

How To Handle Temptation

Luke 4:1-13

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I'm just going to read the first two verses of chapter 4. Luke tells us that "Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing. And when they were ended, afterward He was hungry."

A story is told of an exasperated motorist, who parked his car in a no-parking zone in London and attached the following message to the windshield: "I have circled this block 20 times. I have an appointment to keep. 'Forgive us our trespasses.'" When the motorist returned to his car after his meeting, he saw this note attached to his car: "I've circled this block for 20 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. 'Lead us not into temptation.'"

I had a meeting in Los Angeles this week, and I almost fulfilled that story. I was circling and circling the building, and I thought, "I'm going to have to park illegally to get to my meeting on time."

Every one of us face temptation. There is no person alive who is not tempted of the devil. If you think you've arrived at this plateau where you're above temptation, then you are deceived by the devil himself. Even Jesus Christ Himself was tempted. Now the fact that Jesus was tempted indicates it's not a sin to be tempted. Being tempted is not where the sin lies. Actually, the more spiritual you become, the more tempted you are. Satan has your number, and he goes after you. The more you read your Bible, the more you pray, the more you go to church, the more you draw near to God, the more Satan is going to attack you to try to rob that good work that God is doing in your life. So don't get the idea that you are above or beyond temptation. And don't believe it was a sin to be tempted; Jesus was tempted, but He never sinned or yielded to the temptation. So we all face temptation, but we need to know how to deal with temptation.

I want to look at a few introductory thoughts before we examine this text. I want you to note the time of this temptation: It came right after chapter three, which discussed His baptism. Jesus is baptized, heaven opens, the Spirit descends in the form of a dove and an audible voice—the Father's voice—came from heaven and said, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." So everyone saw that experience, and John the Baptist pointed out, "Behold, this is the Lamb of God Who came to carry away the sins of the world." So Jesus had this glorious experience of the baptism and the Holy Spirit coming upon Him.

I love what J. Oswald Sanders said in contrasting the baptism with the temptation. "After the dove, the devil. After the reassuring voice of the Father, the insinuating hiss of the serpent. After the comforting words of 'Thou art My beloved Son,' came the sinister challenge: 'If you are really the Son of God.'"

Sometimes our temptations lie right after a great blessing. You come to church on Sunday, your hearts are filled, you're worshipping, you're hearing God's Word, and then just trying to get out of the parking lot, you get angry and get in the flesh with another believer. You want to get out and lay hands on another believer, because they aren't moving fast enough. You can so easily lose your victory. You come home blessed, and then something's going to go wrong. Satan wants to rob that blessing and that recommitment and that reconnection with God that so often takes place.

Also in verse 1 is a double reference to Jesus' relationship with the Holy Spirit. Verse 1 says He was "full of the Holy Spirit." Then He returned from the Jordan, where He was baptized "and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." I believe this wilderness was down by the Jordan Valley down by the Dead Sea, a very desolate area. I want you to notice the two references in verse 1: He was filled with the Spirit and He was led by the Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit was leading Jesus out into the wilderness for the express purpose of allowing Satan to tempt Him.

Now God does not tempt us with evil. I want you to note the source of that temptation: it's the devil mentioned there. There really is a devil. One of Satan's deceptions is to get people to believe that he doesn't exist, that there is no personal devil. But the Bible clearly teaches there is. Satan hates God and he hates you, and he wants to destroy you, your relationship to God, your marriage, your family and everything about you. He hates Christians. He's trying to tempt you away from God. Satan tempts us to bring out our worst; God allows us to be tested to bring out our worth. From Satan's side, it was a temptation; from God's side it was a test. Jesus Christ was impeccable and could not sin and did not sin. But the issue is that He was led by and filled by the Holy Spirit.

Why would the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted? This is all introductory so that you can understand the setting here. I believe it was to show us that He could not sin. I'm not going to get into the argument that theologians get into called the "impeccability of Christ." Could Christ have yielded to the sin? Some argue that if He was really tempted, then He had to really be able to sin. I disagree with that. They say that Jesus had that capacity as a human being to sin.

I believe that the temptation of Christ was not to show us if He would sin but to show us that He could not sin in everything that He did by resisting the devil. Perhaps the most important point you can get in the temptation of Christ is that He resisted in His humanity. You need to understand that point. The temptation was real, and His humanity was real.

