

BATTLE



EMPOWERED BY FAITH



Battle: Empowered by Faith
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WEEK 4
Overcoming Temptation
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever beat yourself up because you caved to temptation? It could have been because you were overspending, mindlessly scrolling, or focused on the “HOT NOW” neon sign being on.

Overcoming temptations is a topic we approach with a profound understanding that this is not easy, but possible because of the trust in the transformative power of Jesus. We believe in the possibility of victory over temptation through the Holy Spirit and the grace made available to us through Christ. If you don't believe that what you just read is true or not yet true for you, it is important to begin with prayer and honestly seeking to understand why you don't believe it's possible to overcome temptations. Pray that you will continue in this study, that you will remain curious and willing to learn from God's Word and this resource.

Would you be willing to reach out to one of the pastors and/or Bible teachers to guide you and help to answer any of your questions about temptations, faith, Jesus, and what it means to place your faith in Jesus to receive him as your Savior and to walk out your faith daily?

We are here for you!

We believe in and rely on Scripture as our anchor to understand the nature of temptation and the way to overcome it. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV), the Apostle Paul reassures us, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” We can cling to the truth that God is faithful and He not only understands our struggles but also provides us with the strength to resist and a way out from the temptation.

In Hebrews 4:15-16 (NIV), we are reminded of the empathetic nature of Jesus our Savior: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Jesus Christ, our High Priest, experienced human temptation, yet remained sinless. Through His example and through His grace, we find the strength to resist temptation and find mercy in our time of need.

Theologically we are solid in knowing that the Word of God is never changing. His Word reveals, instructs, and guides us to and in truth. But to overcome temptation we need practical steps and spiritual disciplines that enable us to overcome temptation in our daily lives. What does this look like in our day-to-day lives? Through prayer, study, understanding and applying the scriptures, accountability, and reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, we will discover how to walk in victory over the snares and lures of temptation that seek to ensnare us. Our aim is not only to gain knowledge about overcoming temptation but to experience transformation in our hearts and minds so that we can live differently, truly free. As we journey together, may we grow in our understanding of the victory that Jesus has secured for us and be empowered to live as conquerors over temptation, choosing Him, His will, and His way over our own.

DAY 1 | WEEK 4
**Understanding Temptation
and God's Faithfulness**
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

UNDERSTANDING TEMPTATION AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS DAY 1 | WEEK 4

The letter of 1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth, a bustling city known for its diverse population and moral challenges. In this verse, Paul addresses the issue of temptation within the context of the Corinthian church's struggles with idolatry, division, and immorality. Paul draws upon their shared experiences to encourage and strengthen them in their faith.

Temptation refers to the lure or enticement to sin. It presents itself in many ways, such as dishonesty, greed, pride, lust, or idolatry, and often arises from our innate desires and weaknesses. We are in a BATTLE.

When we are tempted, our flesh rages with its own wants and desires, and we continually fight not to feed our flesh. It is a misconception that becoming a Christian shields us from temptation. It is just not so. Followers of Jesus are inevitably confronted with trials and tests of faith. This reality stems from the fallen nature of humanity and the spiritual warfare described in the New Testament. However, the assurance of Scripture is that God's grace and strength are sufficient to help believers withstand and overcome temptation. We must choose, participate, and rely on the help when we are weak.

What We Believe

We understand that while temptation is inevitable in this fallen world, God provides a way to overcome it. God's faithfulness is unwavering, and He never allows us to be tempted beyond what we can overcome with His help. God, in His faithfulness, equips us, with wisdom and resources to navigate temptation. This includes the discernment to recognize temptation, the strength to resist it, and the means to escape its grip. As Christians we believe that God, through His Spirit and Word, guides us in making wise choices and fleeing from sin. He allows us to choose to listen and obey His guidance.

Paul reminded the Corinthians and therefore us, to stand firm because of the faithfulness of God, not our own strength or willpower, but on God and the Holy Spirit that is sealed in all of us who have placed our faith in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1: 13), who is ever-present in our times of trial. He promises not to allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear and provides a means of escape so that we can endure the temptation without succumbing to sin.

We believe in the power of God's grace to transform lives and enable believers to live victoriously over sin. As we continue in our sanctification, which is the ongoing process by which the Holy Spirit works in our lives to

conform us to the image of Christ. Through the grace of God, we can resist temptation and live holy lives pleasing to Him.

