



# RESISTING TEMPTATION

HOW TO DEAL WITH  
TEMPTATION

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**T**emptation lurks in our hearts, eager to erupt at the perfect opportunity. Assuming alluring forms, temptation may glitter like gold, make your heart race, stroke your ego, or challenge you to compromise biblical principles. James warned that every human will face temptation as Satan exploits our feeble flesh: “Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14). How should believers deal with temptation?

**Not a sin!** You need to realize that being tempted is *not* a sin. Jesus, the sinless One, faced down this foe on the Mount of Temptation (see Luke 4:1-13). Martin Luther said, “I can’t keep the sparrows from flying around my head, but I can keep them from making a nest in my hair.” The trick is to resist temptation: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). You don’t have to say “Yes” to the blonde bombshell, watch the provocative movie, or succumb to peer pressure.

**Not always obvious!** Satan doesn’t knock on your door wearing a red suit with horns and a pitchfork. Paul warned that the fallen cherub parades as an angel of light (see 2 Corinthians 11:14). The devil is a master deceiver. He wants to sell you a bill of goods. He’ll convince you that driving a new car will make your life complete. He’ll insist that divorce equals happiness. Often, he’ll twist God’s words like he did with Eve.



Sometimes Satan's words come from your best friend's lips. Remember? Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23). The tempter is sneaky in his strategies.

**Not mysterious!** When you discover the sources of temptation, victory is inevitable. Temptation springs from your heart, your deep desires. *Desire* can be translated "lust." God has given us normal desires such as thirst, hunger, and sex. When natural desires are fulfilled scripturally, no sin occurs. But when we satisfy desires outside of God's will, they become deadly lusts. For instance, eating is normal—gluttony's sin. Sleep is necessary—laziness is sinful. Sex within marriage is good—out of its biblical context, it is sin.

**Not from God!** Matthew Henry wrote, "As God cannot be tempted with evil himself, so neither can He be a tempter of others....The carnal mind is willing to charge its own sins on God." There is something hereditary in blaming God. Our first father, Adam, told God, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). To believe that God tempts you reveals a warped view of your Heavenly Father. Jesus taught us to pray, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). God doesn't set traps, Satan does.

**Not futile!** Believe it or not, temptation is good for you! When you overcome temptation, God promises the reward of a crown of righteousness and a reputation as His crowning achievement (see James 1:12-18). So the next time the enemy tries to exploit your fleshly desire, just say no! God will rescue and reward you.