

*Parenting Tools:*

## **Dealing With Temptation**



**HOME**  
**22.6**

## **Parenting Tools:**

*Helping Your Child Deal with Temptation*

Temptation has been around, well...since forever! Not too long after the creation of man did the great deceiver, Satan, attempt to distract mankind from the purpose that the Father had set before them (Genesis 3). No human has ever been able to hide from temptation. Even the Son of God—God Incarnate—who was fully God and fully man, experienced and overcame temptation (Matthew 4). It is through Jesus, that the Holy Creator God reveals that He is not a God who intends to keep His Creation at an arm's length, but the only God who desires to sympathize with His creation, as Jesus did through experiencing temptation. God alone has the power, the smarts, and the patience to overcome temptation, and He freely gives that to us through Jesus Christ. The great theologian and reformer Martin Luther once said, "You can't keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair."

Before we look into some practical ways to help your child overcome temptation, let's take a look at some of the realities of temptation. Andy Stanley preached a sermon series a few years ago on dealing with temptation. In that sermon series, Stanley continually returns to what he sees are the core realities of temptation:

1. There is always something more at stake than what we think
2. Temptation forces us to ask the question: Can God be trusted?

Things to remember about temptation...

- **Temptation itself is not a sin, but it quickly leads there.**

Jesus Christ is the sinless Savior of humanity. Though He was tempted, He never sinned. The purpose of temptation is to get us to

choose another plan or another option than the one God has set for us.

- **Temptation does not come from God.**

There are numerous places throughout God's Word where God does test mankind, but never does He tempt them. Testing affirms belief and faith in God and His plan. Temptation strives to question God and His plan. (James 1:13)

- **Temptation is rooted inside of fallen man.**

(James 1:14)

- **Temptation can be overcome.**

We often read the passage, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and our egos begin to swell. We start to feel a lot better about ourselves. We start to look at the temptation that we are surrounded by and look to this passage as a reminder that God will not allow us to experience anything that we cannot handle. This is an incorrect interpretation of this verse. Paul is saying that we will not be tempted beyond our ability, but that is not because we have the ability ourselves. It is through Jesus, who experienced and overcame temptation, that we now have the ability to overcome temptation. Without a relationship with Jesus, we do not have the ability to overcome temptation.

So, what can you as a parent do to help your child deal with temptation?

- 1. Help your child prepare for temptation.**

Begin helping your child prepare now. Do not wait until the temptations get so strong that your child feels almost helpless in overcoming them. Now is the time to help your child recognize and shore up his or her weaknesses. Our enemy, the Devil, is constantly

looking for the smallest little chink in the armor for him to get a foot or even a toe into.

- 2. Set boundaries and stick to them.**

After your child has come to grips with his or her weaknesses, set boundaries to help prepare him or her for the onslaught of temptation to come. Be sure to set realistic boundaries. Some parents often react to temptation in extreme ways rather than realistic ones. For example, if your child has an issue with sexual sin particularly through computers or technology, set boundaries that might include rigorous web filters, weekly text message reporting, and limited social media usage, etc. with the understanding that if these initial boundaries do not help, then more extreme boundaries may need to be set. Be fluid and firm.

- 3. Foster an atmosphere of transparency and openness .**

One of the greatest hurdles your child will have to pass is that of admitting that he or she is struggling with temptation. Be intentional about creating an atmosphere at home where your child can be transparent and open about struggles. Your child will diligently search out a safe place or safe person in which to confide. Strive to be that person and have your home or car be that safe place. Be slow to judge and quick to listen.

- 4. When your child falls into temptation, show grace AND mercy.**

Remember grace is receiving something that we do not deserve, while mercy is not receiving something that we do deserve. Be sure to teach and model these truths before, during, and after your child's slip into temptation. Remember that you yourself desire to know and experience grace and mercy as well. Allow your child to experience the consequences of his or her decision. Too often, we jump into rescue mode; however, when we do this, we are rescuing our children from consequences of temptation rather than the temptation itself. It is sometimes just as merciful to allow your child

to experience some of the consequences of his or her actions, while waiting on deck to extend grace in abundance.

#### **5. Pray God's Word over your child.**

The Word of God is not just a storybook of God's amazing works or a map for life. The Bible is living and active, powerful enough to handle anything that the world throws at it; able to withstand any questions that are asked of it. A number of years ago, Beth Moore wrote a book called Praying God's Word. This book was revolutionary, yet old school at the same time. The teachings of this book are new to us today but were standard in the Jewish and early church cultures, who viewed the Word of God not just as something to read, memorize, and apply, but as a source of prayers as well.

Have you prayed God's Word over your child?

(1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:8-9 & 1 Peter 5:8-11)