What you need to understand about Jesus is that He was every bit a human being. When I say that, I mean fully human, full humanity. He had a human mind, a human consciousness, a human will, human emotions, a human body. We cannot and must not diminish the humanity of Jesus Christ. Somehow we know He's God, but we don't think He's fully human. No; He was fully human with all the limitations and all the weaknesses and all the frailties and all the emotions.

Have you read about Jesus when He was at the grave of Lazarus? The Bible says, “Jesus wept.” The Greek word for “wept” there literally means that his eyes welled up, watered and a tear trickled down His face. I feel that. The Son of God in tears. It doesn’t mean that He wailed. It means His eyes moistened, and a tear ran down His cheek. Fully man, so that He could empathize with us and become a compassionate High Priest.

But here is what you need to understand about His humanity: It was sinless. Fully human yet absolutely sinless. He was born of a virgin. He inherited no sin nature. He lived His whole life—33 years—without thinking an evil thought, without doing an evil deed, without stepping outside the will of the Father. That’s mind-blowing. Every temptation that Jesus received from the devil in this episode here, He resisted in His humanity.

Why is that important? Because I’m a human, and we’re humans. If Jesus did it, we can do it. If Jesus had to rely upon the Spirit, if Jesus had to rely on prayer, if Jesus had to surrender to the will of the Father, you and I can do the same. The devil can be resisted. There may be someone here right now who is listening to me and they’re being tempted to commit adultery and being tempted to lie, being tempted to steal, being tempted to indulge the flesh or to step out of the will of God. You’re thinking that you’re too weak or that you’re inept or that you’re unable to resist that temptation. I’m here to tell you that Jesus will give you the strength. If Jesus Christ can do it, we can do it. The same resources that He had available, we have available to us.

So this whole temptation has to do with His humanity. Does that diminish His deity? Not at all. He was fully God, and fully God in the truest sense; all the divine attributes existed in Jesus. We can’t diminish His deity nor His humanity. Two natures—human and divine—in one person, Jesus Christ. He is unique in all of history; never before and never after will there be a God-man. He came from heaven to redeem us, so He had to be man. In order to save us, He had to be God. He was perfectly suited to be the Savior of the world. The reason I told you all that is that it is an important point; that we, too, in our humanity, can resist the devil.

Another reason for this story is that it exposes Satan’s tactics. There really is a devil. When it comes to the devil, there are two extremes people go to. One extreme they go to is that they see a devil in everything. If you have a gopher in your yard, it’s a demon-possessed gopher. I had a friend who’s crazy like this, and one day he was out in the yard praying. I asked, “What are you doing?” He said, “I’m binding the gopher in the name of Jesus.” I said, “Well, let’s just put some poison down the hole and kill the thing, and we don’t have to stand out here praying anymore.” “I ate too much chocolate cake. The demon of chocolate cake’s gotten into me.” It’s not the demon of chocolate; there’s no such thing. It’s your flesh.

It’s dangerous to blame everything on the devil, but the other extreme is also dangerous. It’s dangerous not to believe that there is a devil. That’s what the devil wants you to believe. “Be sober. Be vigilant. For your adversary, the devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” We really need to realize that there is a personal devil or Satan.

But this story has also been given to us to qualify Jesus as our sympathetic High Priest and to give us a pattern for our own victory. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this temptation of Jesus. So let's look at the three temptations Jesus faced and discover how Jesus detected them and how we can defeat the devil.

Temptation number one is in verses 3 and 4. In each one of these temptations, the devil speaks—he's an actual being, a spirit being, but he speaks—and then the Lord Jesus answers. "And the devil said unto Him..."—that is, Jesus—"...if Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him saying, 'It is written...'"—an important point: Every response to the devil is the Word of God. God's Word, hidden in His heart, is the way He responded to the devil. He is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3—"...man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God." By the way, all the Scriptures that Jesus quotes in all three temptations are from the book of Deuteronomy. It's sometimes called the "favorite book of Jesus."

Now Jesus was in the wilderness, and at the end of verse 2, he tells us that He was hungry. This is a clear statement of His humanity. Because He was fully human, He experienced hunger. He also experienced fatigue, and He was weary and He slept and He cried. He experienced anger. So all of the things that we experience, Jesus experienced. After 40 days of fasting—I'm not much of a faster; my body needs food to function. But I've had times of fasting where I'm seeking the Lord.

