

The Promise of Help, part 6 of Promises  
May 25, 2014

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We are all individuals, with individual interests, tastes, and desires. We are also individual in what we are tempted by. For example, I have never been tempted to get high on anything, legal or otherwise. That is not true of everyone. Many people are tempted to get high, to get drunk, to lose control, to lose their self inhibitions. Some do it for the experience of it. Some do it to escape the pressures and pains of their life. Some do it for other reasons. Some people are enticed to this sin while others are not.

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Everyone faces all three of these forms of temptations. Likely you faced some temptation of each of these this week.

Jesus faced all these desires. Because Jesus was tempted just like we are tempted, He knows a lot about temptation. He can help us find victory over temptation just as He did. While Hebrews 2.18 does not specifically promise us help, it is implied in that statement, and spelled out more clearly in chapter four.

**Hebrews 4:14 (NIV)** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

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He draws then the conclusion that because of our High Priest, let us cement our faith in His service on our behalf. Put your faith strongly in Jesus and don't let go.

**Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

Though our High Priest is fully God, He is also fully man. He lived a human life on earth. He battled temptation every day. Though He is fully God He can sympathize with us in our battle against temptation. He has battled every form of temptation we do, but was victorious every time. He knows something about temptation and how strong its pull is.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)** Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Here is the promise of His help. Because of who Jesus is, and what Jesus did, and what Jesus experienced in temptation, let us, then, pray, expecting help, and we will receive it. God wants us to succeed against temptation. God wants to give us the help we need. That help is promised here and elsewhere in the Bible.

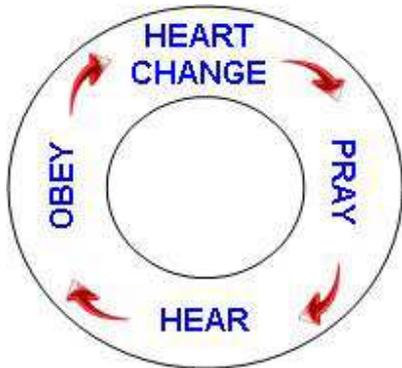
### **Jesus helps us through the Holy Spirit.**

The help Jesus gives is in the form of the Holy Spirit. When you become a Christian, and follow Jesus with your life, He sends the Holy Spirit to take residence in you. The Holy Spirit is the source of our help against temptation. The Holy Spirit is always present, always awake, always aware of what is taking place in your situation. The Holy Spirit sees temptation coming before you do. The Holy Spirit is ready to give you the help you need to succeed against temptation. Look at how Paul, the missionary, describes it.

**Galatians 5:16 (NLT)** So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

God wants you to succeed against every temptation. That is why He gave us His Spirit. When you are tempted, the Holy Spirit will warn you not to sin. The Spirit may remind you of Jesus on the cross, putting that picture in your mind. The Spirit may remind you of the consequences of this sin. It will feel good for a short while and then there will be guilty feelings. Someone may be hurt by this sin. God will be displeased by this sin. The Holy Spirit will warn you not to sin.

Look at the diagram.



It starts with your heart.  
 It starts with your heart. **Pray your heart to God.**

Decide what it is you want. Do you want to sin or do you want to obey God? If your heart is right towards God... if you truly want to be holy... if you truly want to be pure... if you truly want to live out God's will... if you really want to please God with your life, then pray that to God. Commit yourself to Him each day in prayer. Ask for help against temptation.

You have to prepare yourself for battle ahead of time. You can't sharpen your sword in the middle of battle. You can't polish your armor in the middle of temptation. You can't check your equipment while the bullets are flying. You prepare yourself for battle before the battle begins. Start your day by praying for victory over temptation. Pray your heart to the Lord.

**If you are prepared for battle, you will hear the Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit speaks quietly. The Holy Spirit doesn't yell. The Holy Spirit won't yell at you, "Drop that donut," or "Don't go to that website," or "Don't adopt that resentful attitude towards her," or "Stop choosing to be grumpy." The Holy Spirit doesn't speak aloud or loudly. The Holy Spirit speaks softly, to your mind.

