

Our Place at His Place

Battle Plan

May 3, 2020

Welcome to where we're training to fight the good fight!



When is the lure of sin most appealing to you?

We ended last Sunday, talking about preparing for the inevitable battle that comes when we decide to put the Lord first and choose to live by His Word.



And, we know the identity of public enemy #1.



Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, – 1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV



So, let's do what it takes to defeat him! Today we're in temptation training.



When are you most vulnerable to temptation?

At home? Out of town? Or on the road? With a spouse? With friends? Or all alone? When you're stressed? Or lonely? Or bored? Well, right now, pretty much everyone is all of these last three.



Thanks to our individual strengths and weaknesses, each of us is lured into sin in different ways; and yet, **every temptation follows the same pattern.**



The enemy has used the same strategy, the same old tricks, since the beginning. Know why? *They work!* But, **it's good to know that he's so predictable.** That works in *our* favor.



For we are not unaware of his schemes. – 2 Corinthians 2:11 NIV



Unless, of course, you are. In which case, we need to take this time to make ourselves aware of Satan's Four Seeable Schemes.



1. He identifies a desire deep within us.

Sometimes it's **a deviant desire for something bad**, like *revenge*; sometimes it's **a decent desire for something good**, like *pleasure*. But, *whichever* it is ...



... each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. – James 1:14 NIV

But like I said, **it may not begin as an evil desire.**



The enemy will often highlight a legitimate need, and suggest you fulfill it in an illegitimate way. But either way, internal desire gives temptation its grip.

And, the hold can be incredibly tight, when a very *real* longing is met with a very *clear* promise of satisfaction.



2. And *that's* when He plants a doubt about *God's desires*.

He whispers in your inner ear that the Lord won't or can't satisfy your desire in the way that will *most* satisfy you. And, this little bit of unbelief will briefly turn us against God. So ...

See to it, brothers [and sisters], that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away – Hebrews 3:12 NIV

Temptation will *always* win when we buy the lie that the Lord is *not* determined to meet our needs the *best* way they can be met.

3. Then **the enemy will promote a deception.**

- A. "It'll be okay this *one* time, this *one* little thing."
- B. "You can easily get away with; nobody's gonna know."
- C. "After all, you deserve it; it's a legitimate need. "
- D. "And it'll solve the problem ... fast!"
- E. "God will forgive you; *that's* what He does!"



A desire empowered by doubt is deceptively deadly.

After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, – James 1:15-16a NIV

Paul uses conception to make the case that **a little sin is like a little pregnancy.**

It *will* reveal itself; and it *will* require need attention.

4. And finally, **he persuades an act of disobedience.**



I use the word *persuade* because, he can't *force* a child of God to rebel. The devil did not ever *make me do it*; regardless of what Flip Wilson used to say. Because, he has no power without *my* permission. He is limited to his greatest strength: making a very compelling recommendation.



We could put his scheme in fisher-of-men terms:

He finds the best fishing hole among my desires.

He baits the hook with tailor made lies.

He bobs it with a promise of ending my craving.

And he waits for *me* to bite, to reel me in.

He can bob all he wants; but, **he can only dangle the bait. We're the ones who decide to bite.**



Every temptation provides as much opportunity to do what's right as it does to do what's wrong. **It'll either be a stepping-stone or a stumbling-block.** And, with each choice we make to do what's right, we grow in the character of Christ, which is why the Father allows us to be tempted.



Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, – James 1:12 NIV

Just as roots will strengthen when the wind blows against a tree, **each time we stand firm against the force of temptation we become stronger.**



Temptation provides resistance training. And now that we're aware of *his* schemes against *us*, let's devise a scheme of our own, *against him*.



1. **Plan on the battle coming.** Don't feel guilty or ashamed for being tempted; that is a misunderstanding of spiritual maturity. Scripture says "*When you are tempted*", not "*if*"! (1 Cor 10:13)

It's not a sin to be tempted; it's a sin to act on it.

2. And since you know a battle's coming: **prepare for the attack.**

We need to be alert and maneuver *offensively*.

When and where and with whom are you *most susceptible* to an attack of temptation? Home? Away? Spouse? Friends? Alone? Stressed? Lonely? Bored?

Be self-controlled *and alert*. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion ... –
1 Peter 5:8 NIV

Stay alert to inevitable areas of temptation, avoid them as much as possible, and guard yourself with healthy self-awareness.



3. When the battle begins, **duck and cover.** Immediately **kneel and cover yourself in prayer.**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are ... – Hebrews 4:15 NIV

He knows what it's like to have destructive thoughts hop into your head, and inappropriate suggestions made to your mind. **He's sympathetic to our struggle.** He gets it.

Ask for wisdom and strength to stand firm. **Tell Him what you want to do; why you want to do it.** He's been there. He understands.

4. And then, **retreat to regroup!**



Turn my eyes away from worthless things – Psalm 119:37 NIV

Flee the evil desires of youth – 2 Timothy 2:22 NIV

Remember when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph?



She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. - Genesis 39:12 NIV



Why? Because – when it comes to trouble – he didn't ignore the obvious: **It's easier to stay out than to get out.** Have you learned *that* lesson the hard way ... *yet*? **The quickest way to terminate a temptation is to turn our attention away from it.** So, **retreat with your feet, redirect your focus, and regroup with Father God.**

5. And then, **radio for reinforcements**; whether it's simply a single Christian soldier or an entire support battalion.



Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. – James 5:16 NIV

Here's the reason: **Sin grows in the dark.**

A big step in the battle is to bring it into the light, so you can be prayed for, and encouraged, and loved unconditionally, and held accountable. **Some victories require an ally on the ground.**

6. And finally, and mostly, **use your weapon!** We're told to ...

Resist the devil, and he will flee – James 4:7 NIV

But, how are we supposed to resist him? Jesus calls him the *Father of Lies*; (Jn 8:44) and he's had thousands of years of practice! So, **we won't win an argument.** At least, not with our own words and logic. No. **We're expected to resist the way Jesus resisted.** When Satan had a suggestion, Jesus had a scripture. So ...

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. -
Ephesians 6:17 NIV

We stand alone on the Word of God; because, **His B-I-B-L-E is our only W-M-D-D** (i.e. weapon of mass devil destruction). So, **how prepared are you to face your temptations this week?** Above all else remember *this*: **you won't stand a chance in the fight of your life, with your weapon gathering dust on a shelf.**