

“Fighting Temptation”

Made For More Sermon Series | Week Eight | Newbreak Church

February 27th, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to their spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we talk about the dangerous ways in which sin seeks to deter us from walking God’s path and what we can do to counteract it.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is one food you refuse to eat? Why?
- What is one temptation you repeatedly fall into? Why that one?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Joshua 6:27–7:5

Following where we left off in Joshua, God had just knocked down the walls of Jericho, letting the Israelites into a sure and seamless victory! Now, the Israelites were given specific instructions of what things they could take and what things they could *not* take. Unfortunately, a man named Achan did not heed the instructions of the Lord, taking the forbidden things and sending Israel into a spiral of disaster. Temptation got the best of Achan, and sin deterred him and the rest of Israel from continuing to walk in the momentum God had for them. This is where we pick up our discussion.

How do I battle temptation and experience God’s best for my life?

Point 1 – Beware of temptation’s tendency to overpromise and underdeliver.

What is temptation? It is anything that promises satisfaction at the expense of our relationships, and especially our relationship with God. Temptation says: You’re going to like this... This is going to make you feel better... This will make your life more

meaningful. While Joshua 7 does not take us into detail, this is no doubt what takes place underneath the surface.

But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord. A man named **Achan had stolen** some of these dedicated things... (Joshua 7:1, NLT)

We can use our imagination to try to picture what allured him to take the forbidden items. Perhaps he saw how valuable they were and thought of how the monetary value could provide for his kids in ways he hadn't been able to before. We could even give Achan the benefit of the doubt that *he meant well*. But isn't that often the case? We hardly ever sin because we are *trying* to hurt ourselves or others.

Sin offers immediate and fleeting pleasures. God offers eternal and lasting joys.
We discuss this more in this week's blog post: www.newbreak.church/lasting-joy/

Let's be honest, sin is only "tempting" because it makes us an offer—a promise of pleasure—however, the truth is, it will never last. It only leads to a kind of death.

James, the brother of Jesus shares the danger of temptation:

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death (James 1:14-15, NLT).

And because sin's fleeting pleasure leads to death and destruction, God takes it very seriously and tries to teach us to see it the same way. Because, while we see sin at face value, God sees the trajectory of sin.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- How have you seen temptation's tendency to "overpromise and underdeliver"?
- Using your imagination, why do you think Achan gave in to temptation and took the forbidden things in Jericho?
- What does it mean that "God sees the trajectory of sin?" How does this help you appreciate the way in which God treats sin seriously? What example might serve this point?

Point 2 – Make a battle plan against sin and stick to it.

After recognizing the danger of sin, we then make a plan to counteract its schemes. Before the battle, armies plan how they are going to defeat the enemy. Without a plan, defeat is almost certain. But all of the planning in the world is useless if you don't stick to the plan when it's needed. So, what plan can we put in place? Here are a few insights from Scripture.

Flee from sin. (1 Timothy 6:11) It's wise to run from something that is harmful to you. Running from sin is not cowardice, it's wisdom.

Find the way out. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Pray on the spot and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the way out. God promises He will provide a way out of sin. The question we need to answer for ourselves is whether we believe His promise, or not.

Fix my focus on the things of God. (Philippians 4:8-9) Sin can appear appealing in the moment. That is only because we have taken our eyes off the things that have true, lasting value. When we refocus on the good things of God, the false promises of sin fade.

Fill my life with God's grace and restoration. (Psalm 51:1, 7, 10, 12, 17) God loves us and wants a close relationship with us. Sin blocks that closeness. One of the most wonderful characteristics of our loving Father is His continuing forgiveness. When we are repentant and come to Him in humility, asking for His forgiveness, He always forgives. More than forgiving us, He restores us to a right relationship with Him. **Sin makes us think there is no way God will ever forgive us, we've messed up too many times. But God's faithful Word promises us that we can be forgiven and loved.**

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Can you think of any other times in the Bible that people faced temptation? Do those stories of success or failure help you face temptation?
- It's important to note that being tempted is not a sin, succumbing to temptation is sin. What strategies do you, personally, like to put in place when temptation of various kinds comes against you?

- What are some ways that you can “set your mind on things above?” Do you find that you're able to battle temptation when you fill your mind with the things of God? How do you do that? What does it look like?
- If you have kids, what are some ways you can help them truly believe they are loved, in spite of their sin?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?