Nor does the Holy Spirit get physical. Have you seen the commercial for the V8 Juice drink? A man is doing sit-ups and his trainer is asking him about his training. The trainer asks if he is still running in the morning. He says yes. The trainer asks if he is getting his vegetables every day. He answers, "When I can." And the trainer smacks him in the forehead, as if to say, "Duh, getting your vegees is easy with V8."

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If you were drowning and someone threw you a line of string instead of rope, you would still grab it. In fact, if they threw you a thread, sewing thread, you'd grab at it. You would do so because you want to live instead of drown. The Spirit's whisper may seem as thin as thread, but it is more powerful than any rope. It is stronger than graphene. If you

haven't heard of graphene, it may be the next big thing for inventions in the new century. Graphene is 100 times stronger than steel. A thread of graphene would certainly be powerful enough to save you from drowning, if you grabbed on.

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**When you hear the warning, heed it.** Don't brush aside the warning. Don't treat it as nagging. Treat it as help. Don't treat it as an accusation. Treat it as a lifeline, a rescue. Treat it as the help of God in temptation. Then accept the help and heed the warning.

When the Spirit warns you against temptation, turn and walk away from sin. Obey the Holy Spirit. Heed the Holy Spirit. Accept the help. Obey the warning. Don't just resist temptation, run from it. Don't struggle with it, retreat from it. When you hear the warning, heed the warning.

**When you heed the warning and obey God, the Holy Spirit changes your heart.**

We need the Holy Spirit to change our hearts. We need the Spirit to make us like Jesus, on the inside. The Spirit does that through our prayers and obedience. It does not take place in a moment. But it will take place as we take God at His word and seek, in Jesus, the help we need against temptation.

So pray for His help. Pray for His help. The more you pray for help, the more you will hear the Spirit. The more you hear the Spirit, the more you can obey the Spirit. The more you obey the Spirit, the more He will change your heart and the less attraction sin will be to you.

You have to make up your mind, every day, that you want to live for Jesus more than you want anything else. Decide you want to live for Jesus more than you want the things of the world. The enemies of God want you to sin. They will be enticing you all day long to do so. Like any soldier, you get stronger and safer with experience. So you pray to prepare yourself for battle.

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Do you want victory over temptation? Really? It is available in Jesus. If you have been trying to become a better person apart from Jesus, give it up. You will never become victorious over sin without His help. The truth is, you have to start clean and you can only become clean through the High Priest God appointed to mediate for you. You need Jesus to serve your needs with God. Receive Him today as your high priest. This is part of His work as Savior. Receive Jesus as your savior and then you can receive Him as your lord, and find help over temptation.

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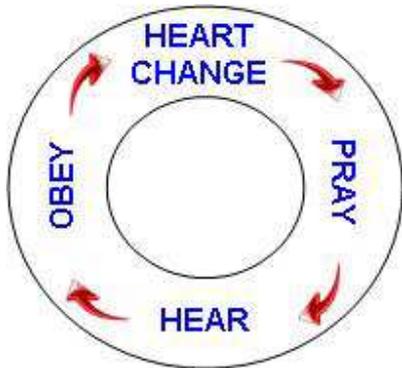
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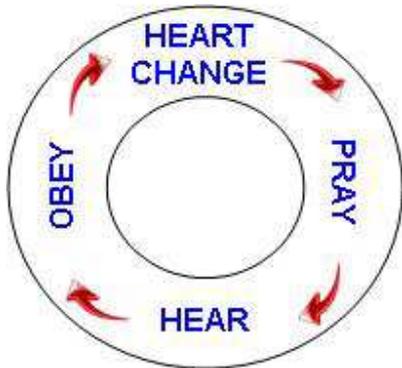
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We are all individuals, with individual interests, tastes, and desires. We are also individual in what we are tempted by. For example, I have never been tempted to get high on anything, legal or otherwise. That is not true of everyone. Many people are tempted to get high, to get drunk, to lose control, to lose their self inhibitions. Some do it for the experience of it. Some do it to escape the pressures and pains of their life. Some do it for other reasons. Some people are enticed to this sin while others are not.

