



Walking Into **Temptation**



Matthew 4:1-10

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [from *peirazo*] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”



Gustave Dore, 1866

What is temptation?

1. Being presented with the opportunity to use my status and power to comfort (not just) my needs outside the will and life of God. (Matt. 4:3-4)

Temptation is about shortcuts and workarounds.



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2. Being prompted to demand God to confirm my identity in my way and time. (Matt. 4:5-7)

Temptation is about authority.



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2. Being prompted to demand God to confirm my identity in my way and time. (Matt. 4:5-7)
3. Being provided greatness at the expense of my allegiance. (Matt. 4:8-10)

Temptation is about idolatry.



Why does God lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted because it was the route to the cross.

R. V. G. TASKER,

*on the temptation to greatness through
idolatry and the rejection of God:*

“But whereas Israel forgot, the Messiah
remembered.”

God must do battle on our behalf.

Matthew 4:1-11

4 Then the devil left him, and *angels* came and *attended* him.



“Temptation in general is comprehensive
of our whole warfare.”

JOHN OWEN

On Temptation

Who is tempting us?

James 1:13-14

¹³ When tempted [from Greek *peirazo*], no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

Temptation occurs *when* God allows it *for*
God's purposes. (Matthew 4:1a)

Why is there *testing*?

God does not allow testing so that He will know our strength.



Why is there *testing*?

God allows testing so that we may know *His* strength.



“We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means.”

C. S. LEWIS

Mere Christianity

God cannot do away with temptation because God will not do away with the journey to the cross. In love, the Father sent the Son and in love the Son went to the cross. In love, God leads us to the cross, too, even *through temptation*. We will see just how much of a struggle we will put up not to go the way of the cross, just how much we will fight the last shred of the fallen self to be put to death.

We are not tempted *from* glory; we are tempted away from the cross with *pseudo-glory*.

Why is there *testing*?

God allows testing so that we may know *His* strength *in us*.



James 1:2-3

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing [*peirasmos*] of your faith produces *perseverance*.

Greatness is not seen in what one is able to acquire through demands, but is given through what one endures in obedience to God.

How can I resist temptation?

Don't run headlong *into* temptation
and don't walk *with* temptation.



Being in Christ and being with Christ does not mean temptation will decrease. It means exactly the opposite. Temptation *may* decrease in frequency, but it will increase in *power* and *sophistication*.

The Devil (Greek) / Satan (Hebrew) is the *accuser*. The Devil doesn't *stop* being the accuser whether or not we fall to temptation. If we fall, the Devil has reason to accuse. If we stand, the Devil will still accuse.

How can I resist temptation?

Walk with Christ through it.



“A car, a train, a bus, a small single-prop airplane—these weren’t options. A caravan, yes, or a donkey, maybe. But Jesus [avoided] these for reasons we don’t know but can likely guess: he was keeping pace with the three-mile-an-hour God, going God speed. He needed the time to shape, slowly, slowly, the lives of those with whom he walked.”

MARK BUCHANAN

God Walk

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Matthew 6:13-14

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

The only One who couldn't be tempted
endured temptation so that when you go
through it, you're not doing it alone.



“O if my lot were but cast among good men, among those that loved or even feared God, I should be free from all these temptations!” Perhaps you would:

Probably you would not find the same sort of temptations which you have now to encounter. But you would surely meet with temptations of some other kind, which you would find equally hard to bear.”

JOHN WESLEY

On Temptation

Psalm 23:4, KJV

“⁴ Yea, though I **walk through the valley of the shadow of death**, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Galatians 5:16

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Walk with God through Lent with our
memory verse.



1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

What about when I've failed to
temptation and fallen in testing?



God is our mighty warrior. God doesn't stop being the mighty warrior whether or not we fail in testing. If we fail, we show that we need a mighty warrior. If we stand, God's redeeming work is on display.