

## Matthew 4:8-11 How to Overcome Temptation “The Pride of Life”

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7.5.15

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 4. Today we will conclude our series on “How to Overcome Temptation.”



This will be our fourth and final message of the series. In this series we’ve looked at a lot of things and because of that we’re going to do quite a bit of review this morning, because we learn best through repetition.

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As we begin, I want you to take a look at this picture again...



The picture we have been using showing Jesus alone is an accurate depiction. Jesus was alone in the wilderness desert, and yet, we have this account because He chose to share with Matthew, Luke and Peter (which Mark wrote down in his Gospel) what He went through.

Now as I said a moment ago, I’m going to spend a good bit of time summarizing all that we have learned over the last month because I want us to cement in our brains what Jesus wants us to know about how to overcome temptation.

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For those of you have been with us, you know we started out by talking about “The Source and Causes” of temptation. We know Satan is the source and as he chooses to come against us, he employs different temptations for different individuals. He looks for our weaknesses.

Now remember this about temptation... Temptation is two-sided coin.

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### **Matthew 4:1**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Just as a quarter has a head's and a tails, temptation does as well. Remember the word “tempted” is the Greek word Peirazo, which can mean a “test” or a “temptation.” Remember...

God allows **tests** to our *faith* to grow us.

Satan uses **temptations** to our *lust* to defeat us.

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You might ask, “How can you tell if it’s a test or a temptation.” Well, that’s simple, you’ll know by the outcome. Remember our \$20 bill that dropped out of the lady’s purse at WalMart.



If you chase her down and give it back, then you passed the test and you used that experience to grow in your faith. If you put it in your pocket, then you succumbed to the temptation and Satan used the experience to bring you defeat.

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With Jesus and His three temptations, (from Satan’s point of view) He wanted to tempt Jesus to go against **the Father’s plan for His life**. But from **the Father’s** perspective, God was allowing this test for His Son to prove that Jesus was worthy to be the Savior of the world.

So Satan would seek to tempt Jesus in 3 ways and since there’s nothing new with Satan; he continues to tempt us in exactly the same three (3) ways.

**How Satan Tempts:**

- #1 The Lust of the Eyes
  - #2 The Lust of the Flesh
  - #3 The Pride of Life
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Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, thus tempting Him with the Lust of the EYES.

**Matthew 4:2-3**

**2** And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

You know Jesus had to be hungry. He’d been fasting for 40 days. There was nothing sinful about turning stones into bread, in fact, Jesus would eventually take five loaves of bread from a boy’s sack lunch and feed 5,000 men (not counting the women and children).

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But, you see, Satan wants to tempt us just like He did Jesus with the lust of the eyes, which is a temptation that pushes us to go ahead of God and outside of His will for our lives. But Satan would fail and Jesus refused to turn the stones to bread. Jesus would not distrust His Father’s Word.

**Matthew 4:4**

**4** But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

**Well, Satan decides to go to plan B.**

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To the Temple in Jerusalem they would go. Satan would take Jesus to the highest point of the Temple called the Pinnacle. See the middle of the picture on the screens.



That's the area that's called the pinnacle or the highest point of the Temple compound. It's 300 feet above the Kidron Valley floor. Satan would say: "JUMP!" IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, prove it...jump!!!

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**Matthew 4:5-6**

**5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple **6** and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

What was Satan doing? He was appealing to the Lust of the Flesh by twisting the Word of God. Remember, he was eisegeting Scripture for his own agenda. He was leaving out parts of the Bible to trick Jesus by appealing to Jesus' humanity via the Lust of the Flesh.

Do you want to know what Satan was doing by appealing to Jesus' flesh? I can summarize it in two words:

**Don't suffer!**

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You see Satan wants to appeal to our flesh by saying:

**“Hey, why should you suffer. Go ahead. You deserve it. You’ve waited long enough. Go for it! Jump!”**

Satan's plan B was to tempt Jesus to turn into a daredevil like my buddy...





