

Fighting Temptation - Part 1

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman discusses the nature of temptation and how to effectively combat it through the power of the Holy Spirit and Scripture.

Duration: 1:09:37

Scripture: Matthew 4:7, Luke 15:11

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of seeking a fully surrendered life to God, asking for His Spirit to fill and empower believers to overcome challenges. It emphasizes the need for hope, peace, love, and joy that come from God's presence and control. The message warns against testing God's limits and highlights the loving call of God to repent and return to Him, promising redemption and guidance despite past mistakes.

Transcript

Lord, again, we want to just ask, Lord, that You would bless this service. Lord, I pray for clarity and direction. Lord, I pray for precision with Your Word.

Lord, I pray, though, that You would go in and begin to radically change hearts tonight, Lord, so people could follow You wholeheartedly. Lord, we want to know the fully surrendered life. Lord, we want You to fill us with Your Spirit.

We want to be conquerors, Lord. We want to overcome these things. Please help us tonight.

Lord, I pray tonight for the people who need hope, desperate hope. You're all they have, Lord. I pray that You would just begin to give them peace tonight, Lord.

Fill them with Your peace. Fill them with Your love. Fill them with Your joy.

Show them that You're still on the throne, that You're in control. Lord, I pray that You would begin to change lives, Lord, tonight. Even those who are not here, as we pray for the spouses that are not here, or the young adults that need to be here that are not, Lord, that aren't walking with You.

We pray tonight that You would bring a strong sense of conviction. Lord, let the hound of heaven loose on them. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, welcome to West Side Christian Fellowship. I've got a lot to say and not a lot of time to say it.

This area of temptation and fighting temptation has been on my heart definitely all month, because all of us go through temptations. And we would be remiss to ignore that fact, as if we come into church, and I've overcome. I'm good.

I'm not tempted with anything. When Jesus Himself was tempted, like we are in all points, yet He was without sin. And I will submit to you that this area of temptation is what will cause a soul to plummet.

It will break up marriages. It will cause young adults to reject God. This area of temptation, what temptation is, and we'll get into it, is it's actually what the enemy uses to pull us away from God.

That's how serious this is. We're talking about something that pulls us away from God, away from our relationship with God, away from purity and holiness and righteousness. It goes after those things that God considers very important.

So this is an important topic, and I think, especially in the church today, in America today, we are tempted beyond anything, anything that I think future generations have ever seen. I mean, it is absolutely alarming what we see on the video screens and the computers, and temptation is everywhere. We are surrounded by it.

It has engulfed us. And a lot of times we just give up. It's too hard.

I just give up. I surrender. Because I'm not going to continue fighting this beast within.

But God's Word has a lot to say about that, and I want to take the time to look at Luke 4. If you have your Bibles, Luke 4. And Bernie, I'm wondering if you can dim these lights just a little bit that are shining down on me. Luke 4. And actually it was yesterday I came across a story on this issue of temptation about a young boy named Alexander. Now Alexander was praying for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks that he would save enough pennies up to buy a baseball bat.

And he was getting frustrated. It wasn't working out. And his mom heard him pray one night, and his prayer went something like this, God, please help me.

Help me save enough pennies to buy this baseball bat. And then he continued, and God, please don't let the ice cream truck man come down our street anymore. Please.

But don't we do that? God, please help me do this. But please don't let me see that woman at work anymore. Or that man on my job.

Or those things. God, please. And He will help us.

But as I've said many times before, sanctification is God's job. It is His job to change us through the power of the Holy Spirit. But obedience is our job.

And a lot of times, what happens is the two extremes, where we either rely all on God, it's all God's job, I'm just going to sit at home, eat donuts, watch TV, and He's going to change me. Well, it doesn't quite work that way. And then the other side says, I've got to do all these things and do all these things, I've got to follow all these rules, I've got to get really rigid, I've got to get really regimented, I can't keep falling off the wagon, I've got to do, I've got to do, I've got to do, I've got to do.

And that's unhealthy too. Because we don't rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to change us. That's one of His roles.

He brings in the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, contentment, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, goodness, self-control. Yeah, that's a fruit of the Spirit.

So that is the marriage of God working within us, yet obeying the Word of God. They come together on this area of temptation. And in Luke 4 we find a very interesting story where Jesus Himself was tempted.

Jesus Christ was tempted. Did you know that? The writer of Hebrews says that we have a high priest who has been tempted. And a high priest just means we have a mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

He's our mediator. In the Old Testament imagery they would know that because a high priest would go in and intercede for the people. He was their mediator.

So Hebrews is using that same language. And the writer of Hebrews is saying we have a high priest who can relate to us because he was tempted in all points. All points as we are, yet he was without sin.

You might say, well how is Jesus tempted with adultery? He wasn't even married. How was He tempted with abusing His child? He didn't even have any kids. You have to remember though when the Bible talks about tempted in all points as we are, we like to get specific.

Where the Bible just says it's all that's in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Jesus was tempted on all three of those areas. Sin is sin, but we sometimes get specific.

In our culture today many of you know the big debate now with same-sex marriage. And we put that same-sex attraction, we put it way up there on the sin list. That is as high as you can go.

Boy, you're at the top of our list and that is as bad as it gets. Yet the man can still continue to cheat on his wife, look at porn throughout the week, and that's no big deal. At least I'm not up here.

No. The Bible says all that's in the world, the lust of the flesh, anything the flesh goes after from slothful living. We don't hear that word very much.

The Bible talks about it. Laziness, the lust of the flesh, eating too much, consuming too much, drinking too much, the sexuality of human nature being disordered. All that is the lust of the flesh.

So Jesus was tempted in that area. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, what the eye sees, covetousness. I want what is not mine.

Doesn't that look good? I want that. So I'm now going to compromise my integrity. I'm going to compromise my lifestyle.

I'm going to make choices I probably shouldn't because I want that. So either the lust of the flesh is going to get you or the lust of the eye. I just saw this commercial the other day.

I don't remember where I was at. And I'm like, man, that car looks really nice. And it's just how they just, you know, it's just driving.

And you just turn this knob to put it in drive. And, you know, it's the new Jaguar. I rent it for 700 a month and it's probably 50,000 down or who knows.

And it's like, boy, that looks, for a minute there, they're drawing me in there. That looks really good. Why do you think they spend millions and millions and millions of dollars for one minute during the Super Bowl? The lust of the flesh.

Millions of dollars for 60 seconds. It's called suggestive selling. Showing you and I, something's okay.

I mean, you got to shave. I know. But some things are not that great.

