

# The Door of Temptation Swings Both Ways

by Shane Idleman

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*The door of temptation swings both ways, and we must confront it head-on by understanding it, presenting ourselves to God's way, and using escape routes such as bearing it and closing the door.*

**Duration:** 48:17

**Scripture:** Psalm 68:6, Matthew 26:41, John 8:34, John 14:6, Romans 6:16, Romans 13:14, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 4:27, James 1:14

**Topics:** "Overcoming Temptation", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming temptation by focusing on three key strategies: enduring temptation by saying no, closing the door to sin by cutting off provisions for the flesh, and avoiding planning ahead for sinful desires. The message highlights the need for repentance and a genuine relationship with Christ to experience true transformation and victory over sin.

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## Transcript

The door of temptation swings both ways. Do you realize that? Even though there's a Mayweather fight tonight, I can't pronounce the other guy's name, so I just say Mayweather, there's a bigger fight inside of you and inside of me. Now, I'll tell you up front, this sermon is, we've talked about bits and pieces of everything I'm going to talk about, but tonight I want to serve the whole enchilada.

And I want to get to where the rubber meets the road, and I want to help a lot of people. That's really my goal. Here's recapping from last week, just one sentence.

We obey, and then God strengthens us. So if you're talking about overcoming something, besetting sin, temptation, whatever it is, our responsibility is to obey the word of God, and then he strengthens us. Now, if that's the case, what happens on the flip side? When there's a lack of obedience, then there's a lack of strength.

They go together. And a lot of times the church wants to separate those two. It's all about obedience, and doing, doing, doing, doing a whole bunch of rules, and then we lose the relationship, it turns into legalism, and we fail.

Or it's all about, you know, it reminds me of the guy driving through the Krispy Kreme donut place, it's opening up, we had one here before, he's trying to lose weight, and he just keeps driving through there every day. God, take this weight off, take this weight off. Well, there's a responsibility on both.

God's gonna help, but also he requires obedience on our part. So that's what we talked about last week. And a quote from Andrew Murray, and I would encourage you to read Andrew Murray, his book on surrender and on humility.

He said, just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest places, so the moment God finds you abased and empty, his glory and power will flow in. Did you know that water flows to the lowest places? It goes to the lowest places. The same way when God finds us humbled and abased and lowly, that's when his power fills us and flows in.

I'm gonna read an excerpt here on a book I just came across, and I wanna encourage you, I might encourage a few different books, this sermon. But this one is called Tempted and Tried by Russell Moore. I believe he's a dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He wrote this book, Tempted and Tried. And there's a chapter that really caught my eye, caught my attention. I actually heard David Platt speak about it this week as well.

And the title of that chapter was, Why You're on the Verge of Wrecking Your Life, Especially if You Don't Know It. And the whole book is on overcoming temptation. I wanna borrow a quote from him.

It's a long one, but it makes a point. I don't know if you're aware of this, but this won't be probably very comfortable for some people. But when they kill an animal, they usually wanna do it without a lot of stress, because a lot of that stress can ruin the meat, the hormones.

The reason is it releases very toxic hormones that ruin the meat. So they wanna keep everything as calm as possible. And these large slaughterhouses, when they would kill cows, they couldn't figure out how to keep them calm.

They would get all, well, of course, they know, they see what's coming. And it's just a very hard environment. So they hired this scientist to come out, and what she discovered revolutionized the way they would slaughter the cows.

And I picked up on this excerpt this week, and I wanted to read it to you. The slaughterhouse, in order to keep the cattle relaxed, they remove anything from the side of the animal that isn't completely familiar. The real problem is novelty.

You know, novelty is something that's new. Workers shouldn't yell at the cows, and they shouldn't ever use cattle prods, because they are counterproductive and unneeded. If you just keep the cows content and comfortable, they'll go wherever you lead.

Does it sound familiar? That's how the enemy works, folks. That's a nugget right there. Don't surprise them, don't unnerve them, and above all, don't hurt them, at least not yet.

Along the way, the scientist devised a new technology that has revolutionized the way the big slaughterhouses operate. In this system, the cows aren't prodded off the truck, but are led in silence onto a ramp. Then they go through a squeeze chute, a gentle pressure device that mimics a mother's nuzzling touch.

The cattle continue down the ramp into a smoothly curving path. There are no sudden turns. The cows experience a sensation of going home, the same kind of way they've traveled so many times before.