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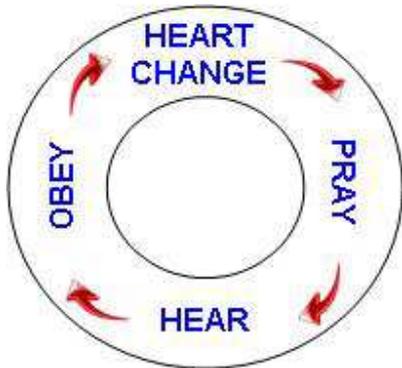
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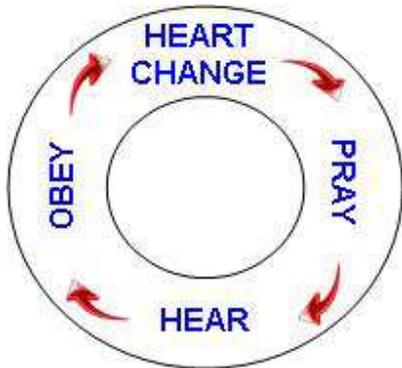
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You have to make up your mind, every day, that you want to live for Jesus more than you want anything else. Decide you want to live for Jesus more than you want the things of the world. The enemies of God want you to sin. They will be enticing you all day long to do so. Like any soldier, you get stronger and safer with experience. So you pray to prepare yourself for battle.

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Invitation

Do you want victory over temptation? Really? It is available in Jesus. If you have been trying to become a better person apart from Jesus, give it up. You will never become victorious over sin without His help. The truth is, you have to start clean and you can only become clean through the High Priest God appointed to mediate for you. You need Jesus to serve your needs with God. Receive Him today as your high priest. This is part of His work as Savior. Receive Jesus as your savior and then you can receive Him as your lord, and find help over temptation.

The Promise of Help, part 6 of Promises  
May 25, 2014

We are finishing up our series on the promises of God today. I hope they have encouraged you to take God at His word and trust Him more. If you have missed any of these messages, they can be read on our website, or download them to your device.

We've looked at the promises of righteousness, heaven, freedom, and glory. Today we're looking at the promise of help. This is not general help. This is a specific help for a specific situation, one that we all face everyday. Every day we are tempted by the things of the world. Every day we are tempted to sin. Every day we are tempted to pursue pleasure, comfort, fame, fortune, pride, selfishness, and rebellion against any and all authority. Every day we battle temptation. God promises us help so we can be victorious.

We are all individuals, with individual interests, tastes, and desires. We are also individual in what we are tempted by. For example, I have never been tempted to get high on anything, legal or otherwise. That is not true of everyone. Many people are tempted to get high, to get drunk, to lose control, to lose their self inhibitions. Some do it for the experience of it. Some do it to escape the pressures and pains of their life. Some do it for other reasons. Some people are enticed to this sin while others are not.

Things that I am tempted by, you may not be. I am tempted to avoid hard thinking. When I am writing a sermon, and hit a wall, there are a dozen things that will easily grab my attention. Suddenly cleaning a closet becomes attractive. But some of you relish what is hard. You see it as a personal challenge that you will overcome. You are not tempted to avoid hard thinking. We have different temptations, but we are all tempted, every day.

What temptation have you been battling lately? Maybe it is porn. Maybe it is lust. Maybe it is alcohol. Maybe it is drugs. Maybe it is grumpiness. I recently read a short description of this sin. Part of that is in your notes. Paul Miller wrote...

*"The cure for a cranky soul begins by repenting, by realizing that my moodiness is a demand that my life have a certain shape."* --Paul E. Miller

Sure, that's why we get grumpy. We are dissatisfied with the current situation we are in. We are un-accepting of whatever circumstances we are currently experiencing. Instead of submitting our attitude and circumstances to God, we become grumpy. That grumpiness may be expressed towards those around us. We might even become grumpy towards God. Whereupon, we avoid prayer. We may become self-indulgent. We tell ourselves, we need a break. We deserve a treat. We are in danger in that moment of further sins, greater sins.

