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MINISTRIES®

# HOW TO HANDLE TEMPTATION

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**Teaching by Joyce Meyer**

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# HOW TO HANDLE TEMPTATION

## Staying One Step Ahead Of The Devil

Foundation Statement:

**Understanding temptation and aggressively resisting it is the only way to stay one step ahead of Satan.**

### I. Temptation Is A Part Of Life.

A. **Matthew 6:13** – Lead us not into temptation.

1. If Jesus included a suggestion to pray for help with temptation in His “model” prayer, it must be something we will deal with regularly.

B. Jesus was tempted.

1. **Luke 4:13**
2. **Hebrews 4:15**

C. **James 1:12** (KJV) – *Blessed is the man that **ENDURETH** temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life . . .*

1. Endure = Outlast the devil!
2. **Endure** (defined/Vine’s) – To abide under, bear up courageously, to suffer; be longsuffering or patient.

3. JM: To go through something difficult and not cave in; to remain the same in trials as in good times.

D. Temptation (defined/Vine's) – The word has combined applications:

1. Trials with a beneficial purpose and effect, divinely permitted
2. Trials that we are to pray not to enter or come into (these would be attacks by the enemy intended to kill, steal, or destroy)
3. Trials that could be entered by our own carelessness or disobedience
4. In either case, God promises to not let His own be tempted beyond their ability to endure; but He will provide a way out.

E. The Greek word is sometimes translated temptation and at other times trials. Temptation and trials are basically the same root word. It is through our trials that we are tempted. Some things seem to be trials to us that are not really trials – we perceive them as such because of our way of thinking.

## II. Are Trials (Testings) From God?

A. **James 1:13-15** states that God tempts no man with evil, and He cannot be tempted with evil. Vine's states that it seems to contradict other places in Scripture.

1. **Hebrews 11:17** – God tempted or tried Abraham by requiring him to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice.

Abraham proved by this trial Who was number one in his life.

B. **I Corinthians 10:9-10** – The Israelites tempted God by their complaining and murmuring.

1. It was man's evil that tempted Him, not evil in Him. He was tempted a few times to just wipe them out; but according to His character, He gave them mercy.

C. **Psalm 95:8** (KJV) – *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

1. The provocation – The Israelites provoked God to anger by their insistent demands. In plain terms, they got Him aggravated. Did you know that you can frustrate God?

- a. **Psalm 95:10** – **For forty long years, He was grieved and disgusted with that generation.**

- b. **Exodus 4:14** – God became very angry with Moses when he kept making excuses.

2. **Psalm 95:8** – *Harden not your hearts as at Meribah and as at Massah in the day of temptation in the wilderness . . .*

- a. **Exodus 17:1-7**

- b. **Numbers 20:1-13**

D. We spend too much time trying to figure out where trials are coming from. We should simply:

1. Resist them if they are Satan trying to destroy us.
2. Resist acting like Satan in these trials if they are permitted by God for our betterment.

How can you tell the difference? It is easier sometimes than others.

E. **I have found the best policy is to be STEADY IN THE STORM.**

1. Remain stable, keep walking in the Fruit of the Spirit, and stay in God's will.

2. **Psalm 94:12-13** – God disciplines us until we learn to **keep ourselves calm** in adversity.

### III. Don't Trust Yourself Too Much.

- A. **Matthew 26:31-41** – Jesus aggressively resisted temptation while the disciples slept.
  1. They trusted themselves too much. They had not yet learned that the spirit may be willing, but **THE FLESH IS WEAK.**
- B. **Galatians 6:1** – When others sin, beware of feeling superior lest you also be tempted.
- C. **I Corinthians 10:12** – *Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands [who feels sure that he has a steadfast mind and is standing firm], take heed lest he fall [into sin].*
- D. **Psalm 1:1** – Don't sit inactive in the pathway where sinners walk.
  1. Don't trust yourself not to get swayed in their direction.
- E. **I Corinthians 5:9-11** – Don't associate too closely with those who are not living right.
  1. They might rub off on you more than you think!!