And they'll pay high dollar amounts to suggest, because they know. They've done their marketing research. They have marketing departments, guys that are paying \$150,000, \$200,000 a year to entice you, to entice me to purchase things we don't need.

It's called suggestive. So they are going after the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and then the Jaguar commercial, wouldn't you look so good in this? The pride of life. That's all he ever uses.

When it comes to temptation, he's going to get you in one of those three areas. That's it. It's not really hard.

When Eve saw that the fruit was pleasant to the eye, good for food, and desirable to make one wise, she took of it and ate. He got her with all three bullets right there. So now we come into Luke.

He's going to do the same thing to Jesus. And what I'm trying to do, there's something in the military that they, basically it's a phrase they say, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. So to be warned of something, now you're armed, now you're prepared, now you can go into battle.

What's happening, we're going into battle unarmed, unprepared, and untrained, and the enemy's just taking his best shot and he's hitting us left and right all the time. It's like dropping somebody off in the battlefield of Iraq with just a backpack and a pair of shorts and a shirt. Go get him.

He's not prepared. He'll be easy prey. So it's in that setting that the devil's going to come to Jesus himself and tempt him.

Now something that's interesting, I don't have time, but if you look at Luke 1, it talks about John the Baptist coming on the scene. And John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He was coming before Christ doing what? Preaching repentance.

Prepare thee the way of the Lord. Repent and be ready. The King is coming.

So he was the forerunner. And Jesus blew his mind. He walked down to the Jordan River and he said, I need you to baptize me.

And John the Baptist said, whoa, wait a minute. I'm not even worthy to unloose your sandal straps, let alone baptize the Son of God. And Jesus said something remarkable.

He said, suffer it so that all righteousness may be fulfilled in the King James. Suffer it so that all righteousness may be fulfilled. In other words, he's saying this has to happen.

I need to be baptized so I can go down, come up. The Father say, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased and the Spirit of God descending upon him as a dove. And the Bible records Jesus himself was filled with the Spirit of God at that point.

He didn't begin his ministry until he was empowered for this work. And then it says, and then being filled with the Spirit, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted. And I will submit to you that that is number one.

Number one, if you're going to overcome the enemy and overcome temptation, live the victorious Christian life, you've got to be filled with the Spirit of God. And that goes back to a lot of what I talked about with holiness and our lifestyle and our choices, what we're feeding our mind, who we're associating with. I'm not going to go over all that again because I really went over it a lot then.

So go back, listen to those messages. But being filled with the Spirit of God because now you're living in the power of God doesn't mean you're going to be exempt from temptation. As a matter of fact, sometimes it comes even more, more.

Now the enemy knows that he's filled with the Spirit of God, he's doing ministry. Now I'm going to come in and tempt him. So you have to remember something.

The thief cometh only to kill, to steal, and to destroy. Temptation just looks good. That just looks good.

But it's there to wreak havoc. So the devil's going to come in and try to derail Jesus and look forward. You have your Bibles there.

I'll probably read from the, I prefer the King James, the New King James, but I printed the NIV, so here we go. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. So the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness.

For 40 days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of those days he was hungry. The devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.

Jesus answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. The devil led him up to a high place and showed him. Now I want you to watch these.

Man shall not live by bread alone. He's going after the lust of the flesh. He's extremely hungry.

We can't even go one day. We can't even skip a meal. We need something.

He tried going weeks and without eating. The enemy comes in at opportune times. He knows when to come in.

He knows when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He comes in at opportune times.

So here's the lust of the flesh, right here. And Jesus says, Man does not live by bread alone. The verse continues, Deuteronomy, I believe he's quoting, But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

So Jesus stops right there, the lust of the flesh. Don't even go there. Then the devil led him to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

See, the devil is the prince of this world. The devil has control of this world's system, the world's mindset. Underneath God's sovereignty, of course.

But the devil has control of all that. And he led Jesus to the high place and showed him. And said, I will give you all this authority and all this splendor because it's been given to me.

And I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, this will all be yours. The lust of the eye.

All this will be yours. And you have to remember, Jesus just came out of obscurity. He's not into notoriety yet.

Nobody knows this man, Jesus. Only a few people. Obscurity, carpenter, poor, coming out, coming on the scene.

The enemy says, right now, bow to me, and I will give you everything you see. What's Jesus saying? You shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only that shall you worship. You see the constant theme here? What he's doing here? The problem is, you don't know the word because the word of God is not in you.

That's the weapons of our warfare. You have to know the attacks of the enemy and how to respond. Then the devil led him to Jerusalem.

And had him stand on the highest point of the temple. Way up high. Some commentators say it's probably some 60, 70, 80 feet or higher.

He's up on top of the very temple, the pinnacle of the temple. If you are the son of God, he's saying, if you are the son of God, prove it. Show us that you're the son of God.

Jump off of this temple, for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. The devil is quoting Psalms, I believe it is. He's quoting the scripture saying, look at Jesus, show off.

Scripture says that you will not dash your foot against a stone. The angels will come and save you. Look, I'm quoting scripture.

So be very careful when people quote scripture. The enemy at the beginning of time in Genesis, he told Eve, did God really say? Did God really say you couldn't eat of that fruit? Did he really say that? And Jesus comes right back. Jesus answered, it is said, do not put the Lord your God to the test.

In other words, do not tempt God. Do not test God. And a lot of you guys probably read, or maybe you hadn't read, or maybe it was just me, the guy who was a snake handler a few weeks back, Pentecostal snake handler, and got bit by a snake, and said, I'm not going to die, because look at it.

Well, yeah, he died. And so did his dad, I think, from a few years before that. I'm not trying to, I'm just trying to say, we cannot tempt the Lord thy God.

Those scriptures are out of context. Those scriptures, when he talks about, if you're bitten by a serpent, you will not die. Drink poison.

As you're ministering, as you're on the mission field, if things happen to you, God will guide you, his sovereignty. You don't go and test those things. Or you might, you let a rattlesnake bite you, you're not

going to make it.

So that's what he's saying here. Jesus answered, do not put the Lord your God to a test. Now this is amazing.

Every time I read this verse, I went back and looked, I've been through the Gospels quite a few times, dozens of times, and every time I get to this verse, it makes me stop and pray or think, oh my God. The devil, it says, when the devil had finished all his tempting, he left him until an opportune time. What's he saying there? I'll be back.

I'll be back. And he does that in our own life. He leaves until an opportune time.

And he looks for those times where he can go in, moments of weakness, different areas he can go and he can begin to destroy. Because he knows, see there's a big lie out there, the devil made me do it. I think, who's that coined by? Some of you older adults.

