

Title: The Temptation Battle

Growing up, I always looked forward to going to my grandmother's house. Sure, it was great to see my grandmother, but the real star of the show? My grandmother always has bowls of candy just sitting around her house. Peanut M&Ms, Reeces' Peanut Butter Cups (the ones that are individually wrapped in aluminum foil that are that perfect blend of peanut butter and chocolate), regular M&Ms, and often a mixture of many other delicious sweet treats. For a 12-year-old, this was FANTASTIC. My mother had warred against candy and tasty treats my entire life, and when we went to my grandmother's, I was given the freedom to run wild. Here was the issue: I couldn't stop. For 3 or 4 days straight, I would eat so much chocolate, drink so much root beer, eat so many Lucky Charms, and top it off with pizza and chips and dip that I was in a state of comatose for weeks following. Since the temptation existed in front of me, it was all I wanted. And so I partook.

For a Christian, the idea of temptation is often terrifying. It is a personal attack on the thing that will draw me away from the Father. It is something I crave daily, and as the temptation happens, it is being flaunted in front of me like a delicious piece of food that I want to eat more than anything else. James puts it like this in James 1:14: "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." Those desires I have for the things of this earth are putting me in a constant state of sin, trying to lure me away from serving our God.

In Matthew 4, we see that Jesus is going to face temptation. This temptation will be something He is going to want and long for. For Jesus, He is going to be tempted by Satan. Check out what it says in Matthew 4:1-2.

[1] Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

We see Jesus in a place of vulnerability. Jesus was in a position where it would not take much to put most people over the edge and fall into that temptation.

The passage continues in Matthew 4:3-4

[3] And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." [4] But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Jesus, in this moment, has the ability to shut down the temptation that is coming His way. I recommend reading Matthew 4:5-11. In this passage, you see the tempter continuously looking for ways to tempt Jesus, and Jesus is continually able to respond in a holy way.

Here is the question I need to ask myself today: Do I have a relationship with Jesus that is strong enough to help me successfully run from sin? Is my desire for a relationship with my Savior greater than my desire for what I want in this world?

If my desire for Jesus is more significant than my desire for a life of luxury, that temptation will be easier to face. If my desire for Jesus is greater than my desire to be the person who uses bad language, that

temptation will be easier to overcome. If my desire for Jesus is greater than my desire to unethically climb the ladder at work, I will be able to battle that temptation. If my desire for Jesus is more significant than _____ temptation, then fighting that temptation will come naturally. So I must be willing and ready to put a relationship with Jesus above everything else in my life, no matter the cost.

Jesus quoted scripture to help fight off the temptation He was facing. What is going to be your methodology next time you are faced with this temptation? What are you going to tell yourself in order to flee from the desires of this world?

I was tempted by candy at my grandmother's house. Similarly and unfortunately, there are many things in this world that tempt us. Am I going to have the relationship with Jesus to say no to those temptations?

Discussion Questions

1. What are some funny things (like candy at grandma's house) that we feel like we can be lured to?
2. In the same way, we are lured to funny little things, we are lured to sin. Discuss ways that you feel like your personal desires lead you into temptation.
3. What makes the way Jesus responded to temptation so admirable?
4. What are some creative ways that you can personally work on to fight off temptation?