

Week Beginning: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Worship Series: #2 in series **NO SHORTCUTS**

living sharing growing



## Theme Verse

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

## Remember This Week

At the heart of temptation is a shortcut that says, God doesn't have your best interests in mind. But God is good and his will always has your highest and best in mind. You can overcome temptation, not because you are strong, but because you are his, and he is faithful.



**How can a young person stay on the path of purity?**

**By living according to your word.**

**I seek you with all my heart;**

**do not let me stray from your commands.**

**I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.** Psalm 119:9-11

Lord Jesus, you resisted the temptation to choose your own path but submitted yourself to the will of your Father and trusted in his Word. Give us the same heart, to resist the promises of the world, to look to you and follow in your footsteps. Open our ears to your Word, and hide your Word deep in our hearts, that in times of temptations, we may have all we need to overcome and remain faithful to you. We ask this in your precious name, Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows for the past week.*
2. *Accountability time! How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What is the one item of food, if put in front of you, you just would not be able to say 'no' to eating?*
4. *What are you like when you are really hungry? How clearly can you think through things?*
5. *What's the biggest temptation that you have faced recently and how did you deal with it?*

We live in a time of instant gratification. Our fast-paced world and never-ending flow of instant responses via mobiles, messaging apps and Facebook have moulded us to want and expect instant gratification. We are willing to cut corners or opt for shortcuts to get an immediate solution.

It's the very thing that makes us so vulnerable to temptation. But all shortcuts come at a cost, tempting us to lay down who we are for what we want. Today we discover the promise and the power available to us where we are tempted to take a shortcut through temptation.



**Read Matthew 4:1-11**

First thoughts/reflections

6. *What is your first reaction/response to hearing this text? What is God saying to you?*
7. *What does the fact that Jesus was tempted tell you about temptation?*
8. *Do you think that Christians are more susceptible to temptation than non-Christians? If so why?*
9. *What do you think is the significance of the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness? After answering it, read [Deuteronomy 8:1-6](#) What insight does this passage give?*
10. *What is the difference between being tempted and being tested?*



Jesus was tempted right after hearing God's public affirmation and calling at his baptism. He has done nothing yet; no disciples have been called, no sermons given, no healings or miracles performed. Jesus is just at the starting line, having being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, when the devil offers him three shortcuts; immediate satisfaction, fresh bread in seconds, a miraculous rescue, the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Satan comes at the precise time when Jesus is most vulnerable and offers a shortcut to bypass any suffering and pain.



11. What are the vulnerable points or times in your life where you are most susceptible to temptation? Or to put it in another way, during what kinds of events or circumstances in life do you most often question God's presence, care, love, or competence in your life?
12. Someone once said, "Temptation always begins in the solitude of your mind". How have you found that true in your own experience?
13. Jesus was tempted with self-gratification, self-protection, and self-exaltation. How are each of these temptations an attack on God's character?
14. What do these three temptations look like in 2017 or this season of life for you?

Martin Luther reminds us: **"The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands"** That was the original first temptation in Genesis 3 - that God doesn't have your best in mind; that somehow you will miss out in life if you do life God's way. So the temptation is to take a shortcut; whether to meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way, to use God to accomplish your own agenda or to do the right thing in the wrong way. Read [James 1:12-15](#) to find out where these desires come from. Peter also says: **Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour** (1 Peter 5:8)

Temptation will come, that's a given. But remember - you only hear a lion roar after he has eaten his prey!! Satan is not haphazard in his attempts to deceive you. Everything he does is an orchestrated and calculated attempt to tempt, deceive, draw you away from God, fill your heart with half-truths and untruths and lure you into pursuing good things the wrong way, at the wrong time or with the wrong person. They are never random. The lies you hear, the conflicts you have with others, the cravings that consume you at your weakest point are all part of Satan's organised assault to neutralise the awesome power you have at your disposal as God's holy and dearly loved children. They take advantage of your natural insecurity which leads you to mistrust God or open you up to the possibility that God doesn't have your best interests at heart. That's when you are in danger of taking matters into your own hands. But there is a cost to every shortcut. If you read the fineprint, every shortcut in the Christian life involves turning your back on God for just a little bit. Jesus refused to succumb to the tricks of Satan. Instead he trusted in the goodness and faithfulness of God as revealed in His Word. He had full confidence in His relationship with His Father, and would not bend in questioning it.

15. There will certainly be times in your lives when you are facing struggle and are tempted to wonder if God cares about you. How can you combat those thoughts?
16. Sometimes in order to take the next step towards a goal or ambition you may be tempted to set aside what you believe in and value or take a shortcut to get there. What has been your experience with this temptation? How did you respond?



### Read [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

17. Jesus has been tempted in every way. How does this encourage you to withstand temptation?
18. Martin Luther said, "I cannot prevent birds from flying over my head. But I can stop them from building a nest in my hair." What temptations/insecurities have you allowed to settle into your thought life? What action can you take this week to start destroying the nests?
19. When Paul described the armour of God in his letter to the Ephesians, he called the Word of God the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). It is the only offensive weapon in the Christian arsenal so that "you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." What strategy or action can you put into place today to make sure you are hiding God's Word in your heart or knowing God's Word better so you can use it powerfully when Satan tempts you with a shortcut?

Don't forget the orange dots that you can find in the foyer at Church. Many people use these dots by placing them on areas of vulnerability (computer screens/tablets/phones, wallets/credit cards, pantry). Use them to remind you to pray so that you do not fall into temptation.



- \* Praise God for giving you all the resources you need at your disposal to fight the attacks of the enemy. Thank Jesus that he is the way out of temptation that the Father gives to us. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you store up God's Word within your heart and depend on that word so you might not give in to temptation and sin against him by taking shortcuts.
- \* Pray for those vulnerable or insecure places in each other's lives that you would never forget your secure identity in Jesus Christ, given in the waters of Baptism.
- \* Pray for those who are fasting or undertaking an action/course to help them grow in deeper trust of the Lord this Lent, that the Lord would protect them and grow them in faith, love and hope.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

**Name**, you are God's cherished and precious child. Amen.