The promise of God providing in times of temptation instills hope and resilience in believers. Rather than succumbing to despair or defeat, we are encouraged to rely on God's strength to endure and persevere through trials. That when it is tough we will not throw up our hands and give up or give in but fight in the BATTLE.

Applying God's Word

Holding on to the grace and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, believers receive divine strength to withstand temptation. In our own strength we could not accomplish resisting the temptation, but with the same power that raised Jesus from the grave inside of us resisting, fleeing, and not succumbing to temptation is possible.

The phrase "a way out" suggests that God provides specific avenues for believers to navigate away from temptation. Spiritual practices like praying, reading, studying, and knowing the Scripture, being in Godly relationships that foster accountability and speaking the truth in love to one another along with practical steps to removes us from compromising situations.

To begin we must be vigilant in recognizing the various forms of temptation that come our way, EVERY DAY, moment by moment some days. Whether it be through worldly influences, desires of the

flesh, or spiritual attacks, we must acknowledge that temptation exists. And know what our temptations are. The enemy is not creative, typically he tempts us with the same things over and over and over. Know your weakness and fortify yourself with prayer and God's Word ready and quick on your tongue!

Instead of relying on our own willpower, choose to depend on the strength and grace that God provides. But be wise and smart in dealing with temptation with these five things to know and remember:

- 1) Know what tempts you and what you seemingly succumb to repeatedly.
- 2) Choose to avoid or remove yourself from places or people that you are weak to resist temptation.
- 3) Pray before entering a situation that you cannot avoid where you know you will be tempted to sin, or you know you are weak in the situation. But don't be lazy here. We can avoid most tempting situations but we either choose not to or don't admit that we are tempted and cycle through those settings continually.
- 4) Have scriptures memorized or written down, handy and ready and use when temptation presents itself.
- 5) Call on the Holy Spirit to guide you away and through the temptation with HIS strength.

God always provides a way out when we are tempted, we participate with Him and choose to seek His will and way. We must practice, just like training we go through to get better at a sport or skill, we practice recognizing these exits and choose them rather than succumbing to temptation.

Questions for further reflection:

1. What tempts you regularly?
2. What practical steps can you take to identify and utilize the “way out” provided by God in times of temptation?
3. Have you considered sharing your temptation struggles with a trusted friend, mentor, or pastor? How might accountability enhance your journey of overcoming temptation?

DAY 2 | WEEK 4

Submit to God

By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you.”

(James 4:7)

SUBMIT TO GOD DAY 2 | WEEK 4

James 4:7 states, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” This verse is found in the practical book of James in the New Testament. Written by James, the half-brother of Jesus, to Jewish Christian believers dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. James addresses various issues facing the early Christian community, including conflicts, worldly wisdom, and the dangers of unchecked desires. In other words, the first audience that these words were written to were in a battle to overcome temptations.

In James 4:7, James emphasizes the importance of submission to God and resistance to the devil. The verse presents a clear dichotomy between aligning oneself with God’s will and resisting the temptations and schemes of the devil. By submitting to God, believers acknowledge His authority and sovereignty over their lives. This submission involves surrendering our own desires, ambitions, and plans to God’s purposes. In contrast, resisting the devil involves actively opposing his influence and temptations.

What We Believe

Prevenient Grace: Wesleyan theology teaches that God’s prevenient grace goes before us, drawing us to Himself

and enabling us to respond to Him. Through prevenient grace, believers receive the ability to recognize and resist temptation, even before they fully commit their lives to Christ.

Justifying Grace: Justification, or being declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, provides believers with the assurance of forgiveness and acceptance before God. This assurance strengthens believers’ resolve to resist temptation and live holy lives.

Sanctifying Grace: Sanctification is the ongoing process of being conformed to the image of Christ. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, believers are empowered to overcome sin and grow in holiness. By relying on the Holy Spirit, believers can experience victory over temptation and live lives that reflect the character of Christ.

Through submission to God and resistance to the Devil, believers can experience freedom from the bondage of sin and live lives that honor and glorify God. We rely on the grace of God, the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation and grow in holiness.