I think sometimes people use fasting inappropriately when they fast to obligate God to do what they want Him to do. I don't think you can get God's hand up behind His back because you're fasting. "God, I've gone without Twinkies all week, so You'd better give me what I've asked for." People use it like that. "God, I went without eating so You really need to do what I've asked you to do." Fasting is to draw you closer to God.

Even in all our praying, the purpose of our praying is to get God's will done, not ours. A prayer of faith is saying, "Not my will, but Thine be done." That's faith in God, knowing better and trusting Him. That's faith. Can God heal? Yes, He can heal. Does He always heal? No, He doesn't always heal. We trust Him. If God doesn't heal us, and God's grace is sufficient—"His strength is made perfect in our weakness"—we'll glorify God, even in our infirmities.

But here we see He had been fasting and He was hungry. I've been told—and I've never gotten that far—that after 40 days of fasting when you regain your hunger, as Jesus did here, you are at the point of starvation. So Jesus was actually starving to death. Then the devil shows up and attacks Him in this area. I actually believe that the devil had been attacking Him the whole 40-day period, and these are the three culminating temptations He faced.

An interesting thing about this story is that the only one who knew about it was Jesus. No other disciples were there; no other disciples heard or saw it. Jesus felt it important to recount this story so that it could be recorded for us.

So Jesus answered the devil and said, "It is written..."—Deuteronomy 8:3—"...man shall not live by bread alone..." Now here is the question: Wherein lies the temptation? What is the sphere of this temptation? There are a lot of ways we can look at it. I believe the temptation was in the sphere of bodily appetite.

Remember when Satan tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis? Satan said to Eve that the forbidden fruit was good for food. This temptation is in the category of what we would call "lust of the flesh." John, in his first epistle, said that of all temptations that are in the world, the first on the list is the lust of the flesh.

Jesus was hungry. Now there's nothing wrong with food. It's not intrinsically wrong or sinful to eat. Thank God for the appetite that He gives us. Eating food is fine, but gluttony is a sin, or eating food out of the will of God is sin. Jesus' appetite was to do the will of God, not to be disobedient to the Father's will. The sin would lie, however, in Him using His divine power to satisfy His human needs in gratifying His own appetites outside of the will of God. That's the key: to gratify His own appetites outside the will of God.

God has given you the hunger drive, the thirst drive, the sex drive, and all of those things are legitimate, but they must be used in the will of God. They must be used within the parameters of God's prescribed will. Outside of that, they can become sinful behavior. So the temptation was, "Use Your power to satisfy your need." Remember He had to resist the devil in His full humanity.

Anyone who makes gratification of their appetite their supreme purpose, is wasting their life. Do you know people like that? They live to eat. They live to buy things. They live to have power and pleasure, and they live for the satisfaction of their lustful desires. They are controlled by their passions. This is what Jesus is resisting here.

The essence of the temptation was to doubt, as well, of the goodness of God. Satan was telling Eve, in essence, that God was keeping something from her that was good. "The food is good." And he, in essence, told her that God isn't good, that He didn't want to bless her life. Satan said, "You can't do this, and you can't do that. And you have all these rules."

When God tells you not to do something, He loves you and He knows what's best for you. I'm not the one to determine what's best for me; God is. As a parent, oh, that your kids would look to you for wisdom and direction. You know, when they turn 13, they reach that age when they think they're omniscient. "Mom and Dad know nothing; I know everything." It's like, "I've been there. I've done that. I've lived through that!" "Yah, but you're old and weird. You don't really know." It's like, "Dude, let me spare you some heartache and pain and misery. Come to the old man and let me direct your life for you. Please."

I realize that kids have to learn on their own from experience, but that we would come to our Father in heaven and say, "Father, I want You to guide me. I know Your ways are best. Help me to make decisions that are within Your plan for my life. I want Your will."

But Jesus was tempted to use His divine power to satisfy His human need. Sometimes we step out of the will of God. “Well, God hasn’t given me a maid; I’m not married. So I’m just going to get involved sexually with somebody and satisfy that need.” God will give you the strength to wait. God will take care of you. “God hasn’t provided for my need, so I’m going to lie or cheat or steal to be able to get by.” No; you do what God has called you to do. If you are obedient to God, He will take care of you.

How did Jesus defeat the devil? With the Word of God, Deuteronomy 8:3; “Man shall not live by bread alone.” Life isn’t just physical; it’s not just about your physical appetites. It’s not just about money or pleasure and things. Life is more than clothes and food. It’s better to be hungry in the will of God than to be full out of the will of God. If we would only believe that. I would rather be hungry in the will of God than be full out of the will of God. I would rather be rejected by men and accepted by God. I’d rather be a friend of God and an enemy of the world. It’s so important to have that commitment. The highest purpose of life is not to satisfy our appetites but to trust and obey the will of God.