Flip Wilson? The devil made me do it. And he would just go around, the devil made me do it. The devil doesn't make us do anything.

So what happens? Well, I'm going to get to that. And I broke the sermon up into two parts, and I hope to God I get through both. But you have to remember, in battle, enemies attack at opportune times.

Some of you guys who are in the military, you know you have to go through training. And generals and sergeants, all these guys, they're looking for opportunities of where to strike the enemy, take out their air base, take out their food supply, hit their communications. They're not just going to go bomb something for no reason.

They look for opportunities to attack. And the enemy does the same thing. So that's why we have to put the guard up.

That's why the Christian faith isn't some game, as you've heard me say before. Life is a battleground, not a playground. For this very reason, it is a battleground.

The enemy comes in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard against him. How does he raise up that standard? Well, let's talk about this. Part one, understanding temptation.

Now, to talk about something, you might say, Yeah, temptation, I understand. Eve, the apple, got it. Well, it wasn't really an apple.

I think it was a fruit. I mean, we use that in our culture today. But she was tempted, I know about it.

Well, let's talk about understanding temptation for a minute. I just have four things under this heading, and then I'll go to the next one. But it's important.

Number one, do you realize, when it comes to temptation, that your flesh... Now, I might offend some people right here. But I'm going to say, with all the love I can muster. Okay, I'll say it with a smile on my face.

Maybe tell a joke to get everybody, okay, it wasn't so difficult. The flesh in you and the flesh in me is in rebellion to God. The sinful nature in us is in rebellion to God.

It does not like God. It does not like the ways of God. It does not like the means of God.

It'll tell you, don't come to church. It'll tell you, you're too tired to pray. It'll tell you, don't worship now.

Look at that person over there you're angry at. It will tell you all kinds of things. The flesh, the flesh, it makes you eat too much.

It makes you drink too much. It makes you sleep too long. It makes you be rude.

It makes you be this. It makes you be lazy. The flesh hates anything to do with God.

Do you have a proof text for that? Oh, absolutely. It's the best one found in the Bible. Romans 8, 7, right there.

It should be in your notes. The notes, one reason I do it, so you can go home and reflect on it and pray on it. And say, Lord, show me these areas and go and study some of these.

Romans 8, 7, the carnal mind. You see, here's a distinction too. When he talks about the carnal mind, it's the flesh side of us, the sinful nature.

And inside of a believer of Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit. And I don't quite understand this. I don't understand the hypostatic union of Christ either, being fully man and fully God.

But we just accept those things. So we also accept that we have the Holy Spirit of God residing in us. Convicting us.

Drawing us. Leading us. The Spirit of God is within me.

But guess who else is in there? The flesh, the carnal mind. And Romans breaks it down saying that our choices are never free from this conflict. Walk in the Spirit.

You will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Whatever things are pure, whatever things are noble, put your mind, meditate on these things. It's this battle within.

And you've heard stories, I've heard stories about, I remember Billy Graham told one years ago. And I've told this probably last year. But there was a man who came to a pastor and he said, Pastor, I am going to, I'm on the verge of suicide.

I have, it's like I have two dogs battling within me. I have this evil dog battling within me who's pulling me down. Anxiety, fear, I want to destroy myself.

And I know there's this good dog, I'm a follower of Christ and I have this battle within me. What is going on? And the pastor said a very simple sentence to him that changed his life forever. He asked him, what dog is winning that battle? And he said, that evil dog is.

And he said, you need to starve that dog to death. See, he understood, as should we, that the source of our strength comes from the food that we choose. Now, I'm not dismissing anxiety, fear, different things whatsoever.

But I am saying we have to be careful because we do have almost like a dual personality. Even though it's not the same thing. We have the spirit within us and the flesh.

The flesh wants to pull us away from God. The spirit pulls us to God. So there's this battle within.

You see people fall by the wayside. How could that happen? They're in ministry. They're even on the TV.

Oh, the flesh got them. The devil got them. He pulled them down.

That's why you've got to be on your guard. Nice little conversations turn into flirtations. Conversations turn into, now how did this happen? Now we're in an affair.

How did that happen? Because the devil comes in at opportune times and begins to whittle away. That's why husbands and wives need transparency and honesty and openness. So there's not an opportunity to come in there.

And Paul talks about this, I believe it's in Corinthians, when he talks about fasting. Even a couple fasting from intimacy. He said, don't do it too long.

Come back or the devil will have an opportunity to tempt you and test you. And a lot of times we see that with couples. If they spend a weekend together, intimacy, friends again, everything's going great.

You think adultery is going to happen the next day? Or the next week? Of course not. There's no opportune time. He'll come back later, next year.

When you're all upset at each other and you can't stand each other. You wonder, how did I even get married to this person? That's when he's coming. He says, now I'm back.

You see how temptation works? The flesh is in rebellion against God. I have something in me that is in rebellion against God. That concerns me.

Because the flesh basically says, feed me so I can destroy you. That's what the flesh says. Feed me so I can destroy you.

We've heard those stories of zoo keepers, that guy in a documentary who wanted to live with grizzly bears. Feed me so I can destroy you. It's that story, you can picture a little tiny lion cub.

And they're bringing in a pound of meat. And then a couple months later, two pounds of meat. And a year later, bringing in ten pounds of meat.

And eventually the thing weighs 350 pounds. And then he eats the zoo keeper. What happened? I thought it was a nice, cuddly little lion.

But no, they are devourers. Feed me so I can destroy you. That's the flesh.

And if this gets you a little upset, that's good. That's good because you know there is an enemy within. That's healthy.

I'm not afraid as much as I am everything out there. I'm afraid of what's in. This is what's going to do me under.

The devil can't do anything. He only presents the bait. Let me read what Spurgeon said on this.

Beware of no man more than of yourself. We carry our own worst enemies within us. Think about that.

We destroy ourselves. We kill ourselves. We kill our marriages, our physical health, our spiritual health.

And that leads me to number two. The enemy simply presents the bait. That's all he does.

I've seen this. The devil makes me do it. The devil is coming after my finances.

The devil is coming after my marriage. He is, but he's not going to make you do anything. He just finds windows of opportunity there.

He just presents the bait. Some of you know this. I went fishing a few weeks back.

Randy, you'll remember too. And I was fly fishing. It's really hard.

It's hard. You have little flies and you're presenting the bait. Oh, I hope they think this is nice little mosquito.

Wait until they get that mosquito. Just presenting that bait. And I wasn't catching anything all day long.

And you look on the shore and all these people are catching lots of fish. Well, they have power bait. And they're putting on the hook.

And they just big old knobs. And they throw it out there. Let it sink.