James 4:7 not only emphasizes the necessity of submission to God and resistance to the Devil but also reveals the promise of victory. When believers submit to God and resist the devil, the devil will flee from them. This promise highlights the authority and power that believers have in Christ. It is not by our own strength or efforts that we overcome temptation, but by relying on the grace and empowerment of God.

Applying God's Word

The practical application of James 4:7 in everyday life is seemingly straightforward, but no doubt difficult. We are called to submit entirely to God's authority and will. This entails yielding control of our own lives to God and seeking His guidance and direction in all things. Practically, submission to God involves daily surrender through prayer and obedience to His commands in His Word. It also means aligning our desires and ambitions with God's purposes and priorities.

Alongside submission to God comes the imperative to resist the Devil. This resistance involves recognizing and rejecting the lies, temptations, and attacks of the enemy. Believers can resist the devil by staying vigilant, being rooted in God's Word, and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation. It also means removing oneself from situations or influences that may lead to temptation and sin. Please look back at "Applying God's Word" from Day 1 and continue to put those steps into practice.

Questions for further reflection:

1. How can you practically submit to God in your daily life, surrendering your desires and ambitions to His will?

2. What are some specific ways you can actively resist the devil and his temptations in your life?

3. In what areas of your life do you struggle most to submit to God and resist temptation, and how can you seek God's grace and strength to overcome?

DAY 3 | WEEK 4
Resisting Conformity
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
(Romans 12:2)

RESISTING CONFORMITY

DAY 3 | WEEK 4

Romans 12:2, provides us wisdom on overcoming the allure of worldly temptations. In this verse, Paul encourages believers not to conform to the patterns of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds.

Paul wrote this letter to the Roman Christians, addressing both Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. He aimed to instruct them in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and practice. The broader context of Romans 12 emphasizes living a life of sacrificial service, humility, and love as a response to God's mercy and grace.

Paul's exhortation to the Romans emphasizes the importance of resisting conformity to the values and practices of the world. The Greek word for "conform" is "sychēmatizō," which implies assuming an outward form or appearance that mimics the standards of the surrounding culture. Do you see in the Greek word the English word that is derived from the Greek one? Yes, synch or synchronization. 'Mimics the surrounding culture' or being in synch with culture is what Paul is warning us about. Instead, believers are transformed by the renewing of their minds, aligning their thoughts and attitudes with God's truth.

What We Believe

Therefore, we are not desiring to be counter cultural just to be counter cultural. We want to live God honoring lives, by our choices and lifestyles that might not or does not 'mimic the surrounding culture'. We stick out and look different. At times that is opposite of culture when we choose God's will and way and not stay in synch with culture around us. Some examples around us are restaurants that are closed on Sundays, praying no matter who you are with or where you are and saying, "no" to things that may be permissible to society but not God honoring.

The call to spiritual transformation and renewal is embraced by these beliefs:

We believe in the necessity of resisting worldly values and norms that contradict God's will. Instead of conforming to societal pressures, we are called to live according to the principles of God's kingdom, which often stand in opposition to the prevailing culture.

We believe in and are living testimonies of an inward transformation through the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. This process

involves the continual renewal of our minds, leading to a deeper understanding of God's will and a conformity to His character.

The message of Romans 12:2 remains relevant, profoundly relevant. We face temptations daily, ranging from materialism and selfish ambition to moral compromises and distractions from our faith. As Wesleyan Christians, we believe in relying on the grace of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to resist these temptations and live transformed lives.

To live out Romans 12:2, we must actively engage in renewing our minds through spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, community, spiritual conversations, studying and knowing the Scripture. This Scripture sits under biblical teaching from pastors who are preaching and teaching not what is popular but what is biblical, corporate, and private worship, and fellowship with other believers. By immersing ourselves in God's Word and choosing to be with Him daily, His truth shapes our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. His thoughts become our thoughts and His ways become our ways, not the other way around! We must cultivate habits that align with God's will and way, seeking His strength to resist temptation.

Please let us know if we can assist you on your faith journey to know your heavenly Father, the transformation through Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and through the power of the Holy Spirit so that you can overcome temptations and live in freedom from the sweet place of victory because of

Jesus. We are here for you, to answer any questions you have and to help you to connect with the Lord and to others.

