes won't stop him. I know, I'll turn the lights on. No, you've got to understand something.

None of that stuff will stop him. The only power that is greater than the power of Satan is the power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And that's why you need him in your life.

Not just religion. Not just a belief in a God out there somewhere. Not just a ritual you've gone through here or there.

No, I am talking about Christ himself living inside of you. Because as I already mentioned, as the scripture says, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Meaning, Jesus Christ is greater than Satan.

Is Christ living inside of you right now? If not, you're vulnerable. If not, the devil can make havoc of your life. Let me tell you something.

Here's a contrast for you to consider as I close. Jesus said, I have come that you might have life and not more abundantly. Here's God's plan for you.

I've come to give you life and not more abundantly. He says in contrast, speaking of Satan, the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. Here's a choice for you.

Follow the God who loves you and wants to give you a life that's worth living or follow the devil that wants to steal you out of God's protection. He wants to kill you. He wants to destroy you.

Well, how about if I follow neither? I'll just follow my own path. But see, the problem is if you're not walking in the Lord's path, you're automatically walking in the devil's. No, no, I don't even believe there's a devil.

Well, that doesn't mean he's not real. Well, I don't think he's real. Well, see, here's the greatest deception of all.

He's manipulating your life and you don't even think he's there. The Bible says that God of this world, speaking of Satan, has blinded the eyes of those that do not believe. He's blinded you to think that you're running your own life.

And he's ruining it. And he's pulling you down the tubes. I'm praying that tonight God would help you to see your desperate need for Jesus Christ.

Because listen, you have broken God's commandments. You've sinned against God. I don't care how good of a life you've lived.

I don't care how moral of a person you may have been or tried to be. You've still fallen short of God's standards because the Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And there's not one righteous.

No, not even one. Every person has fallen short. Every person stands guilty before God.

But God loved you so much he sent his son Jesus to go to that cross. And though the devil tried to divert Jesus from it, Jesus would not hear of it. And he went to Calvary's cross and he died there for your sins because he knew there was no other way that you could be brought into a relationship with God.

He wouldn't let hell or high water keep him from it because he loved you. I love the words of Paul who said, he loved me and he gave himself for me. And that's why Christ went to that cross because he loved you.

And he gave himself for you. True, he loved the world, but he loved you. Listen, you as a person.

He died there for you because there was no other way for you to come into this relationship with God. And that same Jesus who died on the cross and took the sin of the world upon himself then rose again from the dead and he is alive and he's here in this room with us right now. And he's saying, I stand at the door and I knock and if you'll hear my voice and open the door, I will come in.

There's not a better way you could start the 21st century. That sounds so futuristic, doesn't it? But it's here. No better way you could start it than with Jesus Christ in your heart.

Knowing that your sin is forgiven. I mean, this last year you thought, oh man, I need to make some changes. I need to make these resolutions.

Listen, you're not going to be able to keep those resolutions. You need God's help. You need his forgiveness.

You need Christ himself to come and live inside of you. Have you asked him to come in? Would you like to be forgiven of all of your sin? Would you like to know that when you die, you'll go to heaven? It can happen for you tonight. Now there's two ways you can go in life.

You can go the Lord's way or you can go in the devil's way. There are no other choices. God says, behold, I set before you death and life, blessings and curses.

Choose life that you may live. You have a choice tonight. And I invite you to walk in the way of the Lord and ask Christ to come into your heart.

You might ask, well Greg, how does a person do that exactly? Through prayer. That is why in a moment we're going to pray together and I'm going to invite you to ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart. So you can leave Calvary Chapel tonight knowing that your sin is forgiven.

Knowing that if you died tonight, you would go to heaven. Having that void inside of you filled with God himself. There might be some of you that walk with the Lord as a young man or a young woman, but you've fallen away and you need to come back to Christ tonight.

I'm going to invite you to return to the Lord and start this year outright walking with Jesus Christ. I'm going to ask as we pray in these next few moments that nobody get up and leave early or move around. I want every believer in this room to be in prayer for these that are making the most important decision of their lives, okay? So let's pray now for these that are going to make this decision for Christ.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you tonight for sending your son Jesus to this earth to die on that cross and to pay for our sins. Now we pray you will help those that do not yet know you to see their need for you and help them to come to you.

We pray in Jesus name. Now while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed and we're praying together, how many of you would say tonight, Greg, pray for me. I want Jesus Christ to come into my heart.

I want him to forgive me of my sin. I want to know that when I die, I will go to heaven. I am ready to say yes to Jesus tonight.

Pray for me. If that's your desire. If you want Jesus to come into your life tonight and forgive you of your sin and give you the hope of heaven, I want you to lift your hand up right now and I'm going to pray for you.

God bless you. Down here toward the front. God bless you on the side.

Little guy there. God bless you. In the back.

God bless each one of you. Anybody else? You want Christ to come into your life tonight. You want his forgiveness.

Lift your hand up. Let me pray for you. God bless you.

This is a decision only you can make. Someone else can't make it for you. You have to say, Lord, come into my life.

Have you done that yet? Are you sure? If not, you can't be. Anybody else? Well, our heads are still bowed. You want Christ to come into your life tonight.

Raise your hand up. God bless you. Well, our heads are still bowed.

Maybe some of you would say, I've fallen away from the Lord. I've pushed him out of my life. I haven't made time for him.

But I want to return to Christ tonight. I want to come back to him this evening. Pray for me.

If that's your desire, I want you to lift your hand up right now. Let me pray for you. God bless you.

Anybody else? God bless each one. Yes. God bless all of you.

Lord, thank you for each one of these. Help them to follow you from this night forward. Help them to make this decision to follow you so they can look back on this night as the night they made that commitment and met it.

Give them the strength now to do that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Everyone that Jesus calls, he calls openly and publicly. And we're going to do the same tonight. The moment our worship group is going to lead us in a song of invitation.

And I'm going to ask as they sing the song of you raise your hand with me during that last moment of prayer saying that you want Christ to come inside. I'm going to ask when this song begins that you'd get up out of your seat, walk down these aisles, stand in front of the platform, and when you get up here I'll lead you in a prayer of commitment to Christ. Now why do I ask you to come publicly? You might say, I'll just do it in my seat if you don't mind.

Well, I'm not denying the fact Christ would not come into your life right where you're sitting. But doing it publicly is a way of saying you mean business now, isn't it? Because Jesus said, if you'll acknowledge me before people, I'll acknowledge you before my Father and the angels in heaven. But if you deny me before people, I'll deny you before the Father and the angels.

This is a way to acknowledge Him before people. You can do it quietly in your seat, and you can walk quietly out the door, and you can quietly never tell anyone what you did and not do anything about it. When you stand up and walk down an aisle, you're saying, I'm serious now.

I don't care who sees me because I mean it. And I want to stand up and be counted and follow Christ. Maybe you did not lift your hand, but you want Him in your life tonight.

You get up and come as well. And you don't want to come back to the Lord. You join them.

So again, if you raise your hand, even if you did not, but you want your sin forgiven, you want to know that when you die, you'll go to heaven. You want that emptiness inside of you filled. You want Christ to come into your life, or you want to come back to the Lord.

Right now, wherever you're sitting, I want you to get up out of your seat, come on down these aisles, stand here in the front, and I'll pray for you when you get here. God bless you. Get up and come.

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