As they mosey along the path, they don't even notice when their hooves are no longer touching the ground. A conveyor belt slowly lifts them up, gently upward, and then in a twinkling of an eye, a blunt instrument levels a surgical strike right between the eyes. They're transitioned from livestock to meat.

They are transitioned from livestock to meat, and they're never aware enough to be alarmed by any of it. The pioneer of this technology calls it the stairway to heaven. And the whole point is, the path of temptation is gradual and intelligent.

It's not as sudden and as random as it seems, quoting Russell Moore here. And that's the same way the enemy works. It's comfortable.

It's not really alarming. That's how he moves in comfortable ways, tried and tempted. It's not this loud and annoying, and you can clear, it's this cozy, it's comfortable, and then he can lead us however he wants.

And this is a good point to remind you that you are in a war. There's no peace treaties can be signed. No concessions can be made.

No compromises can be negotiated. You can't say, I don't want to get involved. You're already a target.

You can't remain passive, aloof, or carefree against an enemy who doesn't sleep or doesn't slumber. Now here's my famous line I use often. He is sent to kill, to steal, and to destroy.

Wake up. Life is a battleground, not a playground. And on this area of temptation, I was reminded, I saw this movie 20 years ago.

I don't remember a lot about it, but it was an old western with Wyatt Earp. Remember those? And I don't remember the context or anything, but in the movie, it shows him getting very dramatic, and he says, you tell them I'm coming, and I'm bringing hell with me. And that imagery, if you can take that into the believer's life, that's what happens to a believer.

When you give your life to Christ, temptation does not become null and void. It's not easier. It's actually more difficult.

It's almost like the devil says, I'm coming, and I'm bringing hell with me. Folks, we have to wake up to this fact. We can't ignore the fact that we are being tempted daily, if not hourly.

And it's so subtle, sometimes we don't even see it. And it's interesting on this point, I just want to really make this relevant, not relevant, but I want to get this point across, that I actually came here to help. And a person once told me about this area, and I want to write this down.

Shane, people don't want direct confrontation. You need to come through the back door. And I will submit to you that the back door is not working.

Coming through the back door does not work. We need to confront this issue head on, and deal with it, and say, the devil's coming after us, why can't we come after this head on, and take some serious radical steps? Just this week I read these statistics. Broken homes in the United States are at alarming levels, study finds.

88% of scenes now in pornography includes sexual aggression. Is this the sex ed we want for our children? What's really behind America's suicide epidemic? This one stuck out. Why did 40,000

Americans kill themselves last year, the most in recorded history? And they want me to come through the back door? We can't come through the back door.

We've got to go through the front door, and say, listen, there's enough, enough of stealing our children, enough of taking our spouses, enough, enough, enough. Devil, I'm coming after you, just like you're coming after me. But the majority of the church is being lulled to sleep.

Go back to sleep, but let me just keep like the cattle. They don't even know it's coming. Bam, until it's too late.

That's how he works, these subtleties. That's his plan, that's his strategies. Nothing has ever changed.

Also, I want to bring your attention to a quote I gave last summer, I think it was. Do you remember the African pastor? I heard on the radio he was being interviewed, and they asked him, why is there so much counseling in the American church, but not in the African church? You guys don't do one-tenth of the counseling that we do. And the African pastor looked at him and he said, in America you counsel, in Africa we repent.

Let that sink in. There's a big difference there, because we can counsel, we can talk about our problems, we can go around the back door, but if we never get to the root of what's going on, you will not see change. I will not see change.

This has to be confronted head on. So, here's the bits and pieces that I'm going to throw everything together for the whole enchilada. A lot of this you've heard me talk on before, I pull a little bit here for this sermon, a little bit out.

I'm going to just, here it is, bam, right here, here's everything you'll need to know, three things to overcome temptation and close the door. Now, do we do this perfectly? No. But you can definitely go down fighting and you can say no and you can overcome many different things and many different challenges in your life.

I truly believe that. So, although some of these things you probably have heard, I want to just get everything down right here into this strategy. Here's the strategy.

First Corinthians 10, 13, you've heard me quote it many times. No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man. And God is faithful.

Don't forget that part. This temptation is really not about you. It's the enemy does not like the Christ they see in you and they're after that truth.

They're after that kingdom. It's a spiritual struggle. And so it's not just all about me.

He's trying to ruin your testimony. He's trying to ruin your family. He sees the image of Christ in you and that's what he hates.

So it's God who is faithful, not us. It's God who is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. You should memorize this verse because this is very helpful.

