

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 17



Facing temptation is a fact of life for every Christ follower. It's important to know that being tempted isn't sin and doesn't mean we're guaranteed to give in. It just means we need to be aware of the potential to choose the wrong way.

Take a look at Matthew 4:1-11. Satan chose to tempt Jesus in three areas: His physical needs, His obedience to the boundaries His Father had set up for His time on earth, and the choice between following His own desires or God's plan. Hebrews 2:18 says, "Because Jesus was tempted as we are and suffered as we do, He understands us and He is able to help us when we are tempted." He knows exactly what we're up against and how hard it can be to stay committed to what God has for us.

Remember how He countered Satan with scripture? God uses His word to equip us too. When we find ourselves in what seems like a losing battle against giving in and going backward, it's time to stop and ask ourselves what's made us so vulnerable now? What changed? What's the weak spot in our armor? Paul talks about the need for a reality check in Romans 12:3. "Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us." Pride in our successes can prevent us from noticing patterns of compromise or make us ignore warning signs. Paul goes on in Galatians 3:3, "How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?"

Instead of just waiting for temptation to strike and hoping that we'll resist, we need to develop a plan for dealing with it now, starting in the mind. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 advises, "Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good." When a thought pops into your head, hold it there for examination and compare it to what God says. This honest communication with God will redirect your body and mind to follow Him. James 1:14-15 spells this out plainly. "Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow it gives birth to death." This shows that although the thought itself is just a thought initially, it could become a reality. Ask God to show you if this idea came from your own mind or from someone else.

So what happens if you take that step from thinking about a temptation to acting on it? Do you go back to square one with God? No, that's part of the all or nothing thinking that discourages people from coming back to Him when they fall. We confess and turn back to Him, confident that He'll walk us through what happened and show us how to avoid it next time. We should go to Him first, but if we don't, our failures don't have to be the end of our stories. He doesn't give up on us. He is faithful to keep walking with us and continues to renew our minds.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Matthew 4:1-11, Hebrews 2:18 and 10:25, Zechariah 4:6, Romans 12:3, Galatians 3:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Psalm 46:10 and 1:1, James 1:14-15, 1 John 2:1

[illegible]

41