



# Facing Temptation

## **Day 1: A Forty-Day Journey**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 speaks of integrity without hypocrisy. Read the Matthew text, and consider that hypocrisy is the opposite of integrity. Spiritual integrity means we live our lives to please God and bless others...24/7...and we do it for GOD'S glory. The Greek word for integrity literally means "without wax." In ancient times, potters tried to hide flaws with wax mixed with clay, but when a cracked pot was held up to the light, one could see the flaw. Meditate on John 3:21, and tell Jesus you want him to be glorified in your life.

## **Day 2: A Lenten Challenge**

Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 and 23:27-28, and review the concepts presented in Day 1. Is the person others see when they look at you the true you? Do you walk your talk? Are you a person of spiritual integrity? Do you long to be one? We all have cracks and flaws, but what are the leanings of our hearts? Read and ponder Joel 2:12-13. Recalling the Matthew 6 text, challenge yourself this Lenten season to pray and, as the Spirit leads, do acts of kindness and, perhaps, even give sacrificial gifts without anyone knowing you are the one through whom these blessings come. Take delight in being used by God for God's glory. Ask God to mold you anew this Lent.

## **Day 3: Yet without Sin**

Cradling the truths pondered in Days 1 and 2 in your heart, ask the Spirit to teach you more about true spiritual integrity as you read about the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4:1-13 (*also see Matthew 4:1-11*). Now read Hebrews 4:15. Why is it important that Jesus faced temptation and yet did not fall prey to sin? Try to identify what in our lives (your life) might parallel the temptations Satan put before Jesus. How did Jesus respond to each of Satan's deadly lures? Since Jesus was fasting during the forty days in the wilderness, what else was he likely doing? Do you pray (perhaps even fast) and dwell in God's word when tempted? Tell Jesus you want to be strong in him.

## **Day 4: What Temptations?**

Read Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 4:1-13; and 1 John 2:12-17. What is your greatest treasure? What tempts you to abandon God's best for you and seek after more temporal delights? Do you trust the Spirit to expose temptations and empower you to choose God's way rather than the world's values? What are the temptations (*Matthew 4:3; 4:6; 4:8-9*)? Do we ever sate our physical appetites inappropriately, or do we hunger and thirst for righteousness? Do we seek power and glory and allow self or another to usurp the place of Christ on the throne of our lives? Do we misuse our spiritual position in Christ? Pray you will resist temptation.

**Day 5: Knowing the Enemy**

Jesus is victor, and in him the victory is ours (*Mark 14:62; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 5:4-5*), yet the enemy is real, and he is wily. Read *Luke 4:1-13; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 11:14; and 1 Peter 5:8-10*. We needn't be afraid, but we must be alert. As you reflect on our readings, ponder Luther's lyrics: "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing...For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe—his craft and pow'r are great...Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus it is He..." Thank Jesus he is victor!

**Day 6: The Weapons of the Spirit**

When we resist temptation, we grow deeper in our walk with Jesus and we grow into God's purposes for us. Prayerfully read *Psalm 91*, considering that it speaks of God protecting us spiritually. Now read *Ephesians 6:10-18*. Though the expressions are different, both texts speak of dwelling or abiding in God's presence. The Psalm speaks of finding safe shelter in God. Paul (in *Ephesians*) tells us that when we are clothed in Jesus, we can stand strong. Can we dwell in God's safe presence without the word and prayer? As you pray, draw near to God today.

**Day 7: Spiritual Integrity...Without Caving In**

Notice how the presence and power of the Holy Spirit frame Jesus' experience in the wilderness (*Luke 4:1,14*). Remember our discussion about integrity (without wax) as you read *Ephesians 5:8-20*; now look again at *Ephesians 6:10-18*. How do we embrace the power and fullness of the Spirit? We resist temptation, repent when we sin, abide in Jesus, and allow the Spirit to fill us. Pray as you read Palmer's lyrics: "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; each victory will help you some other to win...look ever to Jesus, he will carry you through."