

10 TIPS FOR RESISTING

1. Remember the reward: I am certain that one reason people are so easily overcome by temptation is that they lose their eternal perspective. If an angel appeared to you right now in all his brilliant glory and said, "Repent! Jesus is coming soon," would it be easier for you to resist temptation - at least for the rest of the day? Sure, because your faith would be strengthened that your reward was real and near. It is so much easier to resist temptation if you believe you are truly saved. If you mistakenly think you can work your way into salvation, you will actually erode your ability to resist. Don't forget the glory God has in store for you. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). It's easier to resist a jellybean when you know you are on your way to a feast!
2. Believe in the badness of sin: You also must remember *how bad* sin is - with or without a reward. Paul says, "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13). You need to truly know that sin is very ghastly, and if you need a reminder, go back about 2,000 years ago to Calvary and see what sin did to Jesus. As Christians, we can't embrace sin because it is filthy, ugly, and fatal. Sin caused the death of our beloved Jesus. The devil is a genius at making something sinful, dirty, and crooked look attractive, clean, and harmless. But don't be misled, because that pretty picture will end up killing you. You need to come to the place where you love God so much that you would rather die than deliberately sin and grieve Him.
3. Get Ready to Flee: Few speed records are broken when people run from temptation. Generally, they crawl away from temptation hoping it catches up with them. Sometimes temptation comes through a door we deliberately leave open. So flee from sin, and don't leave a forwarding address.

4. Don't Follow the Crowd: A common reason Christians easily fall into temptation is the reasoning, the devil's favorite "lemming logic." Peter gathered with Christ's mockers around a campfire, and the longer he stayed, the easier it was to act and talk like Christ's enemies.

5. Stay Busy: Sin begins in the human mind, which is designed to concentrate mainly on one thing at a time. If we stay busy, especially focused on doing something good like witnessing or helping the poor, we don't have time to think about evil. Someone wrote, "Strength to resist evil is best gained through aggressive service." One of the ways to stay out of trouble is to be aggressively involved in serving Jesus.

6. Have a Plan: We often stumble into sin because when we see temptation coming, we wait to see what might happen when it arrives. But it's better to be prepared in advance. Proverbs 22:3 advises, "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished" (NKJV). A wise man surveys the road for potential trouble. If he spots a band of robbers, he says, "I'd better hide or change routes because I don't want to be robbed!" But the fool says, "Wow. I think there are bandits down the road. I wonder what will happen when they get here." Christians will often do that with temptation. We say, "I wonder if I'll be tempted if I watch this program, read this magazine, or drink this stuff." If you have an area of temptation you know will drag you down, take whatever advance measures of prevention you can, no matter how desperate, to keep from being overcome. In the very least, plot a way of escape! If your temptation is overeating, make an advance decision to place an appropriate amount of food on your plate and plan to stop when it's gone. Millions nibble their way into sin because they don't think ahead.

7. Know Thyself: The Bible says that we must not trust in our own strength. We must be very cautious when we begin to think we have a handle on a certain temptation and say, "It won't bother me anymore. I've got the victory!" That's when we are especially poised to fall. Some Christians are even proud they have overcome, but they're only setting themselves up for the devil to knock down. We must always be vigilant to recognize our weakness.

8. **Overcome Evil With Good:** We sometimes leave ourselves wide open to compromise when we don't fill the vacuum left by forsaken bad habits. I have known people to gain victory over one addiction only to replace it with another because they did not find a positive substitute. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Luke 11:24-26). If you are struggling with an eating disorder or food addiction, you can't simply give up eating. The secret is to learn to "eat what is good" (Isaiah 55:2 NKJV). If you have a problem nibbling chocolate through the day, buy some grapes or almonds.

9. **Care for Your Health:** Temptation often comes not at our strongest moments, but during our weakest. When we are at the limits of our strength, patience, love, and health, we are tempted to be un-Christian. Beware! Jesus' temptation began *after* 40 days of fasting. He was tired and hungry. Peter was also tired when he denied Jesus. Our ability to resist basic temptations might be greatly influenced by everything from lack of exercise to unbalanced body hormones. When we are sick or have our reserves drained, we react in negative ways. Most marital arguments occur at the end of the day when one or both spouses are tired and hungry. Get enough sleep and eat good food at regular times. One of my favorite authors also advises, "By the indulgence of perverted appetite, man loses his power to resist temptation." Excessive sweets can give you a temporary rush only to be followed by feelings of depression and irritability.

10. **Recognize Your Escape:** For me, the very best means for overcoming temptation is recognizing that God has provided a way of escape for every one of us. Remember this passage: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Now that's some very good news. We don't have to rely on our shaky faith; we can rely on God because He is faithful! Now when you are tempted, you can say, "God is *measuring* what He allows the devil to bring against me, and I'm able to handle it with His grace."