Have you ever been so tempted that you're like, I'm just bent on falling into this. There's no way out of this. And the Bible says he's not gonna let you or me be tempted beyond what we are able.

That tells me we can say no. I mean, I've gotten in trouble before with people, alcoholics or drug addicts. You don't even know it's a disease.

I'm caught in this disease. And as a believer, now am I discounting bondage? Oh no. If you've ever had to overcome something, you know it's not a cakewalk.

It's a struggle. It's a fight. But either we take the Scripture for what it says or we don't.

And when you're cutting out this one, there's about 10 others you need to cut out. God says, I'm not gonna allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. But with the temptation, I will provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

Another translation says that you may be able to bear it, like you're bearing a load. So in a nutshell, it's God who is faithful. We're tempted, but not beyond what we can't endure.

Not what we can say no to and overcome. But in that process, it doesn't feel good. The word endure and bear is like you're carrying a load.

You're enduring something that's difficult. So we think, oh, it's difficult. I must just succumb.

No, that's actually part of the problem. The devil wants you to feel that enduring and that bearing and say, forget it. This is too hard.

Give me that Snickers bar. This is too hard. I'm gonna go to an Albergue and spend \$20 on... Right? Been there, done that.

Constant struggle all the time. But just remember this, that God is faithful that you will be able to bear it. It's not beyond what you can say no to.

And that's very healthy because I think we get trapped in that sometimes. If you talk to somebody who's been addicted to something long enough, you will hear, I'm trapped. There's no way out.

There's no way out. And I will submit to you that there is a way out. The door swings both ways to temptation.

You can enter or you can exit. So I've got three escape routes for you that will actually, and I'm not just saying this to say it, that it will literally change your life, will change the way you view temptation, can help in tremendous ways if you apply it, not just hear it. Oh, that was good, Shane.

Yeah, nothing changes, right? The power of God's word is in the application. I wish I could say that every week. Eventually we get it.

The power's in the application, in the application, not in the knowing, in the application. Escape route number one, bear it. Which I just said, we are not trapped, we are not left without hope.

See, the interesting thing with this is we could say we are not trapped, but we're also not without hope. See, to me, you read the scripture, there's great hope. God's faithful.

He's gonna help me. He's gonna get me out of this. There's great hope there.

When we see something we need, desire, or want, our first impulse is to what? Ignore it? No, our first, get it. I gotta get it. That's our first impulse.

All temptation always starts with the desire. Without that, there's nothing. There's nothing.

Like I've told you many times, you can leave marijuana and cocaine, you can leave it on my counter for 10 years and you've never been touched. But a pack of Reese's peanut butter cups, out of sight, out of mind, I don't want that in my house. It's difficult.

So he knows, that's what the temptation is. There's a hook there. So how he gets you is how he gets different, and there's a hook there.

So the first part of overcoming temptation is understanding this. When we see it, we want it, that pressure, that pressure-filled moment. You know, it's unbearable, I'm gonna cave in.

This is the defining moment. This is when you submit to it, or you close the door. That's why he says that you may be able to bear it and endure it and close that door.

And you gotta do it quick. The more you start to think, I'll start that diet tomorrow. Or I'll start, I just need a few drinks tonight, I gotta get through this night.

And we just keep filling it in with excuses. Bear it means just that. To bear it, picture carrying something heavy.

Now here's a good scripture on this point. Do you not know that when you present yourselves, Romans 6.16, do you not know, Paul's saying to the church in Rome, when you present yourselves to someone as a slave for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, and we've talked about that before, death can be a separation. It doesn't have to be somebody dies physically in their body.

Death is a separation. Or obedience resulting in righteousness. So present yourself.

This is interesting. Paul's saying, you present yourself to whatever you choose to obey. So I can present, how are you gonna present yourself? You've heard that terminology before at a business meeting or something.

How are you gonna present yourself? So Paul's saying, you choose who to present yourself. And they'll look up that meaning to cause something to happen or to be experienced. So whoever I present myself to, I actually cause the next thing to happen.

I can submit, I can present myself to sin. I can present myself to disobedience and reap the fruit of that. Or I can present myself to what God wants me to do and reap the fruit of that.

So now we're finding out that I can bear it, and then it's who do I present myself to? Because we're being tempted all the time. If I present pride daily, I'll share a little bit of this with you, but I didn't realize how prideful I was until I coached a little league team. I said, my grandpa built this field in 1960s.

We're gonna win just about every game. I've got a pitching machine. I'm gonna teach these kids.

