



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

June 2023

When Wrong Looks Good



Question: I find myself struggling daily with desire to indulge in some wrong activities. The thing is, I enjoy these pastimes. I figure that God wants me to be happy (doesn't He?), so I continue doing these things. But then, I end up feeling guilty. And eventually, I deeply regret my behavior. How can I conquer these cravings? When being honest with myself, I do know this is not pleasing to God, and, it's not good for me either.

Response: Temptation is common to all humanity. A temptation is simply a wrong thought, wrong feeling or wrong desire. Our society claims that each person has the privilege of thinking, feeling and wanting whatever they

choose. But God, through the Bible, teaches us to *obey God's instructions*, regardless of how we feel... because His ways are ALWAYS the best way to live!

If I have an urge to steal something or harm someone or to participate in an immoral activity... those are wrong inclinations. Those urges are what we recognize as *temptations*. Perhaps I feel like screaming at my child, or want to seek revenge on someone who hurt me, or crave indulging in sexual sin. These are often called *normal* feelings and *natural* desires. Scripturally, we understand that they are *temptations*. In fact, they *are* normal and natural to any human being. Feelings of anger, discouragement, jealousy, pride, lust can be aroused in any of us.

A tremendous blessing of knowing that JESUS lives within us, is recognizing that we are not in bondage to doing what is *normal* and *natural*. Because of Christ, we live SUPERNaturally. Yes, temptations still come our way. Although I may not always be able to foresee and control whether a certain thought or feeling suddenly "pops" into my head, I definitely can choose whether it remains in my mind. I can immediately determine that the unhealthy desire will not dictate my response, in words and/or actions.

The Bible teaches that we are to *take every thought captive in obedience to Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5). In other words... because of Christ within us, we

Open Arms Childbirth Class

Four Thursday evenings

June 29, July 13, 20, and 27, 2023

Class Schedule 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Covering the important information offered in a hospital course, *Open Arms* adds a distinctively-Christian perspective.

You will enjoy meeting other expectant couples as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course.

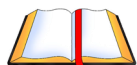
Register by contacting the ALM office.



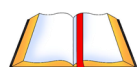
can decide what we think about, instead of *parking* our thoughts on the temptation. This is absolutely imperative to avoid succumbing to the temptation!

Is it a sin to be tempted? No... The Bible says, Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, but He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

The following five strategies will be helpful in victoriously overcoming temptation!



When you are being tempted, talk honestly to the Lord about it. Tell Him about your struggle. Jesus did this in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39) and even when He was on the cross (Matthew 27:46). He admitted how He was feeling.



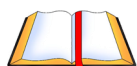
Confess Scriptural truth that applies to your situation. The Word of God is like a sword (Ephesians 6:17) which can help you win your temptation battles. For example, if tempted to watch a movie you know is filled with ungodly behavior, quote Psalm 101:3, *I will set no wicked thing before my eyes*. If tempted to worry and fret about an upcoming task, repeat Philippians 4:13, *I can do all things through Him who gives me strength*. Memorize God's Word so you can use this powerful weapon to defeat temptation.



Reaffirm (out loud, if possible!) that you are the Lord's, that Satan has no power over you and that you choose to follow God, not your wrong *wants*. Satan definitely will try to put temptation in your path, but often it is simply our human nature that causes us to be tempted (James 1:14). Thank the Lord for giving you strength to resist both Satan's enticements and your own human sinful desires. *Submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee* (James 4:7).



Move quickly away from the source of the temptation. For example, if you are tempted to send an angry text to someone who has hurt you, put down your phone, go to another room and busy yourself with some other activity. Scripture tells us to *flee* temptation (1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22). That means to run the other direction as fast as possible!



Choose to put your mind on something good (Philippians 4:8). If you think about doing wrong long enough, you will end up going astray (Proverbs 14:22). So be ruthless in replacing tempting thoughts with wholesome ones.

I realize that every year, at about this time, I say the same thing in my letter... commenting on the summer slump which I understand most ministries face.



Well, you are one of those who has contributed \$\$\$ to further the ministry here at ALM. Perhaps you also pray for the seven of us who work together. Thank you so very much! Really, we are grateful for your generosity, concern, and prayer on our behalf.

We remain amazed at the Lord's provision. In September, it will be 45 years since Sharon and I (along with my brother Mervin and Laurel, and my sister Joann and Cleber) assisted Dad and Mom in starting ALM. As our sign announces... ***Encouraging Christian Living since 1978.***

What a blessing it continues to be, seeing God heal so many damaged relationships!



Decide what you *will do* rather than day-dreaming about what you *would like to do*. Develop an arsenal of good activities you can do in place of the wrong action. For example, if tempted to angrily retaliate when someone has been unkind, choose to pray for him/her. If tempted to watch something impure on your phone or computer, log onto good Bible teaching, or praise music, or go for a walk. Scripture promises that *those who plan what is good will find love and faithfulness* (Proverbs 14:22). What a great result for those who choose wholesome activities over sinful ones.

The good news about temptation? ***No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it*** (1 Corinthians 10:13). Because of Jesus... we do not need to be overcome by temptation. We can **overcome!**

So, let's purpose that we will determine what **we WILL do** today... We WILL tap into the power of His Spirit, and His amazing Word. We WILL win over temptation! We WILL walk in VICTORY!



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