

The Flow

8

Understanding and Overcoming Temptation

1 John 2:12-14

Fostering Spiritual Growth in the Church

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1 John 2:12-14

12 I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, **young men, because you have overcome the evil one.**

14 I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, **young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

1. Review from Last Time

Teach young believers to:

- Have faith and confidence in God (you are strong)
- Meditate on God's Word (the word of God lives in you)
- Overcome temptation (you have overcome the evil one)

2. Description of Temptation

<u>Sources of Temptation</u>	<u>Sin</u>
Desire for Admiration.....	Pride
TV, Internet.....	Sloth
Aspirations.....	Idolatry, Envy
Disparagement.....	Lack of Love
Secrecy.....	Lust
Food, Sales.....	Gluttony
Boredom.....	Lust, Sloth
Stress.....	Anxiety, Anger
Success.....	Pride
Sadness, Loss.....	Bitterness
Busyness.....	Idolatry
Loneliness.....	Anxiety

2. Description of Temptation

a) These everyday situations can lead us to sin

b) **Satan** tempts

“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4)

c) We are tempted by **ourselves**

“I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.” (Romans 7:21)

“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.” (James 1:14)

2. Description of Temptation

d) Temptation is inevitable, BUT sin is not!

- God is greater than Satan and **faith** overcomes the world

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; **and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith**. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5)

- God's will is that **we overcome**, and He helps us

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1 Cor 10:13)

e) God wants us to realize Satan's **lies**: there is truly a much more full and pleasant life that He has both made possible and wants us to enjoy

3. A Choice: Dead Faith and Proactive Faith

a1) Dead faith produces no works, no joy, and leads to broken cisterns

a2) By looking away from God for satisfaction and purpose, a dead faith produces no works (James 2:17) but conceives sin (James 1:15)

“So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:17)

“Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” (James 1:15)

3. A Choice: Dead Faith and Proactive Faith

b1) Proactive faith consistently asserts in the heart that God is good, knows best (His wisdom), and does best (His will)

b2) By looking to God, we find strength (Phil 4:13), wisdom (James 1:5), purpose (Eph 2:10), and joy, even in trial (James 1:2)

“I can do all things through him [Christ] who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:13)

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials” (James 1:2)

3. A Choice: Dead Faith and Proactive Faith

c) Proactive faith is a faith that we constantly must choose to show

“If we *live* by the Spirit, let us also *walk* by the Spirit.” (Gal 5:25)

d) This includes believing in the **fullness** of God's grace based on the **completeness** of Christ's work, even if we do sin (Romans 8:1-4, 1 John 1:9)

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that **the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but “according to the Spirit.”** (Romans 8:1-4)

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)”

3. A Choice: Dead Faith and Proactive Faith

e) Faith has always been God's standard of righteousness (OT Gen 15:6; NT Eph 2:8-9)

f) Likewise, our acts of faith have always determined our growth and fruit (OT Jer 2:13; NT Eph 2:10)

“Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” (Gen 15:6)

“**For by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” (Eph 2:8-10)

“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns.” (Jer 2:13)

4. A Vision: Growing Through Our Faith

a) Faith in God leads to **transformed lives**

b) Faith frees us from doubt in God's willingness to provide and His knowledge of our needs

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6)

c) Faith frees us to live in contentment, joy, and peace (Phil 4:4-7, 11-13)

“4 **Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!** Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus...**11 **Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.** I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance **I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:11-13)

4. A Vision: Growing Through Our Faith

d) God alone knows our true needs, and He can and will provide (Ps 139:23-24; 1 Peter 5:6-7)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way. (Ps
139:23-24)

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt
you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.
(1 Peter 5:6-7)

4. A Vision: Growing Through Our Faith

e) Proactive faith is able to say with full confidence:

- “I believe God always takes care of me even when I do not see how.”
- “I believe God knows what is in my heart and always leads me in the best way.”
- “I believe God is with me now and that I can enjoy this moment.”

f) Find out what is in your heart- where do you need renewed faith in the Lord?

g) Growth comes from faith in God in His perfect wisdom and timing will care for your needs no matter how easy or how impossible your circumstances might appear

Summary

- ❖ Believers grow through the young believer stage by consistently putting faith in God
- ❖ Meditate on these verses that stress the Father's gracious and loving will for your life
- ❖ Before God, ask Him to search your heart and to bring renewed faith into your life so that you can grow toward fatherhood
- ❖ Strive forward and enjoy walking with the Lord: no matter what your present circumstances, temptations and trials await
- ❖ **BUT face them joyfully, cloaked by the perfect grace of God!**

Discussion Questions

1. What is one tempting situation that you often come across? Are there any lies that challenge your faith in those situations?
2. Share an example in your life when you exhibited either a dead faith or a proactive faith. How did it affect your spiritual growth?