And we are almost in last place. And it's, oh man, I'm making an excuse. I'm like, well, it's just pride, pride.

What's going on? I'm tempted with that. Tempted everywhere. It's pride.

Tempted to eat too much. It's everywhere. Tempted to defend myself.

It's everywhere. Temptation's everywhere. So do I present myself to that? I'm going to obey this master and present myself to that, or am I gonna present myself to God's way? See, you just begin to realize how much of this is self-inflicted, caving into temptation.

Mike Wilkerson, another good book, in his book Redemption, this is key. Listen to this, writes this. Sin corrupts worship.

It's not a ceasing of worship, but a distortion of it. We never stop worshiping. Rather, in sin, we worship anything and everything other than God.

We tend to exalt a substance, an experience, a person, or a dream to the level of a God. So addictions, for example, aren't just drug, alcohol, food, or pornography problems. They are worship disorders.

And I had to think about that for a minute. I quoted this last year, but he's absolutely right. Here's why.

They flow from a heart bent on worshiping created things rather than the creator. They are presenting themselves as slaves to disobedience. So when we stay caught in these temptations and we just keep falling, besetting, we are actually presenting, we're worshiping.

It's a form of worship. Our affections, our heart is going to that idol, that idolatry. And again, I don't want to minimize bondage.

I don't want to minimize addiction. I don't want to minimize the struggle because it's difficult, it's challenging, it's frustrating, isn't it? It's frustrating, it's hard. But I do want to point you back to God's provision.

Look at God's provision. The majority of people who cannot break a certain sinful pattern in their life are not obeying the three or four scriptures I just quoted. Do you understand that? Myself included.

If we get caught in a sin, that's because I'm not obeying the scriptures, the three I just quoted. We're allowing ourselves, we're presenting ourselves to that. Escape route number two.

Close the door. Let me say it this way. For the love of God, close the door.

What we like to do is keep it open. James 1.14, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, right when your desire, you have a desire, okay, right now it's fine, it's called a temptation.

Jesus was tempted, I have this desire, I'm not going to act upon it. No way, devil, that you get out of my mind, done. But once you begin to entertain that desire, think about it and plan it, now it's conceived.

Now it's born. You need to abort it very quickly. But as you continue to feed that sin, it conceives and it grows and it grows.

And James goes on to say, then when the desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it's fully grown, brings forth death. Here's the interesting thing, there is a growing process with sin.

You give in to the big things, I give in to the big things, because we first give in to the small things. I have yet to counsel a man, or talk to a woman, I don't counsel usually women, who has committed adultery, woke up one day, had no plan on doing it, it happened, and now, I don't know how this happened. Small compromises lead to the big ones.

That's why, and this thought came to me this week, I haven't heard this in years, my mom used to say it. Have you ever heard that saying, nip it in the bud? I researched it a little bit. There's little things when they start to bud, nip it now.

The little oak tree, you better nip it when it's a little guy. You try to nip that oak tree down 10 years later, you're gonna call somebody with a big tree cutting crew, you're gonna get a backhoe, and dig around the roots, and try to pull it out. Why? Because you didn't nip it in the bud.

That's the same thing with sin. If there's areas in our lives now, that are growing, they're budding, the Bible says, nip it in the bud. Close that door, right now.

Now, if there's any doors open, close it. Close it. Myself included.

You know if there's, right, close it. You gotta nip it in the bud. Because it grows.

And sin, it's set on, the whole thing is designed to kill, still to destroy, but it's designed to grow. It has miracle grow, and every other kind of grow you can think of. It just grows.

And it grows. And here's the point I was getting at with this one. Close the door, even the little doors.

Close the doors, even the little doors. And I'm a little nervous about talking about this next two sentences, because I don't think, not everybody might take it right, but after studying, you know my background in health and fitness, and working with thousands of people in weight loss and fitness, and I'm actually working on another book about addiction, and doing a lot of different studies, and a lot of different things. It's amazing.

The little doors lead to the big doors. Here's what I'm talking about. You take laziness, you take, let's throw junk food out there, you're not taking care of your body, caffeine, nicotine, even alcohol, small moderations, they feed each other.

So these little doors of addiction that you can't get under control, once you can't get those under control, do you become stronger spiritually, or weaker spiritually? Weaker. So these little doors, these little addictions keep this body in a dependent state where it can't break free because I've been succumbing to these temptations. So you're not strong to say no, you're weak to say no.

