

*Pre-Decide*  
*Overcoming Temptation*  
Troy Knight

**TALK IT OVER**

Key Scripture:

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)**

*13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

**Galatians 6:7 (NLT)**

*7 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.*

**Psalms 111:10 (NLT)**

*10 Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom. Praise him forever!*

**Proverbs 19:23 (NLT)**

*23 Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.*

**Proverbs 22:4 (NLT)**

*4 True humility and fear of the LORD lead to riches, honor, and long life.*

**Matthew 26:40 (NLT)**

*40 Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour?"*

**Matthew 5:28-30 (NLT)**

*28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Name a temptation that used to be a stronghold in your life that you have victory over today? How did you finally overcome it?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.** According to Pastor Troy, what's the good news and the bad news about temptation? Why is a desire to stop sinning a prerequisite for overcoming temptation?
- How does the fear of God motivate you to overcome temptation and stop sinning?
- Is the fear of God a good thing or a bad thing? Read Galatians 6:7, Psalms 111:10, Proverbs 19:23 and Proverbs 22:4 for reference. Are love for God and fear of God mutually exclusive motivations?
- **Read Matthew 26:40.** How does prayer help us overcome temptation? Have you noticed an added strength to your faith during 21 Days of Prayer?
- **Read Matthew 5:28-30.** Was Jesus teaching self mutilation? If not, what was his point? Are you taking sin and holiness that seriously in your life?
- Pastor Troy mentioned some pre-decisions he has made to finish the race. Discuss some pre-decisions you've made to stay pure, stay faithful, stay sober or guard your tongue.
- How can we help and support each other to follow through on our pre-decisions and overcome temptation?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Pre-decide to set up guardrails in your life to help you overcome temptation.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Ask God to help you overcome temptations in your life and to help you to pre-decide to stick to those commitments. Join with your Small Group and others in the 21 Days of Prayer at Generations Church on-site or online.

**Question: "How does God provide the way of escape from temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)?"**

**Answer:** No one is given a pass when it comes to temptation. What we are given as Christians is a way of escape. The apostle Paul taught believers not to be fearful when they face temptation because God will offer help and a way out for those who will look for it: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, ESV).

Scripture establishes that God is faithful (Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Hebrews 10:23; Revelation 1:5). Just as Yahweh provided a way of escape for the enslaved children of Israel, He will always present a path to freedom for us. Our heavenly Father is not a faraway, uninterested observer leaving us to fumble along through life. He's right here with us in the battle. The Lord loves us and wants us to succeed in our fight against sin: "God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful" (1 Thessalonians 5:24, NLT).

For believers, God's rescue plan is the person of Jesus Christ. He understands our weaknesses and temptations: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:15–16). Our primary avenue of rescue is to run to Jesus for help (1 John 2:1; 4:4).

Often, we confuse temptation with sin, but being tempted is not in itself a sin. We sin when we give in to temptation. That is why Jesus taught us to pray, "Don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13, NLT).

In most instances, the best course of action is to flee. The account of Joseph in Potiphar's house is a perfect example of how God provides the way of escape from temptation (Genesis 39:1–23). Joseph refused to give in to Potiphar's wife's repeated sexual enticements. He rightly understood that such sin was an offense against God (verse 9). When the temptress tried to force Joseph into her bed, he took advantage of God's exit route and ran from the house, leaving his cloak in her hand (verse 12). Joseph gives us a literal demonstration of Paul's admonishments to "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18) and "stay away from every kind of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22, CSB).

We avoid temptation by staying far from it. Proverbs 4:14–15 warns, "Keep off the path of the wicked; don't proceed on the way of evil ones. Avoid it; don't travel on it. Turn away from it, and pass it by" (CSB). If we want to stop indulging our sweet tooth, we stay out of the candy store.

We keep ourselves far from evil and temptation by running to God and His Word. Paul urged Timothy to "run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you" (1 Timothy 6:11–12, NLT). James instructed us to humble ourselves before God, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, NLT). Jesus resisted the devil's temptations with the truth of God's Word, and so can we (Matthew 4:4, 10).

God also provides a way of escape from temptation through prayerful vigilance. Jesus told Peter, James, and John to "watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38). Later, Peter counseled believers to "be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings" (1 Peter 5:8–9). Peter's final recorded words included the command to "be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17–18, NLT).

Sometimes we need to come alongside other Christians in an accountability setting for support and prayer. Paul taught that, if someone is "overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted" (Galatians 6:1, CSB). As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are stronger together as we carry one another's burdens (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Whenever we stare temptation in the face, we must remember that we're not alone (Deuteronomy 31:8). The Lord is with us, and His Spirit is at work in us, enabling us to crucify "the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:22–24). God will never leave us or abandon us to our own resources. We must look to Him and other believers for the way of escape that God has promised to provide.