And the fish comes along. Oh, look at that. Bam.

They just present the bait. There's the hook right there. They just present it.

That's all the enemy does. He presents it. And guess what? It looks good.

That's why it's called temptation. That's why it's called temptation. That's why it's called attraction.

When affairs happen, there's attraction. I haven't seen too many affairs where they're not attracted to the other person. I see nothing in that person.

I'm not attracted whatsoever. But I think I'm going to go leave my spouse over that. No.

There's attraction. So instead of saying, Oh, I finally met the one that I think God really wanted me to have. We're so in love.

We love each other. This is really who I should have married. I'm so happy with this person.

He makes me feel appreciated and loved and wanted. That's attraction. That's not necessarily good.

That's what he's doing. It's the bait. And you don't notice the bait until you take the hook.

So that's what the enemy does. He comes in. The lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eye. The pride of life. He simply presents the bait.

And I love what the Puritan John Owen said on this. And this is so true. And we don't want to talk about this.

But he said, Secret lusts lie lurking in our own heart. Don't they? I bet we can all name some secret lusts right now. Lurking in our own heart.

And he says, Which will never give up until they are either destroyed or they're satisfied. See those evil lusts that are lurking. They're just ready to come out.

It's not going to stop until you either satisfy it or you destroy it. That's why Paul says, Crucify the flesh. Make no provision for the flesh.

Flee temptation. All these are strong words. He said, You don't play with it.

Because if you play with it, you'll lose. Have you ever heard of the second look? You're walking down the street. First look, uh-oh.

Second look is when they get you. It's that second look. Presenting the bait and going back to that temptation.

So that's how temptation works. Number one, The flesh is in rebellion to God. So it's very easy.

Number two, The enemy simply presents the bait. That's why an affair, And I hate to harp on this point, But it fits right in with this topic. The relationship is an attraction.

A good job opportunity that Satan wants you to take. That's going to take you away from your family. Seven days a week.

Away from church. He'll make that job opportunity look alluring. Where do we get these from? Allure, fishing.

Alluring. Attractive for the flesh. It's satisfying.

Because we're feeding that thing. So you have to remember that. The flesh is not your friend.

It's not our friend. It's goal is to seek and to destroy. And also John Owen said, I wrote down this morning before I forgot, Be killing sin or sin be killing you.

It's terrible English, But it's a great point. Either be killing sin, Or sin's going to be killing you. You see, Sin and temptation doesn't just stand still.

It's like a plant. It either grows or it withers. Depending on whether you feed it or you starve it.

See, that's why you can't play patty cake with the devil. You can't play, Let's just play hard and fast with the rules. Let me live on the fence.

Let me try to, you know. No, no, no. You'll fall.

You'll never see in the Bible where it says to Entertain sin and temptation. Consider it. You'll see strong words.

Be sober. Be alert. Be vigilant.

Because your adversary, The devil, Goes about as a roaring lion, Seeking whom he may devour. Paul says, Make no provision for the flesh. Don't even think about it, Or the enemy will pull you down.

The thief comes only to kill, To steal, And to destroy. Be sober. Be alert.

And also flee sexual immorality. Don't consider it. Flee from these things.

It's like, Temptation, Go. Done. Don't even consider it.

Because it's in the considering that we fall. And a lot of times we fall because of fear. Especially in relationships that people are in, That they know they need to get out of.

They're in fear. I don't want to lose this person. I'll never find somebody else.

I'm getting old. My alarm clock's ticking. I mean, I remember when I was, My young 30's saying these things.

And it makes you make wrong choices, Because you have a false perception of things. Because temptation is coming in, And it's tempting you. So the enemy just presents the bait.

So next time you see something that's alluring, Satisfying, Enticing, Gratifying, Not all those things are bad. God has given us desires for a reason. The food is good.

Okay? Food is good for us. Intimacy, Created by God. It's very good for us.

Some of these things are good, But that's where the word perversion comes from. He perverts what is good, And makes it a false temptation. We go for it.

We take the bait. And now we ruin our lives. But as a word of encouragement, In case I forget, No matter where you're at tonight, One of the great things I love about God, Is He calls us back to Him.

No matter how far we've drifted, The prodigal son was eating slop in a pig pen. And he came running back to his father. And Jesus gave that example.

He said, come back to me. I'll clean you up. I'll restore you.

Sure, there might be consequences for our actions. Absolutely. But God is never so far away, That He's not calling us back to Him.

Saying, repent. Turn back to me. Seek me with all of your heart.

Trust in me. Look to me. And I will guide you.

I will redeem you. I will save you. I will secure you.

Look back to me. So the point of these messages, Is not to go home frustrated and failure, But to go home victorious, Because we get in right relationship with God. But sometimes it takes difficult things, To turn us around and wake us up.

Just today we were looking at a house. We're considering buying a house someday in the future. And I'm a salesman's worst nightmare.

So it might not be, It's gonna be hard. But we had two stories in this whole thing. And I'm looking, I know my son's just gonna want to jump off of there.

I can't have a two story. You know, we can't. There's no way.

Morgan says, watch, let's see this. So we take him up there. And look, are you ever gonna jump? And he, no, no, I'm not gonna jump off of that.

But you had to show him. You had to scare him. You got, these are facts.

These are real. You have to, that's what the Bible does. It's not a little nice fairytale book.

This does not make for good reading at night with your kids sometimes. Daddy, why did they take her out and stone her? Why did they kill those people? Why did he do this? Why did he, oh my Lord. Because it's to warn people.

I sent messengers to my people, rising them up early to warn them to turn from their ways and turn back to God. So that's what the Bible, it warns us. There's a tempter out there.

If it wasn't temptation, if it didn't look good, it wouldn't be difficult. And that's why, just on this note too, I'm not getting on a rabbit trail, but at men's conferences, I used to talk to a lot of guys, single guys that had a big problem with pornography. And they're like, I just know as soon as I get married, I can whip this thing.

Oh God, no. There's no way you're gonna whip this thing when you get married as if that's gonna satisfy this thing. Actually, it gets worse sometimes.

It gets more perverted. It destroys the marriage. The very foundation of trust is destroyed.

The intimacy is gone. You don't wanna see them anymore, spend time with them, touch them because of these things. So you're not gonna just change, this temptation is, it comes into the marriage just as much as singles when you're married.

That's why you've gotta put on the whole armor of God and you've gotta withstand, withstand the wiles of the devil. See, we don't wanna hear those things. The Bible tells me, withstand, can't God just change me? How many of us in here pray, Lord, just please take this away.

Please take this away. Young men pray that all the time when they're young and single. Lord, please take away this lust.