Evel Knieval. Instead of jumping buses... Satan wanted Jesus to jump off the Temple and let angels rescue Him and by-pass the betrayal of the disciples, the mocking of the Pharisees, the scouring with the cat-of-nine tails, the sweating of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane and the agony of being separated from His Father while He died an excruciating death on the cross. SKIP IT JESUS! JUMP!!! IF YOU DO: They'll anoint you as the Messiah because of the miracle and you get your goal accomplished without the pain! Without the suffering!

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But once again, Jesus refused. He saw through the rationalization! Jesus refused to by-pass and short circuit God's plan. Why? Because Jesus was able to resist Satan's temptation to take the easy way out. Instead, He saw past the temptation...He saw through it...to the glory to come. Here's what He saw...



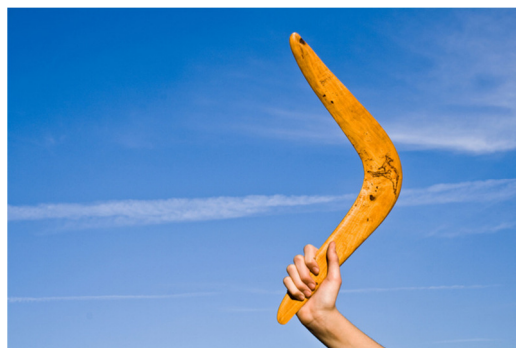
He saw the resurrection after the suffering. He saw the glory of being able to come to the disciples and say, "Fear not! I am alive!" He saw past the pain of their betrayal and He focused on the joy of being able to reconcile mankind back to His father! ...but He had to suffer to make that happen.

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Church family, with temptation comes suffering. When you and I are tempted. We will suffer. We will suffer in trying to decide if we will pass the test or succumb to the temptation. And I promise you...listen...you are going to suffer either way. Are you listening?

Watch this. If you give in to Satan's temptation, he convinces you to do it your way. He says, "Don't wait. You owe it to yourself." And if you give in, then you buy into those lies and you do it...you know what happens next. Satan as the Accuser boomerangs the whole deal.

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He tempts you to do it and then accuses you after you do it. Boomerang. He tempts you to give in for the temporary pleasure, and then he accuses you for doing it. Folks that brings great suffering, because he smashes your face in your defeat and failure and you SUFFER.

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Okay but...on the other hand, you choose not to give in. You choose to pass the test...but, in so doing, you will suffer on the front end. For instance, you will have to hold your tongue and offer forgiveness you will suffer or if you give back the \$20 that's not yours, you will suffer, or if you wait till you're married for intimacy, you'll suffer; or if you turn down "seconds" at the dinner table, you will suffer; or if you keep the credit in your wallet at the store, you'll suffer. Oh you'll suffer, it comes on the front end...but, now I want you to think of the outcome.

- You held your tongue and the relationship is salvaged and restored.
  - You give back the \$20 and the Lord blesses you with an expected raise at work, because you put His kingdom first.
  - You choose to keep the intimacy in check and thus, the joy in your new marriage is greater because fulfillment comes best God's way.
  - You pass on seconds and you step on the scales and the pounds come of.
  - You kept the credit in your wallet, and the statement comes and there's a zero balance.
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Suffering. You pick...front end...doing it God's way or back end...boomerang doing it Satan's way. Either way, you are going to suffer. It's your choice. Listen, there is always a way of escape.

### **1 Corinthians 10:13**

**13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Jesus saw past the suffering and endured the suffering and I want you to jump down to verse 11 and see what happens at the end of the temptations.

### **Matthew 4:11**

**11** Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Once we go through the suffering (on the front end) there is peace and joy and power on the back end. What do you think those angels had with them when they came? I'm convinced they had bread. Why do I say that with such confidence? The Greek word for ministering is: **diakoneō**. It's the word we use for Deacon and it literally means: "to serve, to wait on tables with food and drink."

Relief came. It came after the suffering.

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You can trust God's plan for your life. He'll take care of you. After all He's your Heavenly and He will always provide for you. You are His child. But understand (and this goes contrary to the prosperity Gospel), even though we are the children of God, as believers and followers of Christ, the way of escape is always marked with a sign that says: **suffering**.