Applying God's Word

Only with the Holy Spirit guiding us, can we take an honest look at our life and point to where we may be conforming to worldly patterns, whether in attitudes, behaviors, or priorities. Do this, ask God to reveal these areas and to empower you to break free from their influence.

Renewing our minds takes practice. We must first seek to have a renewed mind. Pray something like this, "Lord, I want to take every thought captive. Holy Spirit shine your truth in any area that I have departed from your truth, I desire your will and your way, not my own. Forgive me when I have chosen my will over yours. I choose you. Amen!"

It is not enough to say, "I won't think about this" or "I won't succumb to be tempted by that." No! think about how many times you tried not to think about something and found yourself ONLY thinking about it and thinking about it even MORE. The only way to stop thinking about something is to replace it. We must dismantle the lie and renew our mind with TRUTH.

Paul teaches in Philippians 4:8, that for us to think about "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." What a great place to begin. Choose and fill

our minds that way. Replace lies with truth. Replace temporal thoughts with eternal thoughts. Choose to renew your mind.

Guard yourself, by being discerning about the messages and values promoted by society, media, and popular culture. Becoming desensitized to lures and schemes of the enemy to worm his way in is what we must stand guard over our minds, homes, and families. A slow erosion, small even tiny yesses to watching something on Netflix or YouTube or TV can become an entry point into the erosion and begins the lure to temptation and to derail us from having God honoring thoughts, fortified to refute the enemy and his temptations. How do you boil a frog? You don't throw a frog into a pot of boiling water the frog will hop out, right? No, you place a frog in room temperature water and very slowly turn up the heat, until the frog is boiled. That is what we are to be on guard against. Take inventory, (be brutally honest as you do) of all that you allow your head and heart to watch and experience. Expose them to the light of Biblical truth and refuse to adopt attitudes or behaviors that contradict God's will.

As our minds are renewed, we begin to see and know what thoughts we have, what images we allow our eyes to see, what is true and what are in opposition to God's word, His character, and His will. Gaining discernment to test and approve what God's will is. We transform and know what to say 'No' to. As we seek His guidance and wisdom in

making decisions and navigating life's challenges, trusting that His will is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Questions for further reflection:

1. What are you allowing yourself to be exposed to? List below seemingly innocent entry points that can lead to temptation.
2. In what ways have you observed the influence of worldly thinking in your life? How can you guard against conforming to the patterns of this world?
3. Reflect on a time when you experienced a transformation in your thinking or perspective because of renewing your mind in God's Word. What insights did you gain?

DAY 4 | WEEK 4
Transforming Our Minds
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
(Romans 12:2)

TRANSFORMING OUR MINDS

DAY 4 | WEEK 4

Today, we will stay in Romans 12 and go deeper still into verse 2. “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

Paul urges believers to resist conformity to the world’s standards and instead undergo transformation through the renewal of their minds. The Greek word for “transformed” is “*metamorphoō*,” from which we derive the English word “*metamorphosis*.” It conveys the idea of a radical and inward change, akin to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

What We Believe

We believe in the possibility of radical transformation, a metamorphosis, through the power of God’s Spirit. As we submit our minds to the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, we are transformed from the inside out, becoming increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. Consider moving from a lowly worm, i.e. caterpillar, trapped in a cocoon that burst forth into a transformed free butterfly. Hallelujah!

We believe that the renewal of our minds enables us to discern and align with God’s will. By immersing ourselves in Scripture and prayer, we develop a deeper understanding of

His character and purposes, allowing us to become and live transformed.

Applying God’s Word

Practical application of Romans 12:2 involves these intentional steps towards transformation:

Invite the Holy Spirit to work in our heart and mind, surrendering control and allowing Him to bring about transformation.

Yield to His leading in prayer, asking for His guidance and empowerment.

Believe that He wants to and that He will. We do not want to miss this powerful advocate and counselor that Jesus promised would come to us and did at Pentecost. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 1:13 that once we believe the Gospel of our salvation, we are marked with a seal the promised Holy Spirit.

Speak daily in God’s Word and focus on being transformed moving from death to life. Reflect on passages and seek to internalize and apply their principles in our lives is essential to the renewing of our minds that leads to being transformed so that we can indeed have new thoughts and the old temptations no longer tempt us.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Name 2 temptations that you had previously in your life that no longer seems to tempt you.

