

Resisting temptation: I Cor. 10:13 says "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And 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 stand up under it." **No matter how you are walking with God, the enemy will find a method of presenting temptation.** So how do you resist temptation? (The million dollar question.) These are not necessarily in order of importance.

1. Understand your "triggers." James 1:14-15 says that each of us is tempted by our own evil desires. When those desires are acted upon, they become sin, and sin becomes death. It becomes pretty clear from these verses that we need to put ourselves in positions to avoid temptations and evil desires.
 - A. What environments are not "healthy" for you?
 - B. Are there specific things that are "dangers" to you?
 - C. Are there emotional conditions that make resisting temptation more difficult?

2. **"Radical amputation"**—This means radically removing **ALL** things from your life that are sources of temptation and "triggers."

If the Internet is your temptation, get rid of it, filter it, or never use it when you're alone. You must have a filter on your internet access that someone else controls and can check on what you've seen while surfing. If you think you are "strong" enough to resist internet temptations, you are absolutely deceiving yourself.

- The Apostle Paul says in a couple places that there shouldn't even be a hint of sexual immorality among us (believers). Anything that would lead you into sexual temptation is a "hint" of sexual immorality and must be dealt with radically.
- I Tim. 2:22—"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." I don't think this means flee evil desires once they confront you, but the challenge is for us to cut off these desires even before they pop up.

3. **Teammates**—You must get other guys who will hold you accountable and on whom you can call when the going gets too tough, which we guarantee it will. These guys must be willing to ask you hard questions about your sexual purity and not take anything but the complete truth from you.

We say "guys" because it's easy to choose one guy from one part of our lives and feel like you can "pull the wool over his eyes" a little and not be completely honest. You need to have a guy from several areas of your life work, school, church, etc.)—it's that simple.

4. **Daily structure**—Regular practice is not just an option for victory. It is a key to replacing the evil desires with the righteousness God desires. Make a schedule if you have to in order to ensure you get yourself into the renovating power of God's Word.

- Prayer. Real conversations with God are critical to resisting temptation. As with the suggestion in the previous confession section, we would recommend you begin praying out loud whenever possible. It will feel strange at first, but you will come to discover it will make what you're praying about a greater

reality. The Bible is full of verses talking about praying out loud ("cry out to the Lord," "called out to God," etc.), and whether it's a principle or not, it's interesting to note that God often responded quickly to these prayers. If you are unsure of how to pray, let us know and we can get you some resources.

- Bible study and memorization. Paul says in the famous armor of God chapter (Eph. 6) that the key to spiritual victory is knowing God's Word—the sword of the Spirit, belt of Truth, helmet of Salvation, and the Gospel of peace. Dedicate a time and place to sit down and systematically study the Word. If you don't know how to do this on your own, let us know because there are lots of sources to help you. One suggestion is the web site Setting Captives Free (www.settingcaptivesfree.com), for their Bible studies ("The Way of Purity" and "The Purity Challenge") are geared toward men and teens being free from sexual immorality and overcoming sexual temptation.

Rom. 12:2 clearly states that the key to changing the way we act is changing the way we think. Paul says "do not conform" but be "transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Memorize verses like the ones we've listed to use in times of testing and temptation. These will become key weapons in your battle plan to resist temptation.

Recovering from temptation: Sometimes when we've failed to resist temptation, it takes us a long time to recover. In the mean time, the enemy has made us highly ineffective for Kingdom work, which is exactly his goal. Let's look at some ways to overcome the "temptation blues."

- Confession—You've got to have someone to whom you can confess your sin, and we will point you back to Jas. 5:16.
- Repentance—This is so key but often overlooked in the overcoming sin process. In practical terms, repentance means demolishing the source of the temptation, if at all possible. What steps must you take to avoid falling to this temptation again? Identify them then do them, or it's not true repentance.
- Fight the failure feelings—A reasonable amount of shame and guilt should bother you until you've confessed. After confession, the 100% forgiveness of the Cross takes over, and feelings of guilt, shame, worthlessness, failure, fear, etc. become tools of the enemy that remove us from Kingdom service. Make your emotions match the following Truths.
 1. Guilt: God has removed the guilt of our sin. Rom. 5:1 and Rom. 8:33 both state we are not condemned before God.
 2. Uselessness: 2Tim. 3:16-17 says God's Word is working in you to equip you for "every good work." **God still wants to, is preparing to, and can use you.**
 3. Failure: We have the treasure of Jesus in "jars of clay" (2Cor. 4:17). God understands our humanness, but it's not license to sin, either.
 4. Fear (of the "lightning bolt"): Rom. 8:35 says **nothing** separates us from the love of Christ.