The exact wording I wrote down was this. These small things allow further bondage because the flesh continues to dominate, and we become weak and unable to say no. If you look at an addict's life, it started many, many years ago with the small things.

Listen, I've seen people addicted to just junk food not taking care of their body. And then as a result, they've got to be addicted to caffeine to get that body going. And then nicotine comes in, and they're addicted, they're addicted.

Is it a secret now they're addicted to hardcore porn? Is it now a secret? So I'm not saying if you have chocolate, please don't misunderstand. But what I'm saying is if you can't get your body under control in

the small things, they lead to bigger doors. The devil says, just give me a foothold.

All I need is this foothold. See, now I'm in. Now you can't say no to that.

Now you can't say no to this. Now you can't say no to this. See, I've got you.

You're not like Paul said, I discipline my body and bring it under subjection, lest when I preach to others, I myself should become disqualified. And that word disqualified there, in the context he's talking about running a race and winning a prize and standing before Christ and saying, Lord, I'm disqualified. I did not discipline my body.

I spoke all these things, but I went home and I drank like a drunk sailor and I ate like this and I did this and I engaged in this. I'm disqualified. And that's what he's saying to the larger body of believers.

If you can't discipline your body. And I've seen this. Of course, there's exceptions to the rule, so you don't have to come up afterwards and say, my grandma lived to be 85.

But the majority of times, it's the little things. A very lazy person, it's okay at 16, 17, but it better get under control. It's ugly at 23.

And they're lazy. And then they're fine eight hours a day for video games. And then that addiction fuels that.

See, you can't control, the body just keeps taking you down. So if there's an addiction there, if there's a besetting sin that we can't, it's the little doors. The little doors are where the enemy starts to come in.

I mean, think about that. You know, couples, I do too, the majority of them that ended up in divorce court, it started with the little things. The little things.

It got bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. And if you don't begin to control your desires, what you'll find is your desires eventually begin to control you. So take that for whatever it's worth.

I've noticed that it's the little things you've got to nip in the bud that lead to the bigger things. And this is why fasting is so important. How many times do I try to get this point across? Fasting literally starves the flesh and puts you back in control.

You're telling the flesh, no, you will submit to me, I'm not submitting to you. That's the way this runs. And you begin to take control again.

And then prayer comes in, and the word of God, and you begin to take the thoughts captive, and you begin to rebuild your life and strengthen it. If you don't have those things in your life, willpower's not enough. Remember? I'm just gonna grin and bear shame, you motivate me, come tomorrow.

No donuts, no coffee, no cigarettes, no chewing tobacco, I'm going great. Willpower alone, it won't do it. Willpower will not do it.

You've got to incorporate biblical principles. I only say that about nicotine, I started chewing when I was 12, when I went on a trip to Oklahoma and came back, Copenhagen, I think, or something, my mom could not believe it. And even at 12, it wasn't easy to stop.

Even with my mom, I mean, you felt that, associated with baseball. And you want to just get it in there, and the guys, you're 13, going into high school ball, and it was like, what's this thing that's got me? Oh, it's a little drug called nicotine. Do you know they put stuff in things? Ever wonder why there's caffeine in soda? Does it come naturally? No.

Got it. Hook, hook, you want more of that, don't you? Yeah, come on. Not rocket science.

So I know when I'm talking about these things, I've told you before, it's easier for me to eat a whole pizza than one piece. It's easier to have the whole package. My wife, she'll tell you, can I have a little piece of gum? Give me a handful of gum.

I have that, you know, that personality. And so I know there's a, but I also know I've seen God's word proven to be true, and here's the most wonderful thing about it. When you say no, you begin to be filled with the spirit of God.

The passion for God becomes alive again. You're conquering things. You're going through life.

You're not upset as much because now you've taken control of your desires with God's help. It's been like the cloud has been lifted. The gray color, it's blue again because no means empowerment.

God says, now I can fill you with my spirit. Now you're denying the flesh. You're being filled with the spirit.

So you don't walk around saying, I can't do anything. I can't. You're saying, Lord, now I'm free.

Now I don't want that. I don't want this. It's taking me down.

These things have gotten me addicted. The hardest thing I ever had to stop was coffee. Unbelievable.

That thing called every morning, five in the morning. Hello. Get up.

Come and get me. I said, no, no, no, no, no. I can't.

Why? Because it makes me into a jerk. I'm not going to get in all that, but I'm just showing how all this stuff ties in. I'm showing this is a fellow pilgrim on this journey.