### IV. Avoid Even The Appearance Of Evil.

- A. **I Thessalonians 5:22** – If we are to avoid even things that appear evil, how much more should we avoid actual evil!
- B. The Word of God says we should **hate evil.**
  1. **Psalm 97:10-12** – *O you who love the Lord, **hate evil;** He preserves the lives of His saints (the children of God), He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked . . .*

2. **Proverbs 8:13** – The fear of the Lord is to **hate evil**.
- C. **I Corinthians 10:1-6** – The Israelites were protected by the cloud of God’s Presence. They were baptized into Moses and brought under obligation to the Ten Commandments. They all drank the same spiritual drink and ate the same spiritual food.

**NEVERTHELESS, GOD WAS NOT PLEASED  
WITH THE MAJORITY OF THEM.**

1. Why was Paul telling the New Testament Church about this?
  - a. He was saying, “Even though we are saved and baptized into the Holy Spirit, we can live in such a way that God is not pleased with us.”
  - b. **Just as the Israelites were brought under obligation to the Ten Commandments by virtue of their commitment to follow Moses out of bondage, so we are brought under obligation to live a Christian lifestyle by our commitment to follow Christ.**

**V. Using Wisdom Helps Us Avoid Certain Temptations.**

- A. **Proverbs 5:1-8** – Avoid the very scenes of temptation with a loose woman.
- B. **Proverbs 4:14-15** – Avoid the path of evil and don’t get in the way of evil men.
- C. Examples:
  1. Do not carpool alone with someone of the opposite sex if either of you is married or seriously committed to another relationship.
  2. Pastors and spiritual leaders should not counsel the opposite sex without other people either in the room or outside the office door with the door open.

- a. I have heard of many cases of adultery among spiritual leadership that started with counseling.
  - b. If you had a drinking problem in the past, don't go sit in a bar with your friends. If you had a problem with drugs, don't spend the evening with someone who is smoking marijuana or using cocaine.
3. Avoid even the scenes of evil!
- D. If you don't want to eat dessert, do not go to a restaurant that has unbelievably awesome desserts.
- 1. I purposely choose restaurants (whenever I can) that I know have low-fat meals I would enjoy.
- E. **Romans 13:14** – Make no provision for the flesh.
- 1. Even allowing wrong thoughts into our mind is asking for trouble.

**WHERE THE MIND GOES, THE MAN FOLLOWS!**





# What Is The Real Problem?

## I. Not In Your Own Strength

A. **James 1:12-16** – The weaknesses in the believer or even the unbeliever is what Satan uses to work through.

1. Satan baits us and thereby draws us into his well-laid trap.
2. Example: I am never tempted to rob a gas station or a bank, but I am still frequently tempted to be impatient. Since this is still a weakness in me (which has improved, but is still an issue), Satan sets up situations and puts people in my path that will draw the worst out of me. God permits it because it is the only way I will ever realize what a problem I have and get serious about dealing with it.

**Verse 14** – *But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions).*

3. **John 14:30** – Jesus said there was nothing in Him that belonged to Satan.

That should be our goal.

B. Definitions for bait, lust, and passions:

1. **Bait** – To place bait in a trap, to lure in by trickery; used in the taking of animals [JM: the flesh is considered the animal part of man, the lower nature of the believer]. An enticement; to torment, especially with persistent insults, criticisms, or ridicule; to tease. Synonyms: **heckle, hound, needle, badger, taunt, or ride.**
2. **Lust** – Intense and unrestrained desire; an overwhelming craving; to be obsessed with.

We can have lust in any area (sex, food, material things, power, promotion, fame, etc).

3. Passions – Comes from a Latin word which means suffering or to suffer. A powerful emotion such as love, joy, hatred, anger, or greed. Strong desire or lust; a deep overwhelming feeling. Enthusiasm, fervor, and fire are often the cause of losing control; a driving motivation or attitude; strong, forceful devotion for a cause.

Passion is necessary in life for accomplishment. The stronger the passion, the more the individual accomplishes. Good passion, such as compassion or passion to be Christlike, is a wonderful force that drives the individual toward excellence and lofty goals. Bad passion, however, is the ruin of many individuals.

- C. James 4:1-3 – Our wrong desires and wrong motives are major problems.

