



Part 4 – “Breaking Free”

Central Point . . .

1 Corinthians 10:11-13

11 All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close. 12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin. 13 But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

This week's study is a challenge to avoid being a victim of "Deceptive Comparisons" and feeling false security because of intoxication with "Self-Confidence". Most people have no problem compiling a list of individuals whom they consider to be moral, ethical, and spiritual "failures". This is a tool to boost pride and self confidence.

If you practice this exercise, you have no trouble feeling that you are able to "stand firm" by comparison to these whom you consider "failures".

This study is your challenge to take a different approach to life: to take their "failures" as a sober warning of your own vulnerability to fall victim to the same temptations or "parasites".

When you practice comparing yourself to others only to make "self" look better and get a better score on the moral report card, it demonstrates neither compassion for others nor concern for the danger of false confidence.

Use this study to discover ways to place your confidence in God rather than in your personal effort or personal ability.

Focal Point . . .

Monday:

Jesus Wins Over Temptation:

Temptation serves as a parasite in our relationships in three distinct ways. Jesus was tempted in these three ways and was able to stand victorious.

Temptation Truth #1 The cravings of our bodies -- sensualist.

Luke 4:3-4 *The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: "Since you're God's Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread."* ⁴*Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."*

In Jesus' example, you can see that legitimate needs are never satisfied by illegitimate methods.

1. First Satan identifies your weakness and attacks at that point. As you examine your life what would you say are some of your weaknesses? List them in order of where you think Satan might attack next.

2. Which of the following would you consider the most likely area of your life that Satan will attack you with temptation?
 Sexual temptation; Financial inducement;
 Fear of alienation; Fear of offending someone;
 Desire to get even; Other: _____
3. If temptation is not from God, then from where does it come? James 1:12-16
¹²*God blesses the people who patiently endure testing. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.* ¹³*And remember, no one who wants to do wrong should ever say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else either.* ¹⁴*Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires.* ¹⁵*These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death.* ¹⁶*So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.*

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, grant me strength and will power to stand against my physical cravings. In Jesus Name, Amen

Tuesday:

Temptation Truth #2 The lust of our eyes -- greed. Luke 4:5-8

For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. Then the Devil said, "They're yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I'm in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. Worship me and they're yours, the whole works." ⁸*Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."*

In Jesus' second testing example, you can see where Satan was offering Jesus a "shortcut" to quick gain. It would, however, yield only short term gain and create loss of long term gain of grace with His Father.

1. Jesus quoted Scripture to prove Satan was presenting a false hope in his shortcut. What is promised to you if you use Scripture to resist Satan's temptation? Ephesians 6:16-17 ¹⁶*In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.* ¹⁷*Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

2. If you will expose yourself to Scripture through reading, studying and memorizing, what does God promise to do for you when Satan tempts you and temptation comes down upon you? John 14:26
²⁶*But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*

3. Set a plan of reading, studying, and memorizing Scripture. Start that plan here today.

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, thank you that you have provided Scripture to be a weapon of defense against the power of temptation. In Jesus Name, Amen

Wednesday:

Temptation Truth #3 The Pride of our Hearts – self-serving.

Luke 4:9-12 *For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, "If you are God's Son, jump. It's written, isn't it, that 'he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you; you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone'?"* ¹²*"Yes," said Jesus, "and it's also written, 'Don't you dare tempt the Lord your God.'"*

In Jesus' third testing example, we see Satan was trying to tempt Jesus to use God's gifts and privileges for "self" glorification. God's gifts to us are to be used for His glory and for the benefit of others.

1. If you will put Christ first in your life and allow Him to relate His love for you, what can you expect to happen in this growing relationship?

Philippians 1:8-11 *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ...to the glory and praise of God.*

2. If your life is being lived to the "glory and praise of God", then you are maturing in your relationship with Christ, able to take on "solid food". When you practice this what will be the next ability you will have to overcome temptation?

Hebrews 5:14 *But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

3. Is your life reflecting any of these evidences of spiritual maturity that can confront Satan with the use of God's power and God's Glory?

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, I want my life to bring "glory and praise to you and I want to know victory over the temptation of pride and a self-serving attitude. In Jesus Name, Amen

Thursday:

How to break free from temptation...

1. **Make a covenant with yourself.** Psalm 119:11

I have taken your words to heart so I would not sin against you.

a. The Psalmist has set his aim on the highest goal a man can have. What is that goal? Will you accept a challenge to do the same?

b. The Psalmist has set his aim on not sinning against God. What is he expecting to be the light, guide and the nourishment of his spiritual nature? How can you follow his example?

2. **Look for a way out.** 1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³*You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptations.*

a. What encouragement do you find in this verse that is a constant on which you can always count on and trust in?

b. If you will do your part of trusting in God and not in your own self-sufficiency what does God promise to do for you that will assure victory over temptation?

2 Thessalonians 3:3 *3 But the Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from the evil one.*

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, with your help and direction, I believe you and I can break me free from temptation. In Jesus Name, Amen

Friday:

3. **Divert your thoughts.** Philippians 4:8-9

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

a. The inner you is the real you and your thoughts will ultimately color your actions. What are your thoughts and what actions would one expect from such thoughts?

b. What you read, watch, and listen to shapes your thoughts: "trash in, trash out" or "holiness and purity". Based on your 'intake', what should you expect to be the outcome of your actions?

4. **Remove yourself.** 2 Timothy 2:22

Run from temptations that capture young people. Always do the right thing. Be faithful, loving, and easy to get along with. Worship with people whose hearts are pure.

a. Instead of hanging around where temptation is kindled what should you do?

b. How should you counter the urge to "hang around" temptations?

5. **Ask for forgiveness, resolve to do better, and start again.** 1 John 1:9

On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.

a. This is a good time to write down specific "sins" of which you are conscious that you commit either daily or regularly. (Not just I am a sinner)

b. Then ask God to forgive you and make a commitment to walk away from them. Make a fresh start in life replacing them with God's character.

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, with these practical biblical helps and your faithfulness to strengthen and guide me through Your Holy Spirit I look forward to embracing freedom from temptation. In Jesus Name, Amen

Turning Point...

With the choice of embracing relationships from God's perspective the relationship **parasites** that suck the life out of relationship can be controlled and their destructiveness greatly limited.