



age one another in bearing one another's burdens, and strengthening the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble (cf. Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 12:12).

### 3. Follow Through.

Ideally, we will always have the help of our brethren to encourage us. Sadly, though, this is not always the case, and we can sometimes find ourselves standing alone against temptation. Even

when the odds seem overwhelming we must remember that we have the most important ally on our side—God Himself (cf. Dan. 3:7-12). We must still follow through if we don't experience an immediate satisfaction or pleasure in resisting temptation. It is never a pleasant experience as it is happening, but we will ultimately reap the rewards if we are successful. We will gain endurance, patience, and a better knowledge of how to combat the various trials that beset us in this life (cf. Jas. 1:2-4). In the next life, we will gain an eternal home with God if we are found faithful (Re. 2:10).

Let us put these good tactics to use, brethren. Let us avoid temptation to the best of our ability, but when confronted with it, be diligent to emerge victorious, never allowing it to swell into evil desire.



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ISSUE

14.19

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

May 6  
2012



## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Steve Dixon  
Pat Goguen  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

### Evangelists:

Kyle Pope  
Jason Garcia

## Temptation and Evil Desire

By Jason Garcia

Some have argued that there is no difference between temptation and evil desire, and would even use the terms interchangeably. However, we must be wary of this, for even our Lord was tempted (cf. Matt. 4:1-11), but was never guilty of committing any evil (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-22). Where, then, do we draw the line? Clearly, being tempted *per se* is not the same as desiring to do evil. Nevertheless, Paul condemned such desires when he said, **“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry”** (Col. 3:5 NASB). How can we distinguish between evil desire and being tempted? We should investigate the Scriptures to see where God draws the line.

If we fail to control our thoughts, and actively entertain sinful desires in our minds, this is unquestionably sinful in God's sight. Consider the Lord's words when He said,

**“Everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”** (Matt. 5:28). Clearly, if one chooses to indulge a wanton imagination, then this constitutes evil desire, for it is charged against him or her as sin. Even if the desire does not manifest itself in *observable* action, the action has still occurred in one’s heart, and the Judge of mans’ hearts



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will hold us accountable for such disobedience (1 Cor. 4:5). If we contrast this behavior with that of Jesus’ temptation, then we will see a vast difference between the scenarios. The devil tempted the Lord to commit evil and disobey God, but each time the Lord refused to yield, citing Scripture and rebuking the enemy. We should remember this is just one isolated incident we see in His lifetime of facing temptation (cf. Heb. 4:15). There is a fundamental difference between the man who willingly and delightfully entertains evil thoughts, and the man who consciously and diligently combats such thoughts. Scripture teaches that we are to take disobedient thoughts captive and subdue them for the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). However, as we’ve already seen, failing to do so will indict us before the Lord and begins the process that James describes, saying, **“Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death”** (Jas. 1:14-15). Experiencing temptation is *not* sinful, but *yielding* to temptation (even entertaining and indulging evil thoughts) is sinful.

Now that we’ve seen the difference, how do we keep from crossing the line from being tempted to evil desire? Again, we must look to Scripture for the answer.

**1. Adopt The Warrior’s Mentality.** If we are to be prepared to combat temptation as it happens on a daily basis, then we must ready ourselves mentally. Awareness

is critical to any warrior, but especially to us as we engage a savage, unrelenting enemy (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). Sin is a very real, ever-present threat (cf. Gen 4:7), and we must understand that we are not bullet-proof—we are all susceptible to its influence (1 Cor. 10:12). When confronted with a ruthless, hate-filled enemy (cf. Jn. 8:44), we cannot afford to hesitate. We must resolve way ahead of time to act *quickly*, and act *decisively* (1 Cor. 10:13). God will always provide the way of escape, and we must be ready to take it. We must have the warrior’s resolve for victory—to resist until the enemy flees! (cf. Jas. 4:7)

**2. Learn To Fight.** Once we’ve established the right attitude, we must think in more practical terms of avoiding evil desire. It will be difficult for the enemy to gain a foothold in us if we don’t allow him any opportunity to do so. Do not afford him any opportunity or provision to use against you (cf. Eph. 4:27; Rom. 13:14). If you must remove yourself from situations or decline to participate in some of your friends’ activities, then so be it if it will help you avoid temptation! Also, do not be afraid to use the Sword of God to cut the enemy down to size (cf. Ps. 119:11; Eph. 6:17). Remember the Lord’s example from Matt. 4? He used Scripture to rebuke the devil and fight temptation. Our faith will also be a tremendous asset in overcoming temptation. Paul

describes faith as our shield with **“which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”** (Eph. 6:16). God has promised to come to our aid and not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. If we truly believe this, then our faith in those promises will stand between us and the thoughts that say, “It is too much to bear, just give in”. Inherent in all temptation is the additional temptation to yield, but our faith can extinguish the desire to give in, because God has promised that we *can* prevail! Finally, a tactic too often neglected and underestimated is calling in reinforcements. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are, by God’s design, here to help us and we must come to one another’s aid as we struggle against a common enemy. We can encour-