## II. Can We Overcome?

- A. James 4:5-7 – An independent spirit (attitude) prevents us from receiving help from God.
  1. Be subject to God – **SEEK HIM, SEEK HIS HELP, HUMBLE YOURSELF,** and **REALIZE YOU CANNOT BE STRONG WITHOUT HIM.**
- B. Romans 8:37 – . . . *we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory **through Him Who loved us.***
- C. Philippians 2:12-13 – Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (**self-distrust**, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation). **Not in your own strength**, for it is God Who is at work in you.
- D. Habakkuk 3:19 – The Lord God is our Strength, and He makes us able to walk and still make progress even during difficult times.

### III. Watch Your Mind And Your Mouth.

- A. Don't think or say you are in a trap you can never be free from. Believe and declare that God is working in you because you have put your trust in Him, and that every day you are getting closer to a complete victory.
1. Your victory is already a reality in the spirit realm. To get it out of that realm into the realm where we live, you must cooperate with "spiritual laws."
    - a. **Psalm 103:20** – Angels hearken to the voice of His Word. They do not hearken to complaining, murmuring, or negative and defeated talk.
    - b. **Romans 4:17** – We serve a God Who calls those things that be not as though they were. God called Abraham the father of many nations long before it was a reality in the natural realm.
    - c. **Psalm 19:14** (KJV) – *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord . . .*
    - d. **Proverbs 23:7** – As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.
- B. **Ephesians 4:22-24** – The bridge from bondage to freedom is daily renewing your thoughts and attitudes.
1. **Do you have the attitude of an overcomer, or one who has been overcome?**
- C. **The answers to many of our serious problems are really very basic and simple!!**
1. Right thinking and right speaking are the two main keys to getting from where you are to where you want to be.
- D. **Romans 12:2** – Be transformed (completely changed) by the entire renewal of your mind.

1. **Where the mind goes, the man follows.**
- E. Don't think and say, "This is just too hard" or "I just cannot resist the temptation."
1. **Deuteronomy 30:9-14** – Keeping the Word in your mind and heart gives you the strength to do it.  
**STOP SAYING IT IS TOO HARD!**
- F. It does little or no good to pray and ask God for help, then cancel everything you ask Him to do by making negative statements.

#### IV. Do Not Expect Overnight Results.

- A. Miracles and healing are two different things.
1. Miracles occur by the divine intervention of God with no human instrumentality.
  2. Healing is a process that occurs as a result of God and man working together to correct the situation.
- B. **Deuteronomy 7:22** – God delivered the Israelites from their enemies **little by little**.
- C. **II Corinthians 3:18** – God changes us from **glory to glory**.
- D. **Unrealistic expectations set us up for disappointment and despair.**
- E. You may have a "suddenly" in your life – a sudden breakthrough that occurs quickly – but it is almost always after a long period of waiting and believing. It seems suddenly to us; but in reality, it has been in process for a long time.
- F. God recently spoke to me about **CONSISTENCY**. Consistently doing what is right is the **ONLY** permanent solution to what ails us.
1. One will never maintain their weight properly without consistently eating right. To eat right, lose weight, and then eat wrong and gain it back is America's story.

By and large, we are an undisciplined, excessive society. I cannot eat right one or two days a week and expect that to offset five days of eating wrong.

G. Product ads I see:

1. Take this pill once a day and watch the fat melt away.
2. Wrinkles vanish overnight with this new cream.
3. Buy this car and instantly feel good about yourself.
4. This perfume will draw the man you desire into your life.

H. **EXPECT to invest some time and effort. EXPECT to be persistent and steadfast. EXPECT God to show you some behavior patterns in your own life that have contributed to your problems. EXPECT correction from God. EXPECT to be uncomfortable during the changes. EXPECT complete deliverance and victory over every temptation, but DON'T EXPECT to NEVER be tempted.**

V. **Stop Making Excuses!**

A. **Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 5** – Deal aggressively with your enemies and exterminate them.

1. As soon as I see a couple of bugs in my house, I call for the exterminator. I don't have mercy on the bugs; I exterminate them.

B. **Deuteronomy 13:15-17** – Destroy them utterly.

C. Examples:

1. You cannot quit smoking if you smoke only once in a while.
2. You will not get off of drugs or alcohol if you only use them occasionally.

3. If a person has been “addicted to adultery,” they will not get free by thinking, “I won’t go beyond flirting or perhaps an occasional private dinner.”

D. Freedom demands confrontation.

1. **I Samuel 17:32-51** – David actually became king when he confronted Goliath – not when God Anointed him.