I know it's not easy, but the fruit, the fruit of God setting you free, I wouldn't trade that for anything. Then as soon as you're set free, what does the devil do? Come on. It's been a while.

Want to enjoy a glass of wine? No, because I want three bottles. No, come on. You've matured.

He just keeps all the time. Until the day we die, that little sucker, he's going to keep just at you and me. I'm tired and sick of seeing him wreck families simply because of these things.

I know you can hear a pin drop here, but like I said, I'm here to help. I'm tired. I'm tired of preaching at young adults' funerals from drug overdoses.

I'm tired of going to a hotel there on Sierra Highway last year as a young girl died from an overdose and trying to keep her three-year-old daughter out of the room while we waited for the coroner. Guys, this is real life. So the minute we think we can joke, yeah, no, He's coming.

But greater is He that's in you than he that's in the world. The Bible doesn't say you might want to consider this. You might want to try.

God says, here's what you do. I lay it out before you. Choose life and death.

Choose the broad road. Choose the narrow road. Choose the door that leads to temptation or closes the door to temptation.

God says, I lay it out. I truly believe that this is why so many Christians are angry, depressed, and they're lashing out. They went through door one, and they caved in, and they went through door two, and now they're caught.

And I saw something on the Internet or something. He was bringing like a big marlin, a tuna or something out in the ocean. And this fish was just, man, he was lashing.

He was sitting up against a boat. That's a believer caught in sin. That's a great analogy.

That's why they're lashing out. That's why they're angry. Nobody can get around them.

They've been caught. That hook, that big hook is still in their mouth. And they've been caught.

They're lashing out like this fish. And anybody that gets close to them, they'll be hurt because they're caught. And God says, come out.

Come out. That's why I've said a miserable Christian is a Christian who's caught in sin. Now, we all sin, right? I've got a baseball game later tonight.

I might run the risk of it. Right? Pride comes in. My wife says, just go there to serve the kids and serve your community.

And who cares who wins or loses? Yeah, but I'm a guy. You've got to win. I can't go home saying we lost again.

But God will do that. He'll teach us, right? So it's there. It's ready to rear its ugly head.

I like what John Rice said, old Baptist preacher. There can be no happy, successful prayer life for a rebellious child of God. That deserves a repeat.

There can be no happy, successful prayer life for a rebellious child of God. If your prayer life is stifled, like mine has been many times before, many times it can be linked to the rebellion in our life that we're holding on to or not willing to let go. Do you think it's easy to pray when you walk through door one and door two and now you're that Marlon? Now I'm going to go just spend a whole hour in prayer with God.

I'll go take an hour hike and just talk to God. No. You do anything but that.

Anything but that. And again, guys, I'm just trying to help. The whole point of this message is to help.

But it irritates a little. It hurts a little. Because we have to bring these things to the surface.

Here's escape route number three. So you have these down yet? Number one, the Bible says... I'm going to have to try to remember without going back. I don't think I'll be able to do it.

Oh, bear it. Thank you, taking notes. First, you have to be able to bear it.

There's endurance. There's a saying, nope, nope. Right when it happens, nope.

I think that's why Paul said flee. Don't consider. Don't fight.

Don't fight sexual morality. Flee it. Why? There's a bearing.

There's a look. Flee. Nope.

Closing the door. And then the second thing, we have to close that door. Don't even give it a little.

What's the old saying? Give the devil an inch, he'll take a mile. Or more. It's there.

And then we get to this escape route number three. And to be honest with you, I don't quite understand this one. This still gets me.

Not personally. I mean, I guess it gets all of us. Some people are so caught in sin.

This escape route, number three, is very interesting. Let me read it. Don't plan ahead.

Now, wouldn't we all say, yeah, no kidding, Shane. Come on. You couldn't think of something for a sermon, so you just threw that together? No, this is profound.

Romans 13, 14 will be an enormous help here. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. Memorize that one, too.

Make no provision. That means don't plan ahead. Don't have a forethought.

Don't think ahead about how to gratify the sinful desires. Don't plan ahead. Jesus says if anything causes you to sin, remove it.

But this one I don't understand. Here's why. A man trying to kick his gambling habit plans his next trip to Vegas.

The young couple, and I've seen all these recently, the young couple who is dating and trying not to have sex plans a night of wine and a movie on the couch. The addicted teenager plans to meet his dealer on Friday after school. The recovering Oxycontin addict makes a doctor's appointment for the following week.