And I'm telling you, you better pray to God He doesn't take away that when you get married. It can be for a good godly purpose. But we pray, Lord, take this away, take this away.

But sometimes we don't understand that the escape route has already been provided. Look at these words the Bible uses, withstand the wiles of the devil. Having done all, stand, stand therefore.

With your loins girt about with truth and righteousness and holiness and purity. There's action words on our part. And let me get to that real quick.

And number three, though, before I forget, when I talk about the words temptation, most people think of, especially men, sexual temptation. That's what, right, oh, talking about temptation, they go right there, right there every time. Notice how Jesus, that didn't even come up in this whole discourse on temptation.

Nothing to do with that. So temptation comes in many different forms, many different facets. But it was the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye.

That's what he went after with Jesus. Basically, temptation is anything that causes you to turn from the right path. You're on the right path with God.

We say, I'm gonna follow God with all my heart. I want a marriage that's solid. I want a marriage that's gonna stand.

I'm gonna, all these things. The temptation comes in to derail you off of the right path. So it's anything that the enemy presents to get you out of prayer time.

You're so busy. You're so busy all the time. Now there's no time for prayer, no time for this.

Bitterness comes in. Bitterness, anger, resentment comes in. The enemy uses those things.

Yeah, yeah, see, see, see. He looks for those opportune times. So it's not just sexual.

It has to do with all types of lust. And number four, the door of temptation swings both ways. You know what I mean by that? You can enter or you can exit.

When it comes to temptation, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. And let me explain why. If you have your Bibles, or I'll just read it, James 1 verse 2. Here's the benefits of testing and trials and temptation.

And before I forget, do you know the temptation's not necessarily wrong? It's conceding to it is. If you're tempted to do something, you say, that's not a right thought. I'm not gonna go there.

I'm walking away. That was the temptation. It's not yet sin.

Sin is conceived when that desire birthed forth sin. When we have these desires and we act upon them, that is when sin is conceived. And I'll talk about that in a minute.

But for the sake of getting to the next point, James 1 verse 2. My brethren, and this is a ridiculous Scripture. What's this guy talking about? My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. James is saying, why am I gonna count it all joy when you fall into various trials? What? I don't wanna be tempted here, James.

I don't like this temptation. I don't like these trials. I don't like what I'm going through.

Why am I gonna count it all joy? Because knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. Patience is a virtue. Patience will have you restore your marriage.

Patience will have you wait for sexual purity until you say, I do. Patience will restore a lot of things. That's why he says, let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

So what he's saying, when you fall into various trials, various temptations, when you withstand them, when you overcome them, you come out a better person. Because now you have patience. You see, these words aren't bad.

Discipline, fortitude, perseverance. Those are spiritual muscles. Spiritual muscles that you have developed over time.

Now your faith can stand the test of time. Now you can be tempted with the things and say, I'm not going there. I've been there, done that.

I bought the t-shirt, all that. I'm not going there. I've been through the furnace of affliction.

I've come out. And I'm not going back. I'm not grabbing that bottle again.

I'm not grabbing that pill again. I'm not snorting that stuff again. I'm not getting online and looking at that garbage again.

Because I'm building faith. I'm building endurance. I'm building discipline and perseverance.

Because James, the same word he uses here, trials, is paramos in the Greek. And when Jesus talks about Jesus was tempted, it's parazoo. It's the same exact root word, but with different abstract meaning.

So the same root of testing and trials and temptation. It's that same word. But James, it's more of an exam and a formal examination.

Did you pass the test? Pass the test by not giving in. Where in Jesus' case, it's the enticement. Jesus was enticed.

However, the outcome is the same. He's enticed. He pushes against it.

He resolves. He comes out stronger. Now he's passed his test, his exam.

So it's that same word there. So when we go through things, Christians that are very weak and immature are those who are not overcoming a lot of temptations. They're lazy in giving in to them.

They're slothful. They're just giving over. They're double-minded and everything.

There's no fortitude. There's no strength. There's no discipline.

So there's no maturity. You look at a mature Christian believer. They've been through hell and back.

They know how to overcome. Not that they don't still fall and sin and make mistakes, but they've overcome a lot of those things. So now they have patience and fortitude, the gifts of the Holy Spirit inside of them because they have resisted the devil.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. What happens in the natural world here when we're resisting something? A hundred pounds right here every week. What's going to happen? You go to 125, 130, 150, 200 pounds.

You're resisting it, so your body is adapting. All muscle is, when somebody has muscle, is it's the body responding to an unfamiliar workload. So if you see somebody, they do the same thing day in and day out.

They stay the same. They go in and do something the body's not prepared for. They lift weights.

The body says, I need to come back so I'm ready and I'm stronger next time. You lift the weights and the body says, I need to build up for I'm stronger next time. And around 30, 31, 32, the human body starts declining.

So it's harder to keep that muscle density because the body's declining. It's basically consuming itself as we get older at that age. You're growing and growing and then it declines and declines.

That's not real encouraging, but that's the truth. So if you're under 30, thank God. If you're my age, I remember bench pressing 400 pounds and I don't know if I'll get 200 up nowadays.

The body's just declining and declining and declining. But what is that? That's that resistance, building up strength. Also resistance.

I mean, I told you about the book I was reading on the POWs back in World War II. And when they come out of there, I mean, their whole world is messed up with nightmare and all these things and they can't seem to shake this, but they are men of character, men of strength. That's why you often hear of the World War II generation.

There's never a generation that strong. Men and women that were strong and disciplined because they went through things. We don't go through anything anymore.

Woe be to the teenager whose parents buy him a \$50,000 truck and give him all the money and then he goes into life. He's going to be a failure in many areas because there's no discipline, there's no fortitude, there's no strength there. I'm not afraid to use these terms because the Bible does.

It's spiritual muscle building. It's what fighting temptation is. Spiritual muscle building.

You smell those donuts at 5.30 in the morning, you smell the donut place making those donuts, you just keep driving. Every single Saturday without fail, where do my kids want to go? Morgan knows. Can we stop by Panda Express? No.

Just hit the gas pedal, get home, I'll make some egg whites, some protein, some whole grain bagels. Get me away from Panda because I haven't eaten since 2.30. I like to fast before I preach and stuff, so I'm really hungry afterwards. So I can't even look, second look.

The line doesn't look very long. I bet I could be home before Morgan. She won't even know I got there.

I'll start tomorrow. I'll start eating better tomorrow. And so we pull in line and then I feel guilty.

I ate 1,500 calories when I didn't eat it. That's temptation. That's how it works.