2. Looking at your answers why do they no longer tempt you? Have you removed yourself from the temptation, person, or place? Has your mind been renewed about the temptations, and you have different thought about the temptation?

3. Think of a decision or situation you're currently facing. How might renewing your mind in God's Word lead to transforming you and your ability to discern and align with His will in that situation?

DAY 5 | WEEK 4
Finding Grace in Temptation
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

(Hebrews 4:15-16)

FINDING GRACE IN TEMPTATION

DAY 5 | WEEK 4

This verse teaches and reminds us of the empathy of Jesus Christ as our high priest and invites us to approach the throne of grace with confidence in times of need. The context of Hebrews centers on exhorting Jewish Christians to remain steadfast in their faith amidst persecution and to fully embrace the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Levitical system.

The author encourages believers to approach God's throne of grace boldly, confident in Jesus' intercession on their behalf. Instead of fearing rejection or condemnation, we are urged to come before God with honesty, humility, and faith, knowing that we will receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

Jesus made this possible for us who choose to believe Him and place our faith in Him. This is vital to overcoming temptations we face to approach the throne of grace through prayer.

Approaching God's throne is profoundly significant. When we stop to try and take that fact in, we are usually stunned and silent that our prayers are being heard and responded to by the uncreated God.

What We Believe

The power of God's grace and how transformative it is, is central to our Wesleyan doctrine. Understanding grace emphasizes the relational aspect of salvation. God's grace is not merely a theological concept but a personal invitation to enter a loving and intimate relationship with Him. Despite our unworthiness and shortcomings, God extends His grace freely to all who believe in Jesus Christ. This grace is not earned or deserved but is a gift that reflects the lavish generosity and compassion of our Father. Through Jesus Christ, all who place their faith in Him and receive Him as Savior have access to the Father.

The ability to approach God's throne of grace boldly and confidently through Jesus Christ is a profound expression of God's love, mercy, and grace toward humanity. Praying and knowing that God empowers us to overcome temptation in real time and for all time. It is through God's grace that we are saved, forgiven, and empowered to live lives that honor and glorify Him.

Applying God's Word

Hebrews 4:15-16 offers profound reassurance and practical guidance like when facing temptation, we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus understands our struggles intimately. He endured similar temptations during His earthly life, yet He overcame them by relying on the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just as the author of Hebrews encourages believers to approach God's throne of grace with boldness, we too can come before God in prayer, laying our temptations, weaknesses, and struggles at His feet. Rather than trying to overcome temptation in our own strength, we can seek God's help and guidance through prayer.

To fight temptation effectively, we can follow the example of Jesus by using the Word of God as our weapon. Memorizing verses that address specific temptations, and applying biblical principles to our lives, we gain insight, wisdom, and strength to resist temptation.

The Holy Spirit dwells within believers, empowering them to live holy and victorious lives. By yielding to the Spirit's guidance and relying on His strength, we can overcome temptation and live in obedience to God's will.

Overcoming temptation with the help of God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and the life of Jesus may look like resisting the urge to gossip or speak negatively about others by recalling and

reminding ourselves of verses from the scriptures that focuses on thinking highly of others (Philippians 2:3) and placing them first, that our mouths can be used to speak blessings or curses (James 3:10), and we can start a forest fire with our tongues (James 3:5).

Battling feelings of envy or jealousy by reminding ourselves of Jesus' contentment and gratitude for all He has done. Even stopping to count your blessings can be a tool to battle the temptation to complain, grumble and or be envious.

Overcoming the temptation to indulge in sinful habits or addictions by seeking accountability from fellow believers and relying on the Holy Spirit's power to break free from bondage.

Walk in the confidence that His strength is made perfect in your weakness, (2 Corinthians 12:9) enabling you to overcome every temptation that comes your way.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Reflect on Jesus' experience of temptation during His earthly ministry. List what scripture and how He used the truth of God's word to battle.

2. How does His empathy with our struggles offer comfort and encouragement to you?

3. Consider a specific area of temptation you're currently facing. How can you actively approach God's throne of grace and receive mercy and grace to help you overcome that temptation?

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OUR MISSION

To lead people to trade the pursuit of more for a life worth pursuing in Jesus Christ.



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