David went in God’s strength to face Goliath, not his own.

2. **Numbers 13:27-33** – Joshua and Caleb became rulers when they were ready and willing to face the giants in the land – their ten friends would never rule.

## VI. Always Remember:

- A. **Philippians 4:13** – **I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME.**
- B. **Ephesians 6:10** (KJV) – . . . ***BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.***
- C. **John 15:5** – **APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.**





# The War For Man's Soul

## I. Which Temptation Will You Give In To?

A. Satan tempts us to do evil, and God tempts us to do good.

1. **Romans 6:1-23** – In this chapter we see that we are dead to sin – sin is not dead – but we no longer have a desire for sin. God has given us His Spirit and put a new “want to” in us.
2. Since the **SIN PRINCIPLE** is still active in our flesh, we must **RESIST** the temptation to sin and **YIELD** to the temptation to do right.

B. **Romans 7:15-25** – Paul describes his own daily conflict with sin and righteousness.

1. Paul used this language to express his deep hatred for sin and evil.
2. Paul speaks of the daily conflict he had with the depravity that remained in his flesh. Although his spirit was entirely renewed, his soul was in a process of being daily renewed.
3. Paul frequently was led into tempers, words, or actions which he did not approve of, nor did he intend to permanently allow in his life. (Paraphrased from *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary On The Whole Bible*)

We must remember that Paul and the other apostles had to GROW spiritually the same as we do. In **Philippians 4:11** Paul stated that he had **LEARNED** how to be content.

4. By stating that his actions were not really him, but the sin principle operating in his soul, he was not saying that man is not accountable for his sin; but he is establishing that they are done against reason and conscience.

It is not the **heart or spirit** of the **born-again man** that chooses to sin – it is the “uncrucified flesh” that is still in the process of “becoming.” (Paraphrased from *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary On The Whole Bible*)

- a. **II Corinthians 3:18** – We are **constantly being** transformed into His image.
  - b. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two **shall become** one flesh.
5. Paul’s earnest desire for holiness increased as he grew in grace. He found that **he could not resist the flesh in the flesh** – but by the strength and help of God, through Christ, he could resist in the spirit and win the war against the flesh. (Paraphrased from *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary On The Whole Bible*)
6. These passages do not represent the apostle as one that walked after the flesh, but as one that had it greatly at heart not to walk so. If there are those who abuse these passages and choose sin under the presumption that they cannot do otherwise, they do so to their own destruction. (Paraphrased from *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary On The Whole Bible*)
- C. **Galatians 5:16-17** – Walk in the Spirit and you won’t fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The flesh is continually opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit is continually opposed to the flesh.
1. Choices, choices, choices – resisting the temptation to do wrong and submitting to the temptation to do right is the only answer.
  2. The Holy Spirit in us is always tempting us to do some good deed, give a compliment, and choose right conversation, thoughts, and behavior.
  3. I was tempted to give my watch to a woman who admired it, and I successfully resisted the temptation.

I was tempted to keep it for myself, even though I had two more just like it at home in a box. I did not resist the temptation, but promptly gave in to it.

We can see from this type of situation that we are tempted with both evil and good.

## **WHICH TEMPTATION SHALL WE SUBMIT TO AND WHICH SHALL WE RESIST?**

### **II. Resist The Devil, And He Will Flee.**

- A. **James 4:7** – We must submit to God in order to resist the devil.
- B. **I Peter 5:8-9** – Resist the devil at his onset. This is a very important key to victory.
- C. **Resist** (defined/Vine's) – To set against, to withstand, oppose, to stand firm against, to be anti or against. **WE SHOULD BE ANTI-DEVIL!** He is anti-Christ.
- D. **Ephesians 6:10-18** tells us to **STAND**. Having done all that God instructs us to do, we are to **STAND FIRMLY** in our place.
  - 1. **Even after the believer has done what is right, it may take some time of resisting and continuing to resist before the enemy gives up.**
- E. **Ephesians 4:26-27** – When angry, sin not. Don't let the sun go down on your anger. Neither give place to the devil.
  - 1. Resist the temptation to stay angry.
  - 2. Submit to the temptation to be at peace with God, yourself, and your fellow man.
- F. Satan instigates sin.
  - 1. **John 13:2** – Satan put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus.