So the more I drive by it now, it's getting easier and easier and easier. Now that I've probably talked about it, it's probably going to be hard tonight. And Morgan will sometimes come home with it.

I go, why did you stop there? I was doing so good. Can I have some bites? Can I have a few of those things? That's how it works. You're building up that strength.

That's why some people coming out of alcoholism can't go right back into a bar, can't be around parties because they haven't built up that muscle yet. People hooked on pain medicine, they get hurt again. Doctor says, do you want to go on Vicodin? They're like, heck no, I don't want to go on Vicodin.

I'll just grin and bear this out. And the years go by, you begin stronger by fighting it. Now when I talk about this thing, well, you know what, I'll talk about that in a minute.

Because some people don't like when I talk so much about our responsibility. They would lean towards, it's God changing us. God changes us.

The work of the Holy Spirit. You're putting too much emphasis on man's ability. Okay, I'm going to get to there.

Let's read three scriptures. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. If you don't think the enemy has it out for you, he does.

1 Peter 5.8 Your enemy, the devil, prowls about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. So the devil's going about seeking whom he may devour. John 10.10 I've already read these, I know.

But it bears repeating. John 10.10 The thief comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy. So if you ever want to know what the enemy's plan is, here it is.

He's going to go about as a roaring lion, waiting for something to devour. And he comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Steal your peace, your joy, your family, your relationship with the Lord.

He doesn't care. He's going to take it all. And then James 1.14-15 Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own evil desire.

See, it's within us. And he is dragged away and enticed. Then after that desire has conceived, it's like giving birth.

I'm talking a lot about men in pornography, but there's also women in pornography. It's a big rise. You hear it all over.

I mean, the statistics are alarming. So the wife comes home. Nobody's home.

Uh-oh, the desire is coming. What do I do with that desire? Get back in the car, go do something? See, the desire is there. What do you do with that? But you log on, you get on the computer.

That desire has now conceived. Now sin has taken birth. And that sin, fully grown, brings forth death.

That's the process. It's not rocket science here. He'll lead you down one step at a time, one wrong choice at a time, one compromise at a time, until you're at the bottom saying, how did I get down here? You got down here because you were lured, you were enticed, and the devil didn't make you do it.

It was already within. He just presented the bait. So that's how temptation works.

And we have to be careful. We have to be careful, because it's not unnecessary. A lot of times we put too much emphasis on the devil, or it's just my self-esteem's really low, or my inner child is hurting right now.

It's the way I was wired. I have this certain disorder, so it's okay for me to do these things. No, the Bible doesn't give us any room there for flexibility.

It doesn't say if you were 12 years old, and your inner child got hurt, and your dad wasn't there all the time, to go and do this. Now, of course there's things that we need to be sensitive to, and people go through tremendous pain. I'm not discounting that.

All I'm saying is the Bible doesn't give us a lot of flexibility here. Make no provision for the flesh, unless you're wired a certain way. It just groups us all in there.

Here's the solution the Bible talks about. Now the escape route. Let's talk about the escape route.

Phone's on. Okay, phone's on. Now that I've presented this case, what is the escape route? Well, I'm glad you asked.

1 Corinthians 10.13. 1 Corinthians 10.13. I'm still thinking about Panda. Golly. As a side note, if you're trying to lose weight or get in shape, the thing out-of-sight, out-of-mind really works.

Don't have anything in your house that you're going to consume. Out-of-sight, out-of-mind. You have some Ding Dongs in there, some Twinkies, some Diet Pepsi, you're going to fall.

And you're going to fall hard because it's right there. What is it? Oh, cookies. Yeah, all that stuff.

Egg whites. No, they're not enticing. I'm not tempted by egg whites.

But on that note, food... Yeah, okay, that's a whole other sermon. 1 Corinthians 10.13. Okay, you want to know how to overcome temptation? Many of you are going to say, oh, Shane, I've heard this Scripture dozens and dozens and dozens of times. Well, I want to read it one more time and I want you to think about this Scripture very clearly because this is one of the best Scriptures on temptation, no matter what your temptation is.

See, we can't say, yeah, but you don't know my spouse. You don't know my thyroid problem. You don't know my genetic predisposition.

You don't know this. Well, the Bible just says, no temptation. This is everything.

No temptation has overtaken you except that which is common to man. All of us struggle with this thing of temptation. There's nothing new under the sun.

But God, thank God for this part, God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. Sometimes He might. Sometimes God just might say, well, forget it.

Now you're done. You're toast. No, I just couldn't help myself.

You ever hear people say that? Or you say, I just couldn't help myself. I couldn't stop. Well, no.

No temptation has overtaken us, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. See, God is faithful. He's saying, I will not allow you to go through anything you cannot say no to.

There's no way around that verse. I will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. Well, why do I keep falling? Why do I keep falling in these areas? Well, let's keep reading.

But with the temptation, here's the temptation, here's also the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. If you look up that word bear it in the Greek language, it's like, and I actually was going to use that chair, but you're sitting on it. I was going to grab it and carry the chair around just for a minute, bearing it.

This chair represents freedom. This chair represents freedom from my addiction. This chair represents, but I have to bear it.

There's a load to bear. There's a cost to pay. There's a difficulty, there's difficult decisions to make.

There is a load to bear. Fighting temptation is not easy. Any more than fighting anybody is easy.

It's fighting against your flesh. So he says, no temptation, no temptation has overcome you except what is common to man. God's faithful.

He's not going to allow you or I to be tempted beyond what we are able. There go all the excuses out the door. That verse right there, right there, out the door.

With the temptation, He will also make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. So with the temptation, many, oh gosh, I could sit up here for the next hour and give out examples, but in the temptation, I'm in a wrong relationship. And I was in a few before I met Morgan that I knew I got to get out of this thing, but I'm too afraid.

What about if I don't meet anybody? What about if this? What about if that? I'm in this relationship. No, you can bear it. You say, I trust God, not you.

Bye-bye. And you move on. But I can't bear it financially.

I'm going to explode. No, God will hold you up. He will bear it with you.

I'm on this diet and I've got to eat this chocolate. No, you don't. You don't have to.

Now, let me tell you up front, I'm not pointing fingers at anybody. I've tried to stop chocolate. I've tried to stop coffee.

I've tried to stop this and I've tried to stop that. And it's not real easy, is it? It's very difficult. It's really easy when your stomach's full.

Like, oh boy, I'm going to start fast tomorrow. I know I can do it. I feel really good now.

And then the opportune time comes in. Five in the morning. Oh, I'm really tired.

I really need a cup of coffee. I have a headache. I can't do this.

Oh, forget it. I'm too weak. Or donuts.