What temptation are you battling lately? Maybe it is resentment of someone. Maybe it is laziness. Maybe it is selfishness, wanting your own way. Maybe it is rebellion against authority.

Whatever temptation you are currently in battle with, God promises you help. God wants you to be victorious over temptation so that you are not led into sin. So God promises

His people the help they need. Let's look at this promise together in the book of Hebrews.

**Hebrews 2:18 (NIV)** Because he (Jesus) himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus faced every form of temptation. No, he was never tempted to smoke a joint. It was unknown at the time. The specifics have multiplied. But the basic forms of temptation have not changed. The missionary John, lumps many temptations into three forms in one of his letters.

**1 John 2:16 (NIV)** For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

A more literal translation is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh is the desire to feel. The lust of the eyes is the desire to possess. And the pride of life is the desire to be. John lumps most temptations into these three desires. I heard one pastor tell how he would reward his children if they could identify which one of these three a television commercial was an example of. He would pay them a nickel. He says they quickly learned to recognize temptation when they heard it.

Everyone faces all three of these forms of temptations. Likely you faced some temptation of each of these this week.

Jesus faced all these desires. Because Jesus was tempted just like we are tempted, He knows a lot about temptation. He can help us find victory over temptation just as He did. While Hebrews 2.18 does not specifically promise us help, it is implied in that statement, and spelled out more clearly in chapter four.

**Hebrews 4:14 (NIV)** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

A priest is a mediator between God and people. A priest is a go-between. He serves God's interests towards mankind and mankind's interests toward God. A priest represents them both.

The high priest was specially appointed by God. No one is elected to this task. No one can claim this position for himself. There are stories in the Bible where a few tried to take this on without being designated by God. (Numbers 12:1-15; Numbers 16:1-50; 1 Samuel 13:1-15) It did not go well for them. They were disciplined by God for this sin. No human can appoint someone to be high priest to represent God. God must appoint someone to represent His interests to mankind.

Our high priest is the best of them all high priests. Because Jesus is fully God and fully man, He is the perfect choice. That is why God chose Him to be our high priest. There are other reasons why He is the best high priest. These appear further on in the book of Hebrews. Here he only mentions that our High Priest has served us in heaven instead of on earth. Serving our interests in heaven is better than serving on earth.

He draws then the conclusion that because of our High Priest, let us cement our faith in His service on our behalf. Put your faith strongly in Jesus and don't let go.

**Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

Though our High Priest is fully God, He is also fully man. He lived a human life on earth. He battled temptation every day. Though He is fully God He can sympathize with us in our battle against temptation. He has battled every form of temptation we do, but was victorious every time. He knows something about temptation and how strong its pull is.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)** Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Here is the promise of His help. Because of who Jesus is, and what Jesus did, and what Jesus experienced in temptation, let us, then, pray, expecting help, and we will receive it. God wants us to succeed against temptation. God wants to give us the help we need. That help is promised here and elsewhere in the Bible.

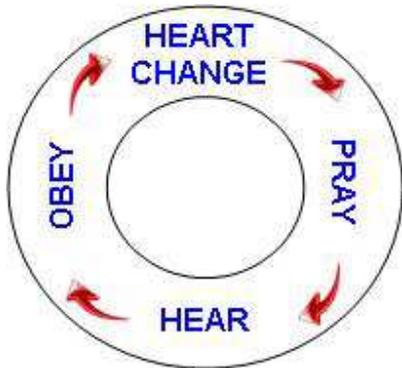
### **Jesus helps us through the Holy Spirit.**

The help Jesus gives is in the form of the Holy Spirit. When you become a Christian, and follow Jesus with your life, He sends the Holy Spirit to take residence in you. The Holy Spirit is the source of our help against temptation. The Holy Spirit is always present, always awake, always aware of what is taking place in your situation. The Holy Spirit sees temptation coming before you do. The Holy Spirit is ready to give you the help you need to succeed against temptation. Look at how Paul, the missionary, describes it.

