

3) Cry out to God for the way of escape. God promises a way out! *"Do not stop fighting. Look for the way of escape. When you find it, run as fast as you can to it. And thank God for the victory He provided for you in the temptation."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

All scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Personal Holiness in Times of Temptation
by Bruce Wilkinson

Every Man's Battle
by Steve Arterburn & Fred Stoeker

The Genius of Temptation
by Michelle McKinney Hammond

How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit
by Erwin Lutzer

DIGGING DEEPER

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601 Route 530 • Whiting, NJ 08759-3599
800.453.7942 • 732.350.1187
fax 732.849.1392

colony@americaskeswick.org
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TEMPTATION



Temptation

Spiritual "No-Man's Land"

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by **MICHAEL P. WOODS, M.Div.**
Pastor, Colony of Mercy Staff 1996-2008



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No-Man's Land

No-Man's Land" was the term used by soldiers to describe the ground between two opposing trenches during World War I. If a soldier entered no-man's land the chances were very slim that he would come out alive. Some did, but they fought with all their might to survive. Sometimes, when we are tempted, we may feel as though we are in a no-man's land of spiritual battle. Although, as Erwin Lutzer states, "temptation is not sin; it is a call to battle." Each sin starts with a temptation. This transformation resource will help in understanding the nature of temptation and how to escape this spiritual no-man's land. Here are a few verses for consideration.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."
— JAMES 1:13-16

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."
— 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

We were created to be dependent upon God to meet the various desires that we experience: to be loved, secure and significant. When we experience these desires, we can be drawn away to get these desires met by our own ways and means, or we can wait on God to meet our needs in His time and in His way. The apostle Paul relates this to the struggles of the

"Temptation is not a sin; it's a call to battle."
— Erwin Lutzer

flesh against the Spirit (Galatians 5: 16). These two opposing forces are continually at war with one another. When a person is stuck in the middle of these competing desires, he is in the realm of temptation.

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

What does a person do once he finds himself in no-man's land? How does he find the way of escape? For many, when they're in the middle of a temptation, they give in to it because they feel it is just too much to handle. They may believe they are too weak to resist. Some have rationalized giving in to temptation by thinking, "I've gone this far; I might as well go all the way." Those lies are direct attacks of the enemy. The devil will not "make" us sin, but he will influence our thinking about sin that leaves us believing a lie. At the moment we give in to temptation, we believe that it is reasonable and right for us to do. However, hindsight shows us the stupidity of our sin and the destruction it causes. When dealing with temptation there are a few fundamental truths. We need to remind ourselves of them:

The devil will not 'make' us sin, but he will influence our thinking about sin that leaves us believing a lie.

1) Temptations seek to draw us away from God.

Our desire to get our needs met in our own way draws us away from waiting on God to meet our needs.

2) Temptations are not unique, but common to all.

Although we may be tempted in different areas, we are all susceptible to temptation. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13). We all struggle with desires that will not take "no" for an answer. The operative word in almost all temptations is the word "NOW." There is a sense of urgency and immediacy that seeks to overwhelm the person who is tempted. The

way to counteract this sense of urgency is to wait on the Lord. Psalm 27:14 tells us to *"Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the LORD."*

3) Jesus was tempted and was victorious over the temptation. The writer of Hebrews emphasized the fact that Jesus sympathizes with us in our weaknesses because He was tempted in all things yet without sin. He was able to wait on His heavenly Father to strengthen and supply Him with all that He needed. We, too, must rest in the Father's strength and provision of our needs.

4) The ultimate goal of temptation is sin. Each time we are tempted we must realize that the goal of the temptation is sin. The ultimate goal of sin is death. We voluntarily place ourselves on a slippery slope of destruction.

ESCAPING NO-MAN'S LAND!

It is important to realize that whenever we sin, it is because we choose to give in to our temptations. It is an outright rebellion against God. We seek to get our needs met outside of the realm of God's blessing and provision and in the realm of self-sufficiency. God's faithfulness to us while we are in our spiritual no-man's land is our escape-hatch out of the danger of giving in to our temptations. The next time you are tempted — and you will be tempted — think through the following principles:

1) Recognize God's presence in the midst of the temptation. He is right there with you, and because of His faithfulness to you, He limits your temptation so it will not overtake you.

2) Realize that sin is most present when it seems most absent. 1 Corinthians 10:12 warns that if we think we are standing firm, we need to be careful that we don't fall. Sometimes when things are going well for us, we grow complacent and deceived by our own sinfulness.