Or panned after church. I mean, where does this... There is a way to bear these things. And there's some temptation here.

I know I'm speaking lightly, but there's some temptations in here, in this room, that are destroying you. They're destroying your relationship with the Lord. You've lost the passion and the zeal for God.

You're in so deep, you don't know what to do. I'm not minimizing that, but there is a way to be able to bear it, to get out of that. First, God is faithful.

You say, God, I give you my life. I give you my temptation. Whatever it takes, Lord, please help me break this off of my life.

I give it to you. God is faithful. He will not allow you or I to be tempted beyond what we are able.

First Corinthians. Here's some ways of bearing it. I went through the Scripture and said, okay, what does the Scripture say to bear it? How do we get out of temptation? First Corinthians 6.18. Consider sexual immorality.

Nope. Flee. Flee sexual immorality.

So there's this word fleeing. We flee. We don't say, I was exposed to pornography early when I was 12, so that's my excuse.

It doesn't matter. You're supposed to flee. It doesn't matter if we're exposed.

Let me be honest, all men were exposed to when they were younger. I mean, it's a culture we live in, so we can't have all these excuses. The Bible says, flee sexual immorality.

1 Thessalonians 4.3 and 5 says, for this is the will of God. The will of God is your sanctification to be pure and holy before Him that you abstain. What? Yeah.

Look at how much infamy. You abstain. You flee.

You do these things. You can't tell your body no. Do you realize that? You're in control of your body as a believer in Jesus Christ.

You can't say no. The flesh says yes, you say no. We have that ability.

The body's not in control. Sometimes we feel like it because it just takes us wherever we want. Tossed to and fro like a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

We can tell the body no. Now again, I'm not minimizing struggles. I've lived them.

I know that, but you can't say no. We're not robots that just go right to where, you know, I didn't know how that happened. No, we can control it.

Then the Bible's wrong because he's saying flee sexual immorality, abstain sexual immorality. Romans 13, 14, make no provision for the flesh. In other words, don't even think about how you're going to gratify the flesh.

Goes back to the panda example. Don't start thinking about how I'm going to gratify the flesh. People that have a problem with alcohol are already planning Saturday night what they're going to go do, hit the yard house, have a couple cold ones and get home, come home drunk, pouring in the driveway.

You're already making provision for the flesh. You're in church, worshiping, making provision for the flesh. Tomorrow, we're going to all overeat tomorrow.

I've got it planned out, this big spread, all that. We're making provisions for the flesh. The Bible says, you want to overcome the flesh, stop thinking about how you're going to indulge.

Make no provision, which is forethought, planning ahead. Don't plan ahead how you're going to satisfy the flesh. That's just a biblical principle.

So you see where God's going with this? Flee, abstain, make no provision. Now, I love this one. Paul says, I discipline my body daily and I keep it under control, lest when I preach to others, I should become disqualified.

Flee these things, abstain from these things, discipline your body, don't plan ahead. It sounds like a little bit of responsibility on our part. I don't know, call me silly.

Think about that. I'm not putting any more emphasis on our ability than the Bible does. And that's what happens.

A lot of people on this side of the camp that says, God's sovereign and he is, thank God for it and God's in control, it's the work of the Holy Spirit. Don't talk about obedience, don't talk about repentance, don't talk, it's God's job. Don't tell man what to do.

I'm just reading Scripture. I'm just reading what the Scripture says. I'm not putting any more weight on it than what the Bible does.

Flee these things, abstain these things, discipline yourself, persevere, say no. It's really that simple? Yeah, it is. But we've been taught in our culture it's okay to coddle, it's okay to give in.

And that's why I wrote down here, the Word of God says to crucify the flesh. What does the world say? Coddling. The Word of God says abstain, the world says indulge.

The Word of God says flee, the world says embrace. The Word of God says resist, the world says give in. So that's basically what we've been doing.

I'm going to coddle, I'm going to indulge, I'm going to embrace, I'm going to give in, and then I'm going to come to church and cry and worship and go home and I'm going to embrace, indulge again, and then I'm going to come back and we never have victory. Because we keep coddling the sin we're called to run from. We keep indulging what we're called to crucify.

And then we come, we feel bad, and now we worship God, I know you'll take me back, I repent, thank you Lord. And nothing changes. We get back the same old pattern of inconsistencies over and over and over and over again.

All the devil does, he looks for opportune time. There they are in a moment of weakness, they're depressed, they're in a bad relationship they just got out of, I'm going to come in with this, I'm going to come in with fear and anxiety and depression, opportune times, I'm going to keep hitting them, I'm going to keep hitting them. I came to the conclusion that when it comes to this area of temptation, as much as we want to say, God just change me, please just take these things away, and He will.

I pray that often, and we pray up here for people, Lord help take these away, because I know people who have come to Christ and they say, I don't want to touch any liquor again, I don't want to smoke, nothing, thank God for that. But then they have all these other areas, why doesn't He take away everything we struggle with, wouldn't that be great? Just take it all away, all away, no, no, no, I just want to walk like Christ and live perfect lives. So we pray, God please change me, and the Holy Spirit comes in, God begins to help us, but He also gives us the power to say, no, to abstain, to flee, to run from, to discipline your body, because as James says, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the tempting and testing of your spiritual condition produces patience, and fortitude, and strength, because that's what a solid, mature Christian is, is somebody who has said no to things, and has built this life of discipline and commitment.

Now does that mean we don't fall? Of course not, I'm not discounting any of those, I'm not suggesting that somebody can live a perfect life, but what do you do with all these scriptures then? You can't say, oh Shane, you're reading them out of context, because the context is the context of temptation, the context is the context of sexual morality, of sinning. Peter says, what about Peter, abstain from sinful desires, well

Peter, you're so outdated, you can't, come on Peter, this is the 21st century, he's saying, abstain from fleshly desires, and then what's he saying, which war against your soul, that war inside, he's saying, abstain from those fleshly desires, because the more you feed it, the more you're going to have to fight it. That's one you better write down.

The more you feed it, is the more you're going to have to fight it. Somebody, I've said before, when I speak at men's conferences, they're like, oh man, it's so amazing, I don't even, I didn't even struggle with pornography for three days up here. Yeah, you left your phone at home, there's no TV, there's no internet, there's no women.

Exactly, what, what, what, what, hello? And we joke, but that's the truth, I hear that more than anything else, I'm so, I love it up here in this men's conference, I don't ever want to go home, these lusts are gone, but they get back home, oh my lord. Why? Because they're feeding the very thing they're called to fight. You're feeding the wrong dog.