**Galatians 5:16 (NLT)** So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

God wants you to succeed against every temptation. That is why He gave us His Spirit. When you are tempted, the Holy Spirit will warn you not to sin. The Spirit may remind you of Jesus on the cross, putting that picture in your mind. The Spirit may remind you of the consequences of this sin. It will feel good for a short while and then there will be guilty feelings. Someone may be hurt by this sin. God will be displeased by this sin. The Holy Spirit will warn you not to sin.

Look at the diagram.



It starts with your heart.  
It starts with your heart. **Pray your heart to God.**

Decide what it is you want. Do you want to sin or do you want to obey God? If your heart is right towards God... if you truly want to be holy... if you truly want to be pure... if you truly want to live out God's will... if you really want to please God with your life, then pray that to God. Commit yourself to Him each day in prayer. Ask for help against temptation.

You have to prepare yourself for battle ahead of time. You can't sharpen your sword in the middle of battle. You can't polish your armor in the middle of temptation. You can't check your equipment while the bullets are flying. You prepare yourself for battle before the battle begins. Start your day by praying for victory over temptation. Pray your heart to the Lord.

**If you are prepared for battle, you will hear the Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit speaks quietly. The Holy Spirit doesn't yell. The Holy Spirit won't yell at you, "Drop that donut," or "Don't go to that website," or "Don't adopt that resentful attitude towards her," or "Stop choosing to be grumpy." The Holy Spirit doesn't speak aloud or loudly. The Holy Spirit speaks softly, to your mind.

Nor does the Holy Spirit get physical. Have you seen the commercial for the V8 Juice drink? A man is doing sit-ups and his trainer is asking him about his training. The trainer asks if he is still running in the morning. He says yes. The trainer asks if he is getting his vegetables every day. He answers, "When I can." And the trainer smacks him in the forehead, as if to say, "Duh, getting your vegees is easy with V8."

The Holy Spirit doesn't get physical. The Holy Spirit won't smack you in the head, punch you on the arm, or pinch you on the backside. What the Spirit does... is whisper. The Spirit whispers, "Stop, Don't, This is wrong." I know that doesn't seem like much when you are faced with some powerful enticement to sin. But you will find, as you grow to be more like Jesus, you will find that His quiet whisper is enough.

If you were drowning and someone threw you a line of string instead of rope, you would still grab it. In fact, if they threw you a thread, sewing thread, you'd grab at it. You would do so because you want to live instead of drown. The Spirit's whisper may seem as thin as thread, but it is more powerful than any rope. It is stronger than graphene. If you

haven't heard of graphene, it may be the next big thing for inventions in the new century. Graphene is 100 times stronger than steel. A thread of graphene would certainly be powerful enough to save you from drowning, if you grabbed on.

The whisper of the Holy Spirit is loud enough to give you victory over temptation, if... if you know the voice of the Spirit. Some of you are hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit and you don't even know it. You think it is conscience, or indignation, or a memory of your parents or something. It is God calling you to resist temptation. It is God giving you the help you need to live victoriously in Jesus. Learn the voice of the Holy Spirit in you.

**When you hear the warning, heed it.** Don't brush aside the warning. Don't treat it as nagging. Treat it as help. Don't treat it as an accusation. Treat it as a lifeline, a rescue. Treat it as the help of God in temptation. Then accept the help and heed the warning.

When the Spirit warns you against temptation, turn and walk away from sin. Obey the Holy Spirit. Heed the Holy Spirit. Accept the help. Obey the warning. Don't just resist temptation, run from it. Don't struggle with it, retreat from it. When you hear the warning, heed the warning.

**When you heed the warning and obey God, the Holy Spirit changes your heart.**

We need the Holy Spirit to change our hearts. We need the Spirit to make us like Jesus, on the inside. The Spirit does that through our prayers and obedience. It does not take place in a moment. But it will take place as we take God at His word and seek, in Jesus, the help we need against temptation.

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