The second temptation is in verse 5-8. “And the devil takes Him...”—that is, Jesus—“...up into a high mountain.” For you Bible students, Matthew and Mark reversed the order of the last two temptations. It is believed they did that because their order is chronological, but Luke’s is topical. Luke picks out the order, because it fits with his theme of Jesus, the Son of Man.

Verses 5-7, “And the devil takes Him up into a high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, ‘All this power...”—the power of this world, of the worldly kingdom—“...will I give Thee, and the glory of them, for it is delivered unto me...”—notice that phrase, “I can give Thee these earthly kingdoms. They were actually given unto me”—“...and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If Thou wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.”

Before we see the Lord’s response, I want to ask, “Do the kingdoms of this world belong to the devil?” Yes, in this sense: When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they forfeited their right over the earth, and Satan became the prince and the power of the air. He became the god of this world. That doesn’t mean that God isn’t sovereign. That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t sit on the throne and rule in the heavens and that Satan isn’t subject to Him. It means that there is a sphere of Satan’s kingdoms in this world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—in which if you sell your soul to the devil, he can actually make you rich or famous or give you possessions or power. People in the world are doing that all the time. The rich, the famous, the powerful—they reject God and His Word. They turn their lives over to the philosophies of the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Little do they realize that they are puppets on a string.

Yes, this world does belong to the devil. That’s why we, as Christians, are not of this world. We’re strangers. We’re pilgrims. We’re just passing through. Our home is in heaven. That’s why we’re not attracted to worldly things. We don’t want worldly pleasures and worldly company and worldly recognition, because heaven’s our home. That’s what influences us; to

live for eternity. That's the perspective we need to have. Too many Christians get too earthly minded, too wrapped up in wanting to be like the world.

Satan says he can give the kingdoms of this world to whomever he wants. Satan is offering Jesus a shortcut. Jesus had come to redeem the world by His death and resurrection and one day be king and reign upon the earth, but Satan said, "You don't have to suffer. You don't have to go to the Cross. You don't have to die. You don't have to go through the pain and the agony. Just bow down now and worship me, and I'll give you what you're looking for." Satan is saying that Jesus didn't have to suffer or go to the Cross.

Were the kingdoms of this world Satan's to give? Yes. And the glory of them? Yes. But Jesus realizes that He has to do it God's way. He realized there are no shortcuts to doing what God sent Him to do. So Jesus points out that the spiritual—God's Word—is more important than the physical. He's not saying that the physical isn't important, that God doesn't provide; He's saying that "Man does not live by bread only but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God."

There are no shortcuts in your Christian life. There is no easy way to spiritual maturity or victory. If Jesus, the perfect Son of God, had to hang on a cross before He could sit on the throne, then we, His followers, should not expect an easy road to glory. Satan's way is glory now and suffering later; God's way is suffering now, but glory later.

Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Do Christians cry? Yes. Do Christians suffer? Yes. Do Christians have pain? Yes. Do Christians die? Yes. Do Christians experience loss and bereavement and pain and sorrow and suffering? Yes. We're following Jesus. He cried. He suffered. He was rejected. He died on the Cross.

"Could he have followed far

Who has no wound or scar?"

How far can you follow Jesus if your side isn't pierced and you're not having the scars of being a disciple of Jesus Christ? The Bible says, "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It's a fact. The world's going to laugh at you. It's going to mock you. It's going to reject you. It's not going to like you. It's not going to approve of you. But this world is not our home.

You want to resist the devil? Get your affection on things above; get spiritually minded. Ask God to give you an appetite for the eternal, and not for the temporal. You're not here to satisfy your earthly lusts, but you're here to obey the will, the purpose and the plan of God.

Someone points out that Satan questioned the Father's love when he tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. "If God really loved you, He'd feed you." It would be like the devil saying, "If God really loved you, your marriage would be better. If God really loved you, you wouldn't be sick. If God really loved you, your kids would be obedient. If God really loved you, you would

have a better job. If God really loved you, you would drive a nicer car, one that always started when you turned the key. If God really loved you, then why are you living in this dumpy place? I thought you were a King's kid. Psst. God doesn't love you." Don't listen to the devil. He's tempting you to doubt the Father's love.

