

# Don't Take the Bait

## (Part 2)

by Bryan Gibson

Overcoming temptation and sin begins with the right attitude—we covered that in a previous article. It's time now to go over our escape plan—specific actions we need to take to overcome temptation.

Pray. “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13). Our Savior knows what we're going through, because “He was in all points tempted as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). He knows the kind of help we need, and is willing to provide it, but we've got to ask (Hebrews 2:16-18; 4:14-16). “Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through” (*Yield Not to Temptation*).

Flee temptation and sin, an oft repeated admonition in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). Sometimes we may we have to literally flee, as Joseph did when he ran from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7-12). But fleeing can also involve just staying away from a tempting situation, something we know ahead of time will be dangerous to our souls. “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3).

Guard the mind. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). In other words, what goes in will come out—in some form or another. So let's be careful about what we read, what we watch, what we listen to. Let's keep bad things out and put good things in. “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalms 119:11).

“Shun evil companions” (*Yield Not to Temptation*). “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Proverbs 12:26). We're asking for trouble when we hang around the wrong people, because eventually they will weaken our resistance to sin. Don't doubt it, because it's been proven time and time again.

Remove stumbling blocks, anything that might be leading us into sin. It might even be the computer we're using to read this article. If we're wandering to “adult” sites, we've either got to stop, or get rid of the computer. “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29).

Keep anger in check. “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26-27). When we're angry, it becomes so much harder to control our thoughts, our speech, and our actions. Keep a firm grip on our emotions, and we stand a much better chance of keeping the devil at bay.

Learn to desire good things instead of sinful things. “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14). It would be a big help, then, if we desired the right things. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6).