2. **Genesis 3:4-5** – Satan tempted Eve to disobey God, and he used her as an instrument to tempt Adam.
  - a. Our temptations often come from Satan through a person.
  - b. **Ephesians 6:12** – We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.
  
3. **Matthew 4:1** – Jesus was led into the desert to be tempted of the devil, but **HE SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED EACH TEMPTATION.**
  - a. “Turn these stones into bread if You are hungry.”
 

Tempted to try to provide for Himself instead of trusting God
  - b. “If You are the Son of God, prove it by jumping off this mountain and see if He will save You.”
    - 1) Tempted to prove His position and Who He is.
    - 2) Anyone who really walks in power and knows who he is has nothing to prove.
    - 3) Jesus would not tempt God by a foolish display of power to prove Who He was to Satan.
  - c. “If You will worship me,” Satan said, “I will give You the world and all that is in it.”
 

Tempted with material things
  - d. **I John 2:15-17** gives a list of these same basic temptations and warns us not to fall into them.

**Satan tempts man with temporal things,  
but GOD TEMPTS US WITH ETERNAL  
BLISS IN HIS PRESENCE.**

4. **SOME RIGHT NOW ARE BEING TEMPTED TO STOP SERVING SATAN AND START SERVING GOD – GO AHEAD AND GIVE IN TO THE TEMPTATION.**

**III. Resist The Temptation To Try To Make Things Happen Yourself.**

- A. Are you ever tempted to try to change a member of your family?
- B. Are you ever tempted to make your own plan of action, especially since God does not appear to you to be doing anything anyway?
- C. Are you ever tempted to run to people for help instead of waiting on God?
- D. **James 4:1-2** – What leads to strife?
  - 1. Man trying to take care of himself instead of trusting God.
- E. **Luke 14:11** (KJV) – *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*
- F. **James 4:6** – God resists the proud, but He gives grace (help) to the humble.

**THE HUMBLE GET THE HELP IN GOD’S ECONOMY.**

- G. **Isaiah 14:12-15** – Lucifer said five times “I will”; and God said, “You shall be brought down.”
- H. **Galatians 2:20** – Paul contrasts Lucifer’s attitude by saying, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”
- I. Jacob was a man who sensed his destiny, but he went after it himself instead of allowing God to take the lead.

1. The attitude, “decide what you want and go after it,” is applauded by the world – but despised by God.
2. Jacob came out of the womb holding his brother’s heel, indicating that even then he was trying to be first.
3. His name meant “supplanter, schemer, and trickster.” He did whatever he needed to do to get what he wanted.
4. He took advantage of Esau’s weakness and deceived him out of his birthright. He later lied and deceived his father in order to steal the blessing of the firstborn.
5. What goes around comes around. Jacob worked for Laban for seven years to have Rachel as his wife. Laban deceived him and gave him Leah instead.
6. Later in his life he had twelve sons of his own, and they deceived him concerning Joseph. They lied and said he had been killed by a wild animal; when in fact, they had sold him to slave traders.
7. Jacob finally became tired of running from the consequences of his deceptive lifestyle. He got alone with God, wrestled with the angel of the Lord all night, and came out transformed.
8. He was left with a limp that he carried the remainder of his life to remind him of his need to lean on God.
9. The account of Jacob can be found in **Genesis: Chapters 25-32.**

#### **IV. Resist Wrong Thinking And Negative, Destructive Emotions.**

- A. **II Corinthians 10:4-5** – “Cast down” is another way to say “resist.”

- B. Resist excessive mental activity.
1. Reasoning
  2. Wondering
  3. Worrying
  4. Excessive planning and detailing
- C. Destructive feelings such as:
1. Offense
  2. Depression, discouragement, and anything else that pulls you down
  3. Condemnation
  4. Insecurity
  5. Self-Pity
- D. Resist laziness.
1. Lazy (defined/Webster's) – Slothful, sluggard, disinclined to exert oneself, resulting in little or no pain; does not want to suffer or be uncomfortable.
  2. **Proverbs 20:4** – The sluggard will not plow if it's cold! He does not want to be cold or uncomfortable.
  3. People often hide behind excuses like "I'm afraid" – when in reality, the problem is laziness.  
  