Follower of Christ, can you see beyond your suffering? Can you look past and through your temptation? Can you see what God wants to do in your life if you will do it His way? Can you see Satan's diabolical plot...his evil plan to try to get you to short-circuit God's will for your life? That's

the lust of the flesh! Don't fall for it! Jesus didn't! He overcame the temptation!

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How did He overcome?

**It's so simple.** He didn't rely on Himself. Instead He trusted His Father and His Father's Word. Jesus responded to each and every temptation by quoting the Word of God.

Listen, the primary defense against temptation is the Word of God. Jesus used the Word of God and He is our example. Jesus said:

**Matthew 4:7**

**7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"**

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Jesus said over and over: "IT IS WRITTEN."

Why?

Because the Word of God is THE authority on this earth. And we must NEVER forget that. You see, we much use it. It is our sword, it is our weapon against the wiles and schemes of Satan. It is with the proper use of the Word of God by the help of the Holy Spirit of God within us that gives us the power to overcome.

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**Church family**, I want you to understand something that many people are having a hard time grasping today. The Bible is God's Word written down in black and white. You see when you are reading from Matthew this morning, you are not reading the words of Matthew. You are reading the words of God. Do you understand that? **Matthew simply wrote down** what God breathed into Matthew. The words you are reading this morning are the words of the Living God.

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Understand this... when people attack the Bible today, they are attacking God. They are attacking His Word...not man's word. God **theoneustos** (breathed) His very own words into man. So, when you see on TV or social media or encounter someone who attacks the Bible, they are actually attacking God and His Word.

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Listen, the Word of God is our sword and Satan wants us to keep it sheathed. He wants to shut us up and lock us up in fear and trembling. And He's doing that today in this country. He's got us scared to pray in public. Witness in public or even wear a Christian t-shirt in public.

But folks, that's how he wins. FEAR. You see, the Word of God is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path, and it dispels fear and darkness, and if we don't use it, then He wins. Listen, you and I can't be afraid to use our only offensive weapon in the armor of God...the Word of God. Don't be afraid to trust it and quote it and rely on it because it is 100% authoritative...because it is indeed the very Word of God!

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As many of you know I put a 2-minute, 40-second video on Facebook this past week describing in historical terms how our country has abdicated the use of the Word of God...



Did you see it?

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It's been viewed over 21,000 times. Why? I think people in America realize why we've fallen. We've given in to Satan, his ways, his schemes, his lies and people are tired of it. I'm praying the swells of revival will begin to ripple across this land. Why? Because we use the Word of God...our sword once again!

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Has the Word of God been a part of your life this past week? Have you spent a few minutes reading it and pondering it this week? You remember...

### **2 Timothy 2:15**

**15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**

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Has this past week been any different from the weeks before in how you have used the Word of God? Have you read it? Spent time in it?

Church family, don't expect there to be a change in this country if it doesn't happen in our home first. Has Scripture reading and Bible reading been a part of your family this week? If not, why not? What's the reason? What's the excuse? Any excuse we give can be directed back to these three excuses:

### **How Satan Tempts:**

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Please, please get into the Word of God. It's your sustenance and food and to the degree you are in the Word of God is to the degree that you will grow in Christ and overcome Satan's temptations.

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Well, let's look at the "Pride of Life." It's very straight forward...and it's Satan final attempt to get Jesus to divert to his plan instead of His Father's.

**Matthew 4:8-9**

**8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."**

What has Satan wanted all along? Worship. That's what he wanted in heaven and it cost him his position as a guardian angel around the throne of God. Satan wants your worship just like He wanted Jesus to worship him.

Do you realize that when you and I give in to temptation and sin, we are deferring worship from God and instead we offer worship to Satan? Think about that. Satan wants worship. When we give in to temptation and sin...we are doing it his way and he relishes in that.

It's what he's wanted all along. Worship. He got Eve to take her eyes off God and place them on herself. She looked at the forbidden fruit with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and with the pride of life, she wanted knowledge and the power that comes with it. Adam was even worse. He was so intimidated in the Garden of Eden that abdicated His role as leader of the home and turned it over to His wife. Turmoil, confusion and sin followed.

