



+ **YOU**

Sermon Series: How to Avoid Life's Pitfalls
To be used with: The Pitfall of Temptation
Sermon Title Possibilities: How Do I Avoid Temptation?
Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*The Pitfall of Temptation*,” this sermon will expound upon specific actions each of us can take daily to help us avoid falling into temptation.

Introduction: Outdoor malls in the summer can be dangerous to the personal budget. You are walking around in the heat and humidity. You walk past a shop that has some things you like in the window, so you slow to for a glance. Then you feel the cool air inside and you know you are hooked. Next thing you know, you have spent an hour in there and have purchased five items. Sometimes temptations can feel the same way. You notice something and slow down for a look. Next thing you know, the glance has turned into a long gaze and it is costing you more than you expected. The key is to avoid the temptation, whatever it might be. Peter provided the early church some habits and characteristics to embrace that would help them avoid the pit fall of temptation. They were useful then and are useful now.

1. I will live in humility (v. 6)

To be humble means to consider others more important than self. Humility is not about thinking less of yourself, but rather thinking about yourself less often. This is a characteristic that many strive after, and few achieve. When it is achieved others take note and the humble person is a leader that others desire to follow.

Peter told the church that we are to humble ourselves under the hand of God. He was not offering a suggestion but rather providing a command. When we live this out, we are telling God that He is more important than us and we are placing ourselves under His authority. This helps us to avoid temptation because we are showing Him that we are trusting His ways and not our own.

This verse also comes with a promise. If we are found faithful in humbling ourselves under God’s mighty hand of protection, He will be faithful to exalt us at the proper time. This does not mean that He will suddenly start making it all about us. Instead, God knows that we will give testimony to His goodness and grace because we are living in humility under His protective hand. We are able to cast all of our concerns on Him, knowing with certainty that He cares for us (v. 7).

2. I will stay alert (v. 8)

The word alert offers a military analogy. Envision a soldier in a fox hole late at night on guard. This soldier will always have another soldier with him because no one ever goes to battle alone. Since it is late, one soldier is resting and the other is on guard. His senses are

sharp, and he refuses to let anything, or anyone hurt him or his fellow soldier. This is the word picture that Peter is drawing for his listeners. Peter commanded the church to stay alert because we have a real enemy who is prowling around and seeking to devour us. To fulfill the command and avoid temptation, we cannot be passive. Instead, we are to be always on guard. The cost of not heeding this command is tremendously high. The word devour means to consume to the point of destruction. The goal of the enemy is to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). We must stay alert so that we do not surrender ourselves to his destructive ways.

3. I will resist the enemy (v. 9)

The next command that Peter gives the church is a call to resist the enemy. To resist, in the original language, means to take a stand and to be immovable. We are called to stand firm in our faith. We are not to stand in our personal preferences or even in the extra biblical traditions that have been handed down from one generation to the next. No, we are to stand firm in our faith in Christ alone.

A good example of one who stood firm in his faith is Joseph from the Old Testament. When Potiphar's wife asked him to spend some one-on-one time with her, he refused. When she continued to pursue him, he ran the other direction. Yes, this is an example of standing firm in his faith. He knew that if he gave in to Potiphar's wife, he would have been more likely to compromise and not resist. So, he quickly removed himself from the situation and avoided the temptation all together.

4. I will trust in God's goodness (v. 10-11)

The context of this entire passage is that the church is being persecuted. Peter is seeking to encourage the church throughout the difficult setting. Let's be honest, temptation is not fun. We do not look forward to it and when we are in the middle of it, we simply want it to finish. Therefore, just like the early church, we need to trust in the goodness of God no matter the circumstances.

We can trust in God's goodness when we know and understand that He is the God of all grace. Grace is best defined as God's unconditional love. When we are experiencing trials and temptations, it is easier for us to question God's goodness. If, however, we know that He is gracious and this truth outweighs our current circumstances, then we are more apt to avoid temptation. If we know that He will restore, establish, strengthen, and support us after we have suffered a little, then it becomes easier to look beyond the immediate circumstance and see the goodness of God beyond the trial and temptation.

Conclusion: Is it easy to avoid temptation? No. Does God give us specific commands that we can embrace to help us avoid temptation? Yes. The key is knowing that these are commands and not suggestions. God provides us with commands as a means of protection. Seeking to be humble, stay alert, resist the enemy, and trust God beyond our circumstances will not result in us missing out of some so-called fun. Instead, it will protect us from harm in the present and additional ramifications in the future.

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