Satan questioned the Father's hope when he offered Jesus the world's kingdoms this side of the Cross. That's why Jesus came, and Satan's trying to offer Him a shortcut. And Satan will question the Father's faithfulness when he asked Jesus to jump from the temple to prove that the Father would keep Him in His promise. Our faith, our hope and our love will be tempted and tried by Satan.

Let me point out the third temptation in verses 9-13. "And he..."—that is, the devil—"...brought Him..."—that is, Jesus—"...to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple and said unto Him, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over Thee to keep Thee.'" Notice that the devil quotes the Bible. Satan is very subtle, but you know that when Satan uses the Bible, he's always going to twist it, take it out of context, add something to it or take something out of it. That's what he does here. He's quoting from Psalm 91:11-12: "For He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways. They shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

What is this "pinnacle of the temple," verse 9? This is the southeast corner of the walls of Jerusalem. It's still there today. If you go on a tour to Jerusalem, you can stand in the Kidron Valley and look up that wall. It's 450 feet from the pinnacle down to the Kidron Valley below. The devil was saying, "You want people to follow You? You want people to believe You're the Messiah? Then do something miraculous."

The devil even gives Jesus a Biblical basis for this; he throws in Scripture. He says, "You like the Bible? I have a Bible verse, Psalm 91:11: 'He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee...'"—but he left out the phrase "...in all Thy ways"—"...and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." The devil was saying, "Angels would miraculously catch You up and people would ooh and aah and hail You as Messiah. That's what You want; isn't it?" Again, the devil was tempting Jesus to step out of the will of God the Father, to do it His way for His own recognition.

When Satan omitted a portion of Psalm 91:11—"in all Thy ways"—this wasn't God's way. It wasn't God's will. Beware of Scripture twisting. In this case Scripture omitting - and taking out of the Bible what it actually says and wrenching it from its context. This is what all the cults do. They knock on your door and say, "We're Christians. We believe in Jesus. We read the Bible." But they take half a verse. They don't read before and they don't read after the verse. They'll take a piece out of a verse, they twist it and they make it say what they want it to say. We're not free to do that. God said what He meant and meant what He said. I do not have the right to change what God has spoken. What God has spoken cannot be broken. I can't take away from it. I can't add to it. I don't even want to water it down or lessen it. Whatever the Bible says, that's what I want to say. It's not my opinion. It's not my views. It's not my ideas. It's what

God's Word says. That's what we need to think on and say. So Satan omits this portion of Scripture, and he twists it around.

There are many false teachers today who do the same. Beware when men preach the Bible and teach the Bible and you're listening to a pastor. You should have your Bible open. You should read the context. You should be thinking critically. Is that really what that verse says? Is that really what it means? Is that what the rest of the Bible says? Compare Scripture with Scripture.

So what was Satan suggesting? That Jesus presume upon the will of God; that He place Himself in physical or moral danger, expecting God to send angels to deliver Him. This is a little more difficult to explain. I'll put it in practical terms. Have you ever heard of churches that do snake handling? Can you imagine going to church, sitting down and they say, "At this time, the ushers will pass out the rattlesnakes." "Whew! I'm outta here!" I have a theological term for that: stupid. Now I know that at the end of Mark's Gospel it says that if they're bitten by a snake, God will take care of them, but that's when God's will is to do that in God's plan. You don't go looking for snakes to bite you to prove you're really a Christian! That's just stupid. They drink poison to prove they're Christians! They're Christians all right; they go to heaven. I can almost see them in heaven looking at the Lord, and He's going, "You are so dumb. You had another 30 years, but you drank that poison, you knucklehead!" We presume upon God's will. You can't do something out of the will of God, foolish or sinful, and expect God to cover for you. That's what it means to tempt the Lord thy God. "Thou shall not tempt" or test or put God to a foolish test.

I have all kinds of examples of this. One I remember long before I got married. I was probably 18 or 19, and I was with a bunch of Christian friends. I lived at the base of the San Bernardino Mountains, and we got this bright idea to go up to the mountains to go tobogganing at night. A midnight toboggan ride. We had no idea where to go. We found this one really cool place, but at the bottom of it there were all these trees and a highway. So we got up to the top of the mountain, and I'm thinking, "There are no brakes, no steering wheel, no seat belts, no helmet. This is just stupid." "Come on, John. This is gonna be fun. Come on; let's go." I said, "I'm sitting on the back because I want to be able to bail off." The guy in the front had a flashlight, and we're getting ready to go down this thing, and one of the guys said, "Let's pray and ask God to keep us safe." I'll never forget that. I go, "Are you crazy? You want to be safe? Then get off the toboggan, you fool!"

