

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

In the beginning there was: A garden, an apple, a good girl and a bad snake. The basic components of temptation (sinful desires or thoughts) remain the same thousands of years later.

Have you ever faced a temptation? Have you had repeated thoughts about or desires to do something that you know that no daughter of Jesus Christ should do? Has it seemed very difficult to rid yourself of thoughts that you knew wrong?

Temptation may have many faces and may not always be easy for you to recognize on your own. You may be tempted to gossip, think more highly of yourself than you should or hold a grudge. You may be tempted to rebel against a church or family standard in dress, music or friendships. You may be tempted to simply give up. You may want to stop praying for a lost loved one or a chronically ill relative. You may feel tired of doing chores or homeschooling or waiting for a spouse and be tempted to quit. You may be tempted to give in to fear as you make decisions and plan your future. Temptations come in many forms and come to believers of all ages. The basic principles of fighting temptation have been the same since Bible times.

I would like to share my story about how Christ's victory of sin, the world and Satan led me to overcome a temptation to harm or destroy myself. In one time of my life, I was severely and repeatedly tempted by what I can now clearly see to be the work of Satan. I did not see my struggle as spiritual warfare initially. The tempting thoughts began as the little foxes that spoil the vines (Song of Solomon 1:15). I allowed myself secret indulgences of sinful thoughts (what would it be like, how would I do it, etc.). Gradually, these began to grow. Sometimes, I almost convinced myself that what was evil was good and that maybe my thoughts were not so wrong after all. In time of difficulty, especially marital conflict, I would turn to the ungodly thoughts again and again.

I would try to silently pray, read my Bible and listen to hymns during this difficult time but it would seem not to work so I would give up. I was mostly tormented by the devil's thoughts and temptations at night. Because of this, I appeared fairly normal during the day around others. It was easy for me to hide my trial from others, even within my own family. Why would I want to hide my struggles from those who care for me, you ask? I had my reasons. I told myself that I did not want to burden others with my problem. I know how busy others are and I

did not feel right intruding on the limited time of others. Maybe a part of me wanted to give in to the temptation and telling others might make that more difficult. I certainly was ashamed of having a problem that I seemed unable to overcome. Was I just a bad Christian? Was I truly saved anyway? I felt that I was a failure as a wife. I did not want others having these kind of doubts about me nor did I want them to know that I had these kinds of doubts myself. These were all the excuses I used for my silence.

One day, in the midst of my trial, in God's providence, a good friend in Christ informed me of a difficulty she had recently gone through and not shared with me. Boy, was I upset! Choking back tears, I begged her to never again deprive me of the opportunity to pray for her and serve her in a time of difficulty. Immediately, the Lord pierced my heart as I realized that I was doing the exact same thing to her that she did to me! I had been dealing with far more serious trial that I had not shared with her. I had satan tempting me to take my own life!

I changed the topic and tone of the conversation under the leading of the Holy Spirit. I humbled myself and opened up to my friend in a way I never had before. I shared openly and honestly with her about the temptation with which I had been struggling. I dropped to my knees as she began to pray with me. She prayed that I might recognize the resurrection power of Jesus Christ in my life (1 Peter 1:3) and remember the finished work of Jesus on the Cross defeating the power of sin over me (Romans 6:6).

She then shared with me some tips on breaking Satan's stronghold in my life. I will share these, along with some other biblical principles the Lord showed me as I gained my victory in Jesus back in my life.

1. Do not let yourself get separated from your flock. Remember, Satan is as a 'roaring lion' (1 Peter 5:8). My friend described how she had learned that lions are best able to catch prey that is alone, separated from the rest of the flock or herd. In my case, this would have been my family and church family. I had to let my struggle be known to those closest to me. Hardest of all for me, the Lord showed me that I should share what I was going through with our preacher and his wife. I initially resisted the Lord in this area, I am ashamed to say. I was not in the habit of sharing private, personal temptations to sin with a preacher. The Lord convinced me quickly though that a shepherd needs to know the struggles of his flock, no matter how terrible they seem. God also showed me that I would not get free from Satan's stronghold without humbling myself before the church leadership and allowing them to help me and pray for me. Once I yielded this to the Lord, He gave me the power to quickly call and then meet with them. This was truly hard for me and despite my resolve not to become emotional, I barely sat down before I began to cry

uncontrollably. Preacher and his wife were more comfort to me in that dark hour than I ever could have imagined. I left that meeting knowing that I would be victorious in Christ.

