



Temptation Preparation

By Cam Broad

Temptation is going to happen in life, it's inevitable. Even Jesus was tempted – we saw it in the wilderness when the devil tempted him 3 times. And we know that Jesus was tempted throughout his lifetime as well, because In Hebrews 4:14-16 we read...

*¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let **us hold firmly** to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ 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.*

Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he **CHOSE NOT** to sin.

So, the initial temptation isn't sin...but our **choice** of what we do with that temptation determines whether we will walk in victory or in defeat.

Think of it this way – temptation is a threat...to take something from you – your purity, your peace, your joy, your love for God and your spouse, your kids, your family, your loved ones, a threat to your integrity, the trust between you and your spouse and kids, girlfriend future spouse, your life and your FREEDOM.

QUESTION: So, if we know that there's temptation (a threat) coming against you when would you say is the **BEST** time to defeat it?

I want to suggest to you – that the **BEST** time to defeat temptation is long before that temptations happens. If you don't have a plan for how you will defeat it, then your chances of winning in the midst of that temptation are lessened.

Let me illustrate it this way, through a Calvin & Hobbes comic episode

In this episode...

Calvin is not allowed to have Candy.

Frame 1 starts off with him in his house and he says, I can't have candy so I'm not leaving the house.

Frame 2 - I'll go outside, but won't go to the grocery store where the candy is...

Frame 3 - ...I'll go by the grocery store, but I won't go in

Frame 4 - I'll go in the store, but I won't go down the aisle where the candy is

Frame 5 - I'll go down the candy aisle, but won't even look at the candy

Frame 6 - Ok, I'll look at the candy, but won't touch it...

Frame 7 - I'll pick up the candy, but I won't open it

Frame 8 - I'll open it but won't eat it

Frame 9 - Last Frame Eat Eat Eat!

Calvin blew it – he succumbed to the temptation and made the choice to do what he wasn't allowed to do, and that was eat candy.

My question is for all of us to think about...**WHEN in this episode did the Candy temptation take Calvin out?**

Eating the forbidden candy – consisted not of one choice, but **10 Compromising choices**...going back to the first temptation to eat candy back in his house. His downfall started waaay before he found himself on the grocery store floor pounding back candy!

But further to that...there's another choice that Calvin could have made even before he got the idea of eating Candy that he was not allowed to eat. That's a **CHOICE to have a plan of what he would do WHEN that temptation first became a though in his head.**

What I want to challenge us with today, and I challenge myself with this as well, is the principle that...

It's much easier to stand up to temptation when we **PREPARE** for it **well in advance**, and stand up to it **in the early stages** of the temptation, as opposed to

trying to stand up to it when we are in the moment...like holding the “open bag of candy” in the candy store

I want to suggest **5 “Temptation Preparation in Advance” principles** that we all can apply to walk in greater victory when faced with temptation.

- 1) **Surrender to Jesus.** We can't win this battle alone, and the best things we can do is surrender to Jesus and depend on Him for help in our time of need.

I started off earlier in Hebrews 4:14-15 talking about the one Jesus, who has been tempted in every way, just as we are and yet without sin...and the very next verse says this...

¹⁶ 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. NLT.

The God we serve understands what it's like to be tempted, he knows our need...and guess what – he tells us to boldly come to him because he has mercy and grace for us – even in the face of temptation – and he wants to help us overcome.

- 2) **Make the choice ahead of time.** Determine ahead of time that you are NOT going to give into, or compromise with the specific temptation(s) that you face.

Job 31:1– made a covenant with his eyes not to look lustfully upon a woman. He planted his flag and said “it's not for me” why? – Because He feared the Lord – He knew that he was accountable to God. That was more important to him than looking lustfully on a woman. Make the choice ahead of time, determine in your heart what you will and what you won't do.

- 3) **Remind yourself** of your Why? The “Why you are doing this”, what you are trying to restore, what you are rebuilding, and what is the reason why you are saying no to sexual sin so that you can experience LIFE, FREEDOM, PEACE, LOVE, FAMILY and standing up to the threats that want to keep you from experiencing these.

Why did Jesus come to earth? WHY did he humble himself to live as a human being, face all kinds of temptation (and resist everyone), go through his whole life knowing that one day he would be brutally crucified on a cross? Why did he go through all of that?

Heb 12:2 says...

²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before him** he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The joy set before him was for you and me to be restored to right relationship with him – to have life and life to the full...so he endured the cross, the temptations, and suffering he went through – because of the JOY set before him. .

What's the JOY set before you, that you are guarding and protecting and saying "no to temptation for" ... so, you can say yes to that JOY?

- 4) **Have a pre-temptation Plan.** Have a plan of what you are going to do when a particular temptation arises, as soon as it arises. Be prepared in advance. When the thought hits my brain, or my eyes see someone...what am I going to do right away. Be prepared. **Write out in advance what the plan of action for you will be** if and when you face a particular situation.

When Jesus was tempted – **he was prepared.** He had scripture memorized that he could quote back to the enemy right away. 3 specific scriptures that spoke directly to the temptation, and he defeated the enemy in each one of those times – and the enemy left him. If you have a plan in place when you experience the first signs of temptation – you have a greater chance of standing up to it and being victorious over it.

- 5) **Flip the script.** We can't **just** say no, no, no to the tempting thought...we have to yes to something better; we have to replace the lies of temptation with the truth of God's word! In John 8:31-32 we read...

³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² **And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

I want to encourage to think about what you get tempted with...and ask yourself...what’s the lie of that temptation? And then **what is the opposite truth** of that temptation. Write those truths down, memorize them. Then... when you face that temptation – use the temptation as a way to turn you to Jesus, to the truth that sets you free, to pray for one another...to worship, to thank Jesus.

If every time, at the first hint of temptation – you take that opportunity to turn to Jesus and replace those negative thoughts with truth...you turn the temptation into a victory. You can flip the script.

Whenever you get tempted – take that as your reminder of the TRUTH that sets you free. Prepare in advance to flip the script on the temptation.

I want to encourage you with this principle of temptation preparation. I’ve suggested 5 potential ways we all can be better prepared to stand up to temptation especially prior to it, and in the early stages of it.

By First of all Surrendering to Jesus, by Making the choice to ahead of time like Job did of what he would not do, by Reminding yourself of your WHY that is your Joy that is set ahead of you and why you are doing this, by having a Pre-temptation Preparation Plan, and by Flipping the script - replacing the temptation thoughts with truth.

Overall, in this – the Holy Spirit is the one who lives inside of us and is the one who can empower us to walk in victory over every temptation that we face. And as we depend on Him, saying **not my will but yours be done**, we can walk in greater levels of victory.

May God strengthen you and encourage you today in these things.