**Matthew 25:24-26** – The servant who received one talent said he never did anything with his talent because he was afraid. The master said he was lazy and idle.

E. Resist the temptation to put things off that need to be done.

1. Do hard jobs **FIRST** – that is better than dreading them all day.
2. David ran quickly to the battle line to fight Goliath.
3. Abraham rose up early in the morning to go and sacrifice Isaac as God had instructed him. It was probably the hardest thing he had ever done.
4. Have an aggressive attitude toward your work.

**STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE DEVIL.**





# The High Cost Of Low Living

Foundation Statement And Scripture:

**Matthew 6:24-25** – You cannot serve God and mammon.

## I. Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve.

A. **Joshua 24:15** – . . . *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

B. **Joel 3:14** – Multitudes are in the valley of decision.

1. There is a lot of pressure from the world today to adopt its ways.

**MAKE A DECISION AND STICK WITH IT –  
EVEN IF IT MEANS PERSONAL SUFFERING.**

2. **I Peter 4:1-5** – Be willing to suffer in the flesh and you will walk in God's will. The world will criticize you, but God will deal with them.

C. **I Corinthians 2:12** – We do not have the spirit of the world; but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things of God.

1. Are you trying to find out the things of God or worldly things?

**I Corinthians 3:18-19** and **Colossians 2:8** – Do not be deceived by intellectualism.

2. Are you studying God's plan for finances or the world's?
3. Are you waiting for God to promote you or playing worldly games to get promoted?

4. Are you believing God for “divine connections” regarding your lifetime mate and your friends, or have you picked a person or a group and developed a plan on how to get what you want?

## II. What If You Gain The Whole World And Lose Your Own Soul?

- A. **Matthew 16:25-26** – Lose your (worldly) life, and you will gain your (spiritual) life.
  1. Try to keep your worldly life, and you will lose your spiritual life.

### WHICH DECISION WILL YOU MAKE?

- B. Is a position in a company worth losing your soul for?
  1. Some people are too busy climbing the corporate ladder to make room for God in their lives.
  2. Be sure your priorities are in line.
    - a. **Matthew 22:37-38** – Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind. This is the first commandment.
    - b. **THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.**
    - c. We can make almost anything into a god in our life – spouse, work, children, house, car, sports, etc. Whatever we are doing is our priority.
- C. **II Corinthians 4:4** – Satan is the god of this world’s system.
  1. **I Corinthians 1:19-21** – God has shown the folly of the world’s wisdom – **just look around you; it only takes an instant to see that the world’s system is not working.**
- D. What does the world say compared to God’s Word?

1. **World says:** Be greedy, save everything you can, look out for number one (which is yourself) and maybe – someday – with any luck – you will have something.

**WORD says:** Do not be greedy graspers – give a portion of all you gain away, care about others, do not worry about yourselves, and God will take care of you. You will also have joy and peace as you live this way.

2. **World says:** Push to be in first place, be in competition, and don't let anyone get ahead of you. A little compromise won't hurt anything – after all, “everyone else does it.”

**WORD says:** The first shall be last. Don't try to push yourself forward, but wait to be brought forward by God. Avoid competition and comparisons. Humble yourself under God's mighty hand; and at the right time, He will exalt you. Don't compromise at all; be true to your heart, and keep a clean conscience because it is the “little foxes” that spoil the vine (life). Live a life of integrity, and God will reward you.

3. **World says:** Compare yourself to other people and then strive to be like them; in this way, you will be accepted.

**WORD says:** Be yourself – your unique self. You are an individual created by God for something special. Find out what it is and do it. If people reject you, don't worry about them. They rejected Jesus too.

4. **World says:** Be jealous; want what others have, and fight to get it. The world has no peace – no real joy; it is filled with strife. People in the world are full of bitterness, resentment, and unforgiveness – even hatred!

**WORD says:** Do not be envious or jealous. God will take care of you. Stay out of strife at all costs. You limit your blessings from God if you don't. Forgive your enemies, bless them, and pray for them. And above all, walk in love.

### III. This World Is Not Your Home.

- A. **Hebrews 11:9-10** – Abraham dwelt as a stranger in a strange country, living in tents (nothing permanent). He was always ready to pack up his tent and move whenever God led Him to do so.