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Friends, you and I don't need to wonder why we fall to sin. After all, when we've been drooling at the world's entertainments, the world's patterns and systems of thinking, drooling at the things Satan dangles in front of our eyes. We shouldn't be surprised when we begin to accept sin in our lives, in our homes, in our country...all because...when we get our eyes off of Jesus and His Word and onto ourselves...our pleasures...our desires...our pride...we will fall. You can count on it!

Pride got Satan kicked out of heaven and it's what he always comes back to. Pride! Pride was his final ploy in his bag of tricks. This was his atomic bomb! WORSHIP ME JESUS AND I'LL GIVE YOU ALL OF THIS.

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Wait a minute! How could Satan say that? Does he have the kingdoms of the world? Well, Jesus didn't deny what he said. Jesus didn't challenge that statement. In fact, the Bible says:

**2 Corinthians 4:4**

**4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

Satan is the god of the world and he seeks to blind us with pride and that puts us in spiritual



darkness. Yes, Satan is running this world right now. He has been given limited authority and limited power on this earth for a limited period of time.

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The Bible says...

**1 John 5:19**

**19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

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However, take heart...the Bible says...

**Romans 16:20**

**20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

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One day it's going to all be over for Satan. But, until Jesus returns in power for His millennial reign, Satan is described as the god of this world. And so the question is: Will you worship him or Jesus?

Jesus calls Satan a thief in John 10:10.

**John 10:10**

**10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

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That verse embodies the choice: We either look to Satan or we look to Jesus?

You know, Jesus wouldn't worship Satan. In fact, we see in verse 10 that He's done with Satan at this point and He shows His magnificent power by once again quoting Scripture.

**Matthew 4:10**

**10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"**

Listen, only God is to be worshipped and Jesus and Satan can't occupy the same space at the same time in your brain and in your heart. How do we overcome temptation? We look to Jesus. It's that simple.

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**Hebrews 12:2**

**2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

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Anybody know these people?



You've got to be old like me to know them. That's the singing group Avalon. They were big about 20 years ago. They used to sing a song titled: "Everything to Me" and I want to share the words with you now.

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### ***Everything to Me (Avalon)***

**I grew up in Sunday school  
I memorized the golden rule  
And how Jesus came to set the sinner free  
I know the story inside out  
I can tell you all about  
The path that led him up on Calvary**

**But ask me why He loves me  
And I don't know what to say,  
But I'll never be the same because  
He changed my life when He became...**

**(Chorus)  
Everything to me!  
He's more than a story  
More than words on a page of history.  
He's the air that I breathe,  
The water I thirst for,  
And the ground beneath my feet  
He's everything, everything to me!**

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Can I tell you how you can overcome temptation? When Jesus becomes everything to you and you worship Him and not yourself. When it becomes all about His kingdom and not yours. When He's more than just an historical figure to you.

You see, for so many people, the only Jesus they know is a man they learned about in Sunday School. They know the story inside and out. But, there must come that place and time that He's more than story. When he's more than the words on a page of history.

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If you really want to overcome, then He's got to become everything to you. He's got to be the water you thirst for and the ground beneath your feet.

**Is He?** Do you know what I've discovered? Most people never truly come to Christ until they hurt. Until they get to the point in life that they need Him...real bad. They're broken and shattered and

have nowhere else to turn. All of the stuff of this earth...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life has left them empty. When a person comes to that place in their lives...then they're ready and they can cry out: "Lord I Need You!" Just like we sing.

**Lord, I come, I confess  
Bowing here I find my rest  
Without You I fall apart  
You're the One that guides my heart**

**Where sin runs deep Your grace is more  
Where grace is found is where You are  
And where You are, Lord, I am free  
Holiness is Christ in me**

**Teach my song to rise to You  
When temptation comes my way  
And when I cannot stand I'll fall on You  
Jesus, You're my hope and stay**

**Lord, I need You, oh, I need You  
Every hour I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You**

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Let's pray.