The recovering alcoholic is planning their summer fun that will put them right back into bondage. Right back in there. On that note, this is a side note.

I don't know if I should open up too much, but this is a long time ago. 1999, I remember I was just coming out of the rebellion and coming back to the God, and it was this huge struggle. I had friendships.

You know, they'll pull you back. And a friend of mine said, listen, I'm not doing that anymore. He said, well, just come to Laughlin with me.

I've got the jet skis. We've got a nice hotel on the river. I'm just drinking ice water.

Okay? You know that. Okay. So we get there, and he's got a whole igloo full of Corona.

Just on the beach with the jet. How long do you think that lasted? Why is that? I was stupid. Are you really going to think I'm going to go there and drink ice water? I mean, who am I fooling? I haven't done anything with that guy in 15 years.

That was it. I'm done. Some of you need to make radical steps in your life, or you will never break the addiction.

You'll never break the temptation. Because they keep pulling you back into that lifestyle. At what point are you going to wake up? After your second DUI? After your third attempt in rehab? That's what it takes most people.

But I'm telling you right now, something or someone is taking you down. They are not your friend. You need to cut them loose.

I would just, oh, no more Facebook. My computer broke. I don't know when it's going to be repaired.

And just vanish. And then get back into God. Because any time you take something from your life, you need to fill it with something good and godly.

Fill it with the word of God. Fill it with church. Fill it with worship times.

Fill it with people who will build you up. You've got to remove those things. But that's what people do.

We struggle in certain areas, and we plan ahead. I'll just go and have ice water. Or you know what most people say, I went to a lot of different, interviewed alcoholics and drug addicts and different things too.

They always think, well, I'll just have one this time. Just one this time. Do you know the definition of insanity? To do the same thing, expecting a different result.

But we plan ahead. The recovering porn addict plans time to go online when he or she will be most vulnerable. The person fighting a food or caffeine addiction fills their pantry with enticements.

We're fueling the very thing we want to fight. You better clean that pantry out. It better be out of sight, out of mind.

Hide the car keys. Do something. You've got to rid yourself.

I don't want to do that. Come on, Shane. Well, how bad do you want it? I'm talking to people that want to change.

And if you want to change, the Bible says make no provision for the flesh. Don't plan ahead. Because whatever I plan, I will do.

I will succeed at those plans. And I believe the enemy can plant thoughts. That was a long time ago.

You're different now. And that's what he used to tell me with my ungodly friends. Shane, you can go and minister to them.

You can go and lead them. And after 10 times of them bringing me down, I said, okay, that's the enemy. Now they can come and visit 15 years later.

But you've got to take radical steps. You've got to take whatever necessary to win that battle. The prideful person plans the next way to puff themselves up in front of others.

You see how we plan ahead? See, I already want to come back next week and say, we won today. I'm already planning ahead to tell you, hey, see, we won. So now I've got to not let you know.

So it's going to be a mystery. But you see how that works. We plan ahead.

And if you think long and hard about it, whatever you're struggling with, are you planning it for tonight or tomorrow or this week? Because either that Scripture's true or it's not. And we know it's true. We plan ahead how to sin.

We don't cut it off. We compromise. On this note, this is why, have you heard of Teen Challenge and places like that? Why do Teen Challenge and rehab, why do they work so well? Whether they know it or not, they're involving all three of these doors.

They're removing you from the environment. They're taking away the desire, the way to act upon that desire. You're not able to give yourself up over to it.

That's why they work so well. They recreate the whole environment, don't they? You show me a rehab center that has a refrigerator full of everything a person's addicted to. They remove you from the environment.

Folks, that's what we have to do. You have to remove those things from your life that are pulling you down because you will die with the same sin that you're living with today if you do not. Listen, I've been to a lot of funerals, and they will take this to their grave thinking, well, God just didn't deliver me, not knowing that He has.

The price has been paid. The war is done. It's victory.

Christ triumphed over death, hell, and the grave, but we're still in that battle. And that's why we have to make these changes. Remember from a few months ago, the soil determines the growth.

The soil determines the growth. This is the seed. But what you put it in determines the growth.

Like I said, you can't plant a watermelon seed on concrete. Why? It's a perfect seed. The same thing.

This has to be planted into good soil, and good soil comes from applying these three things we just talked about, nipping it in the bud, enduring the temptation, saying no, cutting off whatever is causing us this sin, and making no provision for it, not planning ahead. Interesting scripture. I'm going to close with this.