Have you ever been in a restaurant where someone orders this big, giant dessert? You know that it's bad for you. You're all going to share it, and someone says, "Let's pray and ask God to bless it." No. Let's eat it and repent afterwards. The whole time you're eating it, you know you're sinning. "Oh God, bless this. Turn the molecules into celery or something, Lord." It tastes like a banana split, but it's really green beans. That's just flat-out stupid.

People say, "I'm going to marry this unbeliever. I'm a Christian, but I'm going to marry this person anyway. And God bless this marriage." "You mean to tell me that you're asking God to

bless your union when God has already said it's wrong?" That's just flat-out stupid.

You have a problem with alcohol and you say, "I'm just going to hang out at the bar and play pool, talk to my friends. I don't drink. I just smell it." Don't be stupid. "I'm just going to meet the boys at the Fuzzy Frog and hang out and shoot some pool." If you've got a problem with alcohol, stay out of bars! You can't be walking into a bar saying, "Lead me not into temptation. Lead me not into temptation." Slap that dude!

You know that God has given you two feet? Some people say, "I just can't resist." "Can you walk?" "Yeah." "Well, then you can just run. Just get your feet moving, and go the opposite direction. Just get away." Remember when Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife? "Joseph, come lie with me." It's called the subtle approach. And Joseph said, "How can I do this great sin, this wickedness, and sin against God?" And he turned and lite 'em up and smoked it outta there. He just put those PF Flyers into action. Now I know he got in trouble for it, but he did the right thing. I'd rather get into trouble and do the right thing to God than yield to sin.

So that's basically where the temptation lies; presuming upon the will of God—a deliberate disobedience—and asking God to cover for you.

I want to give you some practical suggestions for dealing with temptation. There are three of them. Number one, expect temptation. When you leave today, expect that there really is a devil, and he will tempt you. "Be sober, be vigilant." Be watching; open your eyes. There's a real devil, and he will tempt you to sin. There's no freedom from temptation; expect it.

Number two, detect temptation. Have eyes to see these categories of temptation: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. For food, Satan told Eve, "It's pleasant to look at, and it will make you wise"—pride of life. These temptations are in the areas of your passions, your possessions and your position in life.

Do you know that temptation will never stop? "Well, I'm in my 80s." You're still going to be tempted. "I'm 90." You're still going to be tempted. You'll be tempted to doubt God, to step out of God's will. It'll never stop. I just thought I'd encourage you.

"How was church today?" "Oh, it was great! Pastor told us the devil was going to beat on us 'till we die." But "greater is He Who is in you, than he who is in the world." You don't need to fear the devil; you focus on God.

You should expect it and you should detect it. Satan will get you to doubt God's love, God's faithfulness and God's promises.

The third thing is, reject temptation. How do you reject it? Number one, through prayer. In Luke 3:21, we find Jesus, before He was tempted of the devil, praying. One of the most powerful weapons you have against the devil is prayer. Ephesians 6 describes the armor of God. Verse 12 says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high

places.” He ends that, in verse 18, with saying “all prayer.” “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” So get on your knees and pray.

Secondly, you reject the temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember Luke 4:1: Jesus was “led by the Spirit” and He was “filled with the Holy Spirit.” To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that you let Him empower your life. So if you’re struggling with temptation today, spend time in prayer and yield to the Spirit of God.

Thirdly, and by no means least of all, through the Word of God. In verses 4, 8 and again in 12, Jesus said “It is written,” or “It is said.” He’s quoting from the Word of God. The psalmist says, “I have hidden Thy Word in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” One of the best ways to resist the devil is on your knees, yielding to the Spirit, feeding on God’s Word.

If you neglect prayer and you don’t yield to the power of the Holy Spirit and you become a victim of Satan’s temptation, you have no one to blame but yourself. God has given you the resources. You can’t say, “Why, God, did you let me fall back into drinking?” “Because you’re playing pool at the Fuzzy Frog, you dummy.” Get out of there. Get on your knees. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to take control of your life.

The Bible says, “If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” You have the power of God at your disposal, the same resources that Jesus used in His humanity to resist the devil. You can use those same resources to resist the devil, as well.