Take, make some precautions, make some changes. Think about that, the more we feed it, the more we have to fight it. You're fighting something, you're fighting the flesh, you're fighting the lust of the flesh, I am, so why not just keep feeding it, and then I've got to fight it more.

It's like you're, you're fighting, now there's Mike Tyson, now there's this, now there's this, you're fighting all these big guys, you just keep feeding it, get bigger and bigger and bigger, no wonder we're losing. We're feeding the very thing we're called to fight. We're giving the very thing life that we're called to give death.

We're not crucifying the flesh, we're coddling it. We're giving it more of what it wants. Feed me so I can destroy you.

In simple terms, that's what this breaks down to. If you take all these verses, the flesh, feed me so I can destroy you. That's why I said, if I were to sum all this up, I'd say it's hard to flee from what you feed.

We're called to flee all these things, but we're feeding them in this culture today. I mean, just look around, I've joked about it, but it's actually very sad that what all these commercials, like Carl's Jr., now there's this lingerie and commercials, like my Lord, in a Carl's Jr. commercial, yeah, go check out Facebook for an hour. I mean, it is, we are sex saturated.

We wonder, why do I have a problem in this area? Oh, I don't know, because we're being inundated, and that's a weak word. I wish I had a stronger word than inundated. Baptized, overwhelmed, consumed with these things.

We're consuming ourselves with the very thing we're called to fight. The problem is, too many people enjoy it. They'll come to here and say, oh, I don't like this, this needs to change, but they're not going to make the changes they need to make.

I see this all the time. I've told guys before, you've got to get accountability software on your computers. We put it on years ago on my phone.

And I talk to guys and they're like, I don't know if I want to get that extreme. Well, how bad do you want it? You're going to come up here and cry about it, and you're not going to go home and do anything about it. Why is that? Because there's a part of us that enjoys the very thing that's killing us.

Think about it. You don't think an alcoholic that's killing himself enjoys that drink at night? Absolutely. Absolutely.

The affair that's happening? I like it. Let's get honest. If we would abhor sin like God sees it, it would be much easier to flee from.

I want to read J.C. Ryle. Did I just go an hour? I didn't get to part two yet. Well, maybe next week.

There won't be anybody here for this one. But in all seriousness, guys, this is serious. And I want to read what J.C. Ryle wrote.

And I read this many months ago, but it definitely comes into play here. He says in his book on holiness is a masterpiece. It's been in print since 18-somethings.

I can't even put this thing down because these guys used to call it what it was. They would call sin, sin. They would call disobedience, disobedience.

They would call it like it is. They would say these things are destroying you. And he put in there, there must be no separate truths with any special sin.

Our sins are often as dear to us as our children. We love them. We delight in them.

And we hug them. We cleave to them. But the parting must come.

The parting must come. Like the kids going away, they must come and say, this is destroying me, God. It's destroying me.

The parting must come. Repentance must take place. The very thing that God calls an abomination, abhor, run from, cling to, the very things that destroy the nation of Israel is amusing our nation.

And I'm concerned. As Gabe and Elizabeth come up, we're going to conclude with worship. But I'm just concerned that we're confusing God's patience with His approval.

I want to say that to some of your lives tonight too. You are confusing God's patience tonight with His approval. He's not approving of your lifestyle.

He's being patient and long-suffering. But He's not approving it. And a lot of times we think, I got away with it, so I'm good.

No, you're not good. But think about what was said tonight. Get the CD of this.

Watch it again. I just meditate on the Scriptures all week, and I was even more convinced that God says no temptation has overtaken you, but what is common to man, but God who is faithful will not allow you or I to be tempted beyond what we are able. But with that temptation, He will make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

A way of escape means, I see an escape. I must do something. I must repent of this lifestyle.

I must say, God help me. I must stop feeding the giant and the monster within. I must abstain from these things.

I must become men and women of discipline and perseverance. Though the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, if he falls, he will not be utterly cast down because the Lord upholds him with His hand. Many people get defeated.

I blew it again. Yeah. When I work with weight loss clients, they would probably blow five to ten meals out of a hundred, but they kept persevering.

They kept moving forward. It's not about being a perfect walk. It's about getting up and falling forward, getting up and falling forward, falling wholeheartedly after Christ, getting back up, going, no matter what happens, no matter what temptation.

I just blew it. I'm getting back, and we keep going towards Him. That's also a temptation to say, I've blown it.

I've done too much damage. Why try? God is saying, come back to me. Let me rebuild.

Let me restore. But deep repentance has got to take place tonight. You're not going to pray and come up here and cry about pornography and have it wonderfully just end tomorrow morning.

Maybe. But don't count on it because your adversary goes about as a roaring lion looking for opportune times. The lust of the flesh, the lusty eye coveting, the pride of life, He's looking for these areas to come up in our own lives.

And we've got to hit Him. We've got to come at Him right at the beginning. We've got to hit Him head on with what we know to be right by the Word of God.

Jesus used the Word of God. Think about that. He used the Word of God, His thought life.

I was going to read this verse. It might help somebody. 2 Corinthians says, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We're not going to throw sticks at the devil. We're not going to hit him with a baseball bat.

But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. But they're mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds and casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ, bringing every thought, bringing every thought. Here's the battle, folks.

Jesus' thought life. I'm hungry. I'm hungry, He said.

But He told the devil, Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Do not tempt the Lord your God. You shall worship Him and Him only shall you worship.

His thought life right here. The battlefield is the mind. This is where it's won or it's where it's lost.

And we need to give this area to God. We need to ask for His protection, His safety. And we need to fight like we're engaged in battle because we are.

Life is a battleground, not a playground. Let's pray, Lord. I pray tonight, Lord, many of us are convicted.

Lord, and we don't want to just be convicted to be convicted. We want this to help foster change, Lord. Begin to call men back to You, Lord, to purity and decency.

And if it means getting rid of the computer for a month and the TV, so be it. We want to serve You, God, not continue to feed the flesh. And I pray tonight, Lord, You know the array of temptations in this room.

I pray right now that You begin to show people how they can remove themselves from this temptation, Lord. Whether it's stopping, turning off their cell phone for a week, losing phone numbers, telling people not to call or fighting the flesh, not buying certain foods and certain things and beginning to take care of their body. Whether it's relationships they need to end or things they need to do, Lord, please show them these areas, Lord, and You help them, Lord.

Even though we talked a lot about what we need to do, Lord, we know that You are sovereign. We know that You are in control, Lord. We know that You can heal us of many of these things, Lord.

We pray tonight that those who are genuine, You'd begin to remove those passions, Lord. Have them be workable passions that we can overcome. Lord, we give this night to You.

And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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