

## Learning Not to Bite . . .

On a rough wooden pier, the seasoned fisherman tediously fastens his hook on a line, then baits the hook with what he suspects will lure the fish to bite. This old angler knows that certain fish can be caught only with certain bait . . . a dry fly for trout, worms for bass, stink bait for catfish. What the fish doesn't know is, "All is not what it appears to be." Within a tempting moment there's a bite—a fight—and then a skinned fish fillet!

We all know too well what it's like to be lured by a lie. Something offers a promise, but in the end it doesn't pay. Temptation is that attractive lure hiding the deadly hook. But take heart, you don't have to take a bite.

*"There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but its end is the way to death."  
(Proverbs 14:12)*

Twisted Truths about Temptation<sup>1</sup>• **Twisted Truth:**

"Temptation is sinful."

**Truth:**

Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted in every way, yet He did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

• **Twisted Truth:**

"God is tempting me!"

**Truth:**

Temptation is not from God, but it is allowed by God. (James 1:13)

• **Twisted Truth:**

"The devil made me do it!"

**Truth:**

Temptation is Satan's attempt to lure you into sin, but he can be resisted. (James 4:7)

• **Twisted Truth:**

"She is so saintly, she is above temptation."

**Truth:**

Everyone is tempted, just in different areas. In fact, the mature Christian is often subject to greater temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

• **Twisted Truth:**

"It's beyond my ability to control."

**Truth:**

Temptation may be beyond your control, but it is not beyond God's control. (Proverbs 3:26)

## Tracking Temptation<sup>2</sup>

### • Facing Temptation

(Proverbs 22:5)

- *Temptation* is experienced by everyone.
- *Temptation* occurs often in an area where you have been previously ensnared.
- *Temptation* begins in your mind.
- *Temptation* takes advantage of your attractions and fears.
- *Temptation* appears to meet a legitimate need but does so illegitimately in the wrong way or at the wrong time.

### • Falling into Temptation

(Matthew 26:41)

- *Temptation* strikes when your heart is “off guard.”
- *Temptation* uses rationalization to numb your conscience.
- *Temptation* becomes relentless and urgent.
- *Temptation* provides highly unusual opportunities to enter into sin.

*“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*  
(Matthew 26:41)

## The Freedom Formula for Self-Control

A New Purpose  
+ a New Priority  
+ a New Plan  
= a Transformed Life

- Choose to reflect the character of Christ. (Romans 8:29)
- Choose to exchange your old habit for a new habit. (Romans 12:2)
- Choose to rely on Christ’s strength, not your own strength. (Philippians 4:13)
- Choose to appropriate God’s gift of self-control. (1 Peter 1:13)

## Key Verse to Memorize

*“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)

## Key Passage to Read and Reread Romans chapter 6

*“Preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*  
(1 Peter 1:13)

## Resisting Temptation<sup>3</sup>

In your struggle with Satan’s tailor-made temptations, learn to stand by leaning on the Lord.

**R**ecognize the source. (Ephesians 6:12)

Realize that Satan is the author of tempting thoughts.

**E**xpect to win the war. (Romans 8:37)

Expect many battles.

Expect Christ to win the war for you.

**S**earch your heart. (1 Peter 5:6)

Do you know that temptation is revealing your unmet need?

**I**magine the consequences. (Psalm 38:3)

Think about the guilt and shame you would experience.

Think about the pain you may cause others.

**S**ense God’s presence. (Hebrews 4:13)

God is with you every moment.

God knows your needs and desires.

**T**ransform your thoughts with truth.  
(2 Corinthians 10:4–5)

Seek God’s will and way through reading His Word.

*“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”*  
(Hebrews 12:4)

# The Road Back Home<sup>4</sup>

Isaiah chapter 30 pictures God's relationship with His Hebrew children. In spite of their rebellion, God reveals His compassion and His provision for their way back home.

- **Repent** (Isaiah 30:15)—Repentance requires total honesty before God, acknowledging your responsibility and turning from temptation.
- **Rest** (Isaiah 30:18)—Accept God's grace toward you as He offers His forgiveness.
- **Return** (Isaiah 30:19)—Cry out for help! As soon as God hears you, He will answer you.
- **Receive** (Isaiah 30:21)—Once you return to God, you must learn His path for your life.
- **Recover** (Isaiah 30:22)—As you yield yourself to God's power, sin's power will lose its hold on you.
- **Rejoice** (Isaiah 30:23–26)—God will always bring blessing to the prodigal heart that returns home.

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## Related Topics . . .

- Alcohol & Drug Abuse:  
*Breaking Free and Staying Free*
- Habits:  
*Success in Self-Control*
- Overeating:  
*Freedom from Food Fixation*
- Sexual Integrity:  
*Balancing Your Passion with Purity*
- Spiritual Warfare:  
*Strategy for the Battle*

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### **Temptation:**

*Promise of Pleasure—Lured by a Lie.*

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1. Erwin W. Lutzer, *How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit: Even When You Feel Like Saying Yes* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1986), 50–51; Charles F. Stanley, *Temptation* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1988), 12–20, 40–41, 160–64; Don Baker, *Lord, I've Got a Problem* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1988), 92–93.  
2. For this section, see John Owen, *Sin & Temptation: The Challenge to Personal Godliness*, abridged ed., ed. James M. Houston (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1983), 96, 104–107, 115; Richard Lee, *The Unfailing Promise* (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 81–82; Stanley, *Temptation*, 54.  
3. For this section, see Hannah Whitall Smith, "Lies in Disguise," *Last Days Magazine*, Fall 1988, 10, 11; Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, "Ten Steps to Conquer Impure Thoughts," in *Training Faithful Men* (1976), 1, 4, 5; Bill Gothard, *Moral Freedom* (n.p.: Campus Teams, Inc., 1968), 15–16; Stanley, *Temptation*, 143–44.  
4. Stanley, *Temptation*, 179–87.



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P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221

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