2. Ignore satan's tactics to distract you from truth. Ignore the fierce-sounding roar of the lion. The roar is designed to cause to cause fear and confusion in the prey. The roar itself of course can not kill the prey but it can throw the animal off-balance and allow the lion to successfully attack. As a true child of Christ, I realized that I had nothing to fear from satan. I had only one thing to do as the words to the song reminded me: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in his wonderful face." I also had to change my thoughts with the help of the Holy Spirit. Every time satan sent a bad thought, I had to resist it. I had to strictly think only on whatsoever things are honest or true (Philippians 4:8) and in doing so I would avoid all of the thoughts of Satan, the Father of Lies. I prayed and asked God to help me to take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5).
3. Do it out loud. My friend pointed out the importance of praying and singing and reciting Scripture out loud in times of trial.
 - Pray out loud. This has been a mark of prayer since God called out His chosen people. Jesus prayed out loud.
 - Read the Bible out loud. Jesus defeated Satan by reciting Scripture out loud to him. (Matthew 4: 1-11).
 - Sing hymns out loud. The psalm says "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."
4. Abide in Christ. Although we must always endeavor to be near the Cross, more time and increased commitment is more important in times of trial and temptation. Having seen how easy it is to be led astray, I have resolved that with the help of the Holy Spirit, I will never forsake my devotional time, praying throughout the day or seeking guidance from God in every situations. Hiding God's Word in my heart will keep me from sin. (Psalm 119:11) I also began to daily pray the Lord's prayer asking God to keep me from temptation. (Matthew 6: 13)
5. Set up regular accountability with other godly ladies. Ask the Lord to guide you to who he knows is best and then do it. It may be someone you had not even considered. More than one person may be desirable in times of great trial. Find some way to spend time daily in fellowship with God's people, encouraging and being encouraged. The Bible tells us to "exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13)
6. Ask for help without complaining. Asking for help is different from murmuring and complaining. Describing the truth is not complaining, it is telling the truth. Seeking godly help is trusting God to provide for your need through others. Complaining is not trusting God and becoming bitter for what He has not given you. I should have asked for help much sooner. Ask for help when you need it. Seek the Lord's guidance about when you need to ask for help. God's

ideas about when you need help maybe different than yours but you are wise to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this.

7. Share your testimony with others. I am grateful to the Jesus for giving me an opportunity to share this testimony. I am grateful that God helped me to follow his leading in choosing this topic write about. I had some difficult emotions initially as I began to write this but overall, the chance to go back over what I learned from my Precious Savior in this trial was invaluable to me. However, God allows trial in our lives not only for our own strengthening but so that others may be reminded of the goodness of God as well. Do you know the real reason why we often do not want to share our trials with others? Beneath all of my excuses, the Lord clearly showed me there was one and only one reason underneath them all of why I did not want to seek help or let others know about my trial: PRIDE. Yes, the Lord convicted and rebuked me for my sinful pride which could have led to damage of my testimony for Him. I cared more about what others might think than what was God's will in the matter. We are clearly commanded in Scripture to bear one another's burdens (Galations 6:2) and clearly we can not participate in that if we refuse to share our trials and temptations with others.

Praise report: Since the time I first revealed my battle with temptation to my friend, I was only tempted again one time in a serious way and not beyond what I could bear with my newly found weapons. Once the temptation came, I began to pray, read my Bible and sing hymns out loud. I declared myself a child of God, free from the power of sin, the flesh, the world and Satan based on Romans 6. I am pleased to report that since then, the Lord in his power and mercy has never again allowed me to be seriously tempted in that area. A few times I have had fleeting bad thoughts in that area but they lacked the mesmerizing power that they once had over me. Now, there is nothing special about me except Christ in me that allowed me to overcome temptation to sin. I was merely using the weapons that our Heavenly Father has provided for every daughter of His to use freely. God in His wisdom allowed this trial to strengthen me and hopefully others for the work that needs to be done for His Kingdom. In God's power, he used the people whom he placed in my life and the church fellowship He directed us to be a part of to show himself strong in my life against the powers of darkness. To God be the glory, great things he hath done! "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33b

Pray and ask the Lord to show you any temptations you are facing now. Ask for God's help in overcoming the temptation. Let my testimony guide you in how the Lord might lead you to victory as well.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, make me fit for service in your Kingdom, If this must be through

trials and temptations, I accept them with your grace and power to guide me in overcoming for the sake of your righteousness. Keep my eyes focused on you, my mind stayed on you and my heart loving you as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Guide me, my Good Shepherd and may I abide with you forever. Amen.

OVERCOMING SILENCE, A TOOL OF SATAN

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