**HE WAS NOT ATTACHED IN AN UNBALANCED WAY TO PEOPLE, PLACES, POSITIONS, OR THINGS.**

- B. **I Peter 2:11-12** – As aliens and strangers, abstain from sensual urges that are worldly temptations.

1. Resist the temptation to be worldly.
2. Remember: **YOU ARE JUST PASSING THROUGH!**

- C. **John 17:15-16** – *They are not of the world . . .*

### IV. Attachments To People, Places, And Positions

- A. Unbalanced attachments to people can cause us to depend on them instead of God. It can also cause us to obey them instead of God.

1. Remember: we cannot serve two masters.
2. **Acts 5:29** – . . . *We must obey God rather than men.*
3. **Isaiah 31:1** – Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the Lord our God.
  - a. I sang that song until I couldn't stand to hear it anymore, and all the while I was trusting in man in an unbalanced way. **Even though I was singing the song, I never got the message.**
  - b. I wonder how many songs we sing today, but still don't have the message the song is conveying?

- c. I was very insecure and living in pretense in order to stay in favor with people. I obviously thought I needed them more than I needed God. I would not have said that; but our actions show the real person, not words alone.

B. Unbalanced attachments to places

1. We can become so attached to a church, job, school, neighborhood, city, country, etc., that if God directs us to go to another place, we find it difficult or even impossible to obey Him.
2. **Genesis 12:1-4** – If Abram had been attached, he would not have become the father of many nations and enjoyed the radical blessings of God.

**Some individuals never grow spiritually because God directs them to go to another church; but due to “soul ties,” they stay where they are comfortable in the flesh but miserable in the spirit.**

C. Attachments to positions

1. God may put the believer in a position in the church or ministry, use him there for a season, and then be finished with that particular thing. If we do not move on when God does, we continue in the flesh with no anointing.
2. We can get so attached to “our ministry” that we forget Whose ministry it really is.
3. **John 3:22-30** – John the Baptist, when he had completed his assignment, was ready to turn it over to Jesus joyfully.
4. There are those in leadership who can never successfully turn their job over to someone else, and it prevents growth.
5. God is not impressed with positions and titles –

**GOD IS IMPRESSED WITH PROMPT OBEDIENCE.**

6. People often want positions so strongly that they do ungodly things to get and keep them. They compromise their integrity; and in doing so, they relinquish their blessings.

## V. Love Not The World, Nor The Things In It.

### A. I John 2:15-17

1. We can have them as long as they don't have us!

### B. I Timothy 6:17 – God richly and ceaselessly gives us all things to enjoy.

### C. I Corinthians 7:31 – Do not overuse the enjoyments of this world, and stay balanced. Live as though you are not absorbed by them, as if you had no dealings with them. The outward form of this world is passing away.

1. Worrell translation says:  
*Not using it wastefully or excessively*

2. I Timothy 6:7 – We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out.

### D. I Timothy 6:9-12 – Those who **crave** to be rich **fall into temptation**.

1. Cravings can cause us to act like animals instead of the cream of God's creation.
2. Matthew 26:14-16 – Judas loved money, and it was the open door Satan used to draw him into the temptation to betray Jesus.

## VI. The Iniquity Of Sodom

- A. Ezekiel 16:49 – *Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride, overabundance of food, prosperous ease, and idleness were hers and her daughters'; **neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.***

- B. The French and Russian Revolutions were caused by kings who were rich and oppressing the poor.
  - 1. The people would have loved the royalty and been happy to see them blessed if they would have treated them right. God feels the same way about us.
- C. **When we become reservoirs instead of channels, our actions declare our heart position.**
- D. Jesus met a woman who was not afraid to let go of her possessions.
  - 1. **Matthew 26:7-11**

## VII. Having Possessions But Not Holding Them

- A. **Mark 10:19-27** – Those who have possessions and keep on holding them
- B. **Luke 12:16-21** – Hoarding possessions
- C. **Ecclesiastes 5:13-14** – Riches kept to the hurt of the owner.
- D. **Matthew 6:19-21** – *Do not gather and heap up and store up **for yourselves** treasures on earth . . .*
- E. When you are tempted to keep what you should be giving:

**AGGRESSIVELY RESIST THE TEMPTATION.**

**IT IS A SATANIC TRAP!!**





