



Part 4 – Breaking Free

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Central Point...

1 Corinthians 10:11-13 *These things happened to them as a warning to us. All this was written in the Scriptures to teach us who live in these last days. ¹²Even if you think you can stand up to temptation, be careful not to fall. ¹³You 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.*

Parasites are very real and diminish the quality of life of millions of people throughout the world.

Relationship parasites are very real as well, which diminish the quality of our relationships.

Relationship parasites usually show up in the form of **addictions**, such as **gambling**, **drugs** and/or **pornography**.

Parasites in our relationships come in the form of **temptation** in our lives.

Focal Point...

The Temptation Challenge

The greatest challenge we face is to **do** and **be** and **say** things we **shouldn't aren't** and will **hurt** people.

Three facts about temptation: Every temptation we face has been faced by **others**. We have **never** been tempted by something we did not have the power to resist.

2. God provides a way out of **every** temptation.

Parasites in our personal relationships also affect our relationship with **God**.

1 John 2:16 *Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him.*

Temptation serves as parasites in our relationships in three distinct ways:

1 John 2:16

of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself].¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride

- The **cravings** of our bodies – **sensualism**.
- The **lust** of our eyes – **greed**.
- The **pride** of our hearts – **self-serving**.

Jesus experienced all three of these in His encounter with Satan, and He **overcame** them all without sinning.

Luke 4:1-2 *Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.*

Jesus' response seeks to **expose** the untruths involved with temptation with ultimate **truth**:

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." ⁴Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."*

Temptation Truth #1 – Legitimate needs are never satisfied by **illegitimate** methods.

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." ⁸Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."*

Temptation Truth #2 – Taking shortcuts to short term **gain** result in the loss of long term **grace**.

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.'"

Temptation Truth #3 – Any demonstration of God's love and care for us is for His glory, and the benefit of others.

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.

2. **Look for a way out.**

1 Corinthians 10:13 ¹³You 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.

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.

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.

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.

Turning Point...

Although some relationship parasites take us by surprise, the truth is that most are the direct result of us taking successful steps in the direction of sin. All due to our unsuccessful management of temptation.

Our challenge...

Believers – simply ask God,

Father God – What are the parasites that I've allowed in my marriage?

Seekers – If you are one checking out the claims of Christianity, know that the future God desires for you to experience is one that includes a growing personal relationship with Him. The good news is that to receive it, you simply have to ask Him.

To invite Christ into your heart, you can simply pray,

Lord Jesus, I want to receive your love today. I believe you came and died for me, and I want to be your friend and follower, starting today. So I officially invite you into my life today. Lead me, guide me, love me, so that I can love others better each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.