

Your Problems ... God's Answers
"God's Answer for My Temptations"
Matthew 6:13

- I. As we work our way through the Lord's Prayer, we find ourselves looking at God's Answers to Our Problems.
 - a. Today we're looking at Matthew 6:13 -- "And lead us not into temptation."
 - b. It's a familiar companion ...
 - i. All of us deal with temptation.
 1. It come to us at unique times, unique places and in unique ways.
 2. But none of us is immune to temptation.
 - ii. It's part of being human.
- II. Before we talk specifics, let's lay some important groundwork.
 - a. First, temptation is not a sin.
 - i. Jesus was tempted.
 1. Jesus was also without sin.
 2. Therefore, temptation is not a sin.
 - ii. We find the story of Jesus temptation in Matthew 4.
 1. Jesus is led into the wilderness and is tempted by the devil.
 2. In fact Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."
 - a. Tempted in every way just as you are.
 - b. Every temptation you have faced, Jesus faced and never sinned.
 - c. Being tempted happens to all of us.
 - d. But Jesus shows us that we can overcome it.
 - iii. Temptation is not a sin.
 1. Obsession is a sin.
 2. Obsession is a temptation that's been watered by our thoughts and actions so that it has grown.
 3. Obsession is a temptation that's taking control and interfering with your life.
 4. Lilac bush.
 - a. Taking over.
 - b. I didn't think it was taking over.
 - b. To resist temptation you need margin. You need room.
 - i. Our culture encourages us to go right up to the edge.
 1. If you don't "live on the edge, you don't fit in.
 2. The problem with living on the edge is that there is no margin for error.
 3. One temptation at an opportune moment means disaster because you don't have any wiggle room.
 - ii. You need margin. You need room to work.
 1. You need space.
 2. No margin means you're an easy target for temptation.
 - c. We are weak.
 - i. Face it, we're prone to weakness. We get hooked so many ways.
 - ii. We need help if we're to resist (and maybe overcome) temptation.
 1. We find help in God.
 2. God provides all we need to overcome temptation.

3. 1 Corinthians 10:13 – “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to us all. 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.”

III. Temptation attacks in these three ways (Matthew 4) –

a. Temptation attacks our flesh.

i. Temptation hits us where we are weak.

1. I’m not really drawn to gambling – it’s just not my thing.
2. Temptation doesn’t bother hitting me there.
3. Instead it hits me where I am weakest.

ii. Jesus is alone in the wilderness.

1. Verse 2 – “He was hungry.”
2. So how does temptation come – the tempter provides food.
3. You get hit in your weak spot.

iii. The temptations of our flesh are temptations of our hungers and appetites.

1. Some of those hungers are physical – food, clothing, stuff.
2. Some of those appetites are visual.
3. Some of those appetites are emotional.

b. Temptation attacks our hearts.

i. Temptation goes right after what we want most.

1. We get hit right in our dreams. Right in our aspirations.
2. Some appealing outcome, some bright future that we can aspire to.
 - a. If you only ... Then you’ll reach your goals.
 - b. If you only ... Then you can achieve what you’ve always wanted.

ii. Matthew 4:5-6 says, “Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down.”

1. Jesus is tempted to display his power in a way that would be dramatic and leave no doubt that he is God’s Son, God’s Messiah, God’s Chosen One.
2. But he knows it’s not the time – it’s a good goal, but it’s not God’s timing.
3. He knows it’s not about the power he displays or the miraculous deeds he can perform.
4. It’s about living a life in, among and through human beings so that they can see God.

iii. So often the temptations of our hearts offer us shortcuts.

1. The goal (the end) in mind is a good one, it may even be the same end that God has revealed to us.
2. But the road we take is a short cut.
 - a. God doesn’t only have a goal in mind.
 - b. He has a path laid out for the journey.
3. Any time we leave God’s path, even when we are pursuing God’s goal – we have lost our way.

c. Temptation attacks our pride.

i. We get hit up in our most delicate and fragile place – our own ego and pride.

1. We all have a picture of who we want to be – an image of our ideal selves.
2. It’s a pretty private picture that we guard closely.
3. And the tempter knows just where we hide it.

ii. Matthew 4:8 says, “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

- iii. Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world. They were offered to him on a silver platter.
 - 1. Jesus knew who he was (Messiah/Redeemer/Savior)
 - 2. On the face of it, this would fit the plan well.
 - 3. He came in order to be acknowledged as King of Kings – King of all.
 - a. All he had to do was to say yes and all the pain and agony of the cross would be unnecessary.
 - b. But Jesus stepped aside because he knew that it wasn't about him and him alone.
 - c. It was about God and God's plan for a sinful and broken world.
 - 4. It's hard for us – our pride is huge. And it's easily wounded.
 - a. And when our pride gets wounded our self worth gets pummeled.
 - b. So we look for a way to prop ourselves up and restore our sense of worth – our pride.
- IV. So how can we find God's answer (God's plan) for our temptations?
 - a. Here are three suggestions: first, you need accountability.
 - i. The purpose of a small group or a prayer partner is simply this: you are weak. You need help.
 - 1. These are people who love you.
 - 2. And because they love you want the best for you.
 - 3. And will challenge you to think about your life.
 - ii. This is the wisdom of not going into battle alone.
 - b. You need a strategy.
 - i. You need a plan for eliminating the temptations you experience and ...
 - ii. Dealing with the temptations that come.
 - iii. That strategy means you need to rearrange your life.
 - 1. There are some places you can't go.
 - 2. There are some friends you may need to distance yourself from.
 - 3. There are some things you need to guard your eyes against.
 - iv. You need to exercise the Biblical principle of *boogie*.
 - 1. You need to get out of there.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:18 – flee from immorality.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:14 – flee from idolatry.
 - c. 1 Timothy 6:11 – flee from all of this and pursue righteousness.
 - d. 2 Timothy 2:22 – flee evil desires.
 - 2. There no shame in running, because your not running from so much as you are running to.
 - a. You may be running from temptation.
 - b. But you are running to the sheltering arms of God.
 - c. You need grace.
 - i. First, you will need grace in order to be forgiven when you misstep.
 - ii. You will also need grace – to remember that you will mess up, everybody messes up.
 - 1. You will need grace not to beat yourself up too badly.
 - 2. You will need grace not to beat your brothers and sisters up too badly.
 - 3. This isn't a license to do what you please. It's grace to know that God loves you even when you fall short.
- V. I think I've saved the best for last.
 - a. You can win over temptation.
 - b. Jesus is our example.

- i. It may not be easy, but it can be done.
 - ii. And we have the strength and power to get it done.
- c. James 4:7 says, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. “
- d. If you will give yourself grace, and fill your life with some accountability and a strategy for resisting and overcoming temptation ...
 - i. It's the devil who will do the fleeing.