I came across this week. I was reading my devotionals. I don't know why it really stood out.

But Psalm 68, 6, the writer says, the rebellious dwell in a dry land. And I immediately thought of this addiction or besetting sin is rebellion. Giving in to temptation on a regular basis kills our relationship with God and others.

The rebellious dwell in a dry land. So if you've been dry, your walk with the Lord is dry, stagnant, dead, look at what might be taking place. Because as a believer, our walk should be vibrant, and living, and real, and encouraging others, and we can't wait.

But if there's a deadness there, if there's a dryness there, this jumped out at me, the rebellious dwell in a dry land. And you might know, I don't know what it is, but you know what it is. Whatever area God is wanting to work in your life this week, I would encourage you to take that step.

And here's the good news. You just need to backtrack. Close door three, stop planning.

Close door two, cut it off. And door one, you have the ability to say no. You have the ability to say no.

And again, I want to encourage you on that. Once you do, you'll experience times of refreshing. You'll experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Any time you can deny the flesh, the end result is the filling of the spirit. Any time you give in to the gratification of the flesh, you quench and grieve the spirit. Have you ever noticed why the Bible is boring or church is irrelevant or you're just dry and dead? Not all the time, but a lot of times, it's because we've been fostering that.

We've been quenching and grieving the spirit. There's no excitement. There's no passion.

Have you ever had a passion for God where you couldn't get up quick enough the next day and you couldn't get the Bible the next day? You couldn't get to church fast enough? Do you remember that ever? Where did it go? Does it just fly away? No, it doesn't. We leave it. And if you've never had that before, if you're saying, Shane, I'm bound and all this stuff, then that's a very easy solution.

It's called repentance. The Bible says if you don't know Christ, if you don't know God, you've never repented of your sin, all you need to do is cry out or pray out, whatever it is, and say, Lord, I am repenting of my sin. I'm a sinner and I need you to save me.

I need you. I'm in bondage in all these areas. I've never repented.

I've never come clean. I've never asked that you save me. And I would encourage you to do that if you've never done that before.

I don't know a group this size. It's hard to tell. I don't know everybody here.

I don't know their testimony. And the more I pastor, the more it amazes me that I can talk to people who've been in church all their life and I ask them, tell me about when you were converted and you repented. And I hear things like, well, I've been a Christian all my life.

I was raised in a Christian home. I attended a youth camp and I've always kind of felt close to God. Well, new age people say that.

Jehovah Witness say that. Roman Catholicism definitely says that. I mean, that's not salvation.

And to run the risk of not being clear, I'd rather be crystal clear to you that there has to be a point. You don't have to remember the day. But there has to be a time to say, listen, I repented of my sin and I asked Christ to come in and save me.

And He is my Savior and He is my Lord. Yes, I'm struggling. Yes, I'm hurt.

But I did that and I love Him and He saved me. If you haven't done that and all you've been doing is playing church, no wonder you can't break these things. No wonder there's misery and depression

because you're trying to live a life that you're never designed to live.

So I would encourage you, search your heart, look at your soul. You might be fooling other people, but you're not fooling God. There are people that come to this church that I hope someday say, Shane, I've been playing church.

I finally repented and gave my life to Christ because I have a feeling of who they are already. Shane, there's no fruit. There's no fruit.

And if there's no fruit, you have to wonder what tree you're anchored to, what vine are you anchored to. So that's why I preach like this weekly. That's why I preach with a certain amount of passion because I know there's people there and my heart breaks for them.

They're riding on their parents' coattails. But I've been a Christian all my life. Is it possible that, you can't be a Christian all your life.

I tell my kids, they're here today, that you can't be a Christian all your life. Don't count on Mommy and Daddy. I tell them, you're gonna have to have your own relationship with the Lord.

Don't say what I say. You're gonna have to find Him and meet Him. Don't say, oh, my mom and dad were just good.

No, no, no. You have to meet Christ on your own. You have to ask for forgiveness of sin and repentance.

That's the only way to salvation. There's no other name that will save. When we stand before God, how many people are gonna stand before God and say, but I was a good person, good according to whose standard? Good according to whose standard? According to what we're seeing on the news in Baltimore? Good according to what? You have to look at Christ and His example.

And that's when you understand what God says, there's none that are righteous, no, not one. Our good things are but filthy rags in the sight of God. Because He looks at Christ, not at anything we do.

So that's why you have to embrace that gracious gift of forgiveness from the cross in order to be saved.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/CIUULbjEIDM.mp4>

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