



DAY 1 – BATTLING MY STUBBORN ATTITUDE

You've probably witnessed this scene, even if you've never parented a small child:

You stand before a toddler and give an authoritative command or maybe just a helpful suggestion. Chubby little hands firmly planted on hips, the toddler declares loud and defiant, "NO!"

Sad to say, I can relate to that toddler! There are days when I feel completely compliant to a healthy food plan and really attuned to God's word, willing to follow both throughout the day. But then there are days when I feel utterly defiant.

READ Jeremiah 7:23-24. *What promise does God make to you if you walk in his ways (verse 23)?*

What happens when you stubbornly follow the leading of your own thoughts (verse 24)?

It may help you to remember that following the leadership of God's word is a privilege, not something forced upon you. God knows that the power of his word will keep you from slipping backward. Thoughts that are contrary to the truth of God's word are unavoidable.

Grab a pad and pencil to keep handy today. Ask God to help you identify every thought that is contrary to his word. Throughout your day, jot down each contrary thought and also the emotion you felt when that thought crossed your mind (*happy, sad, hormonal, angry, defiant, compliant, carefree, tired, apathetic, etc.*).

DAY 2 – BATTLING MY THOUGHT LIFE

Review your thought list from yesterday. What actions followed the thoughts you listed? How were your feelings and/or emotions involved? Discuss the relationship between thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions with your group.

If we're honest with ourselves, our thought lives can reveal some pretty "base" thoughts. Yet, each thought *can* be filtered through God's word. You may *enjoy* a thought, even think about an *action*, but you don't *have* to act on what you think.

READ 2 Corinthians 10:5. *Describe the strategy God gives for getting control over your stubborn thought life.*

Ask God to help you put this plan into action. Write out the progression of your thought process as you apply this strategy, replacing your old ways with new ways of dealing with a stubborn thought life. Again today, write the thought and the accompanying feeling/emotion. This time, combat any negative thoughts with the truth of God's word. Then, **PRAY**, asking God to take captive every thought and bring it into submission to Christ. Then record any action, whether positive or negative. Evaluate with your group and gauge the success of the strategy, offering helpful suggestions you gleaned from this exercise.

DAY 3 – AVOIDING “TRIGGER” TEMPTATIONS

We’ve been warned to stay on the *perimeter* of the grocery store when shopping in order to avoid unhealthy food choices. And when someone suggests a *Sneaky Pete* hotdog or *Milo* burger for lunch, we know we’re in trouble! And then there’s the friend who asks you out---the one who lives life with NO limitations! There are certain places, situations, and occasions that you should avoid....and yes, people, who are “trigger” temptations.

List your “trigger” temptations:

READ Proverbs 4:14-15. *Sounds pretty harsh, doesn’t it? Rewrite these proverbs in your own words, using a practical application, perhaps using the “triggers” above with which you can identify.*

READ Proverbs 6:27-28. *Rewrite these proverbs in your own words, describing practical ways you can be (or have been) scorched or burned.*

Commit to God three “triggers” that you will avoid and agree to a certain period of time. Title your commitment, “DON’T GO THERE!” Write out your commitment and sign your name. Ask God to give you strength and ask family, friends, and your group to give you support and accountability to keep your commitment for this period of time.

DAY 4 - UNDERSTANDING TEMPTATION

Tempting thoughts will continue to pass through our minds on a regular basis. And we can’t *always* avoid “trigger” places and people. When we find ourselves dealing with “triggers” or letting our minds “window-shop,” we need many weapons in our arsenal to close that door before we walk into sin.

READ James 1:13-15 and answer these questions.

Does God tempt you?

What is the root cause of temptation?

Describe the progression of temptation based on these verses.

Temptation is a complex animal, but understanding it can help you conquer it. Temptation plays on your natural flesh, your desires, your lusts, your passions, your possessions, and your pride. Ask God to help you identify your specific temptations and then identify the object of those temptations. For instance: (sugar = *appetite of the flesh*) OR (shopping = *pride in my appearance*).

Remember: Evil desires are not the same as sin. Left unchecked, evil desires, combined with temptation, help you decide to sin. Pray now and ask God to help you identify this progression in your life today, and respond in a way that will be pleasing to him in your body, his temple.

DAY 5 – CONFESSING SIN

Wouldn't it be great if you could stand before your group this week and state,

"I have conquered this temptation! I'll not feed from that trough again! I know my trigger points and I "don't go there!""

Even though we are new creatures in Christ, our fleshly desires remain this side of heaven. We must remain vigilant, as even the most seasoned believer is vulnerable to his flesh.

READ 1 John 2:16. Identify the three ways temptation plays on your weak nature:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Ask God to help you identify any additional areas of weakness (*things that look good, taste good, or feel good*) that Satan can turn into sinful desires. A problem identified stands a better chance of being solved.

READ 1 John 1:9. Confess past sin in these areas and return to the fellowship of God with a clean slate. Claim the strength of God with a full understanding of your weak nature to handle temptations more effectively the next time.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

DAY 1

Jeremiah 7:23-24 (New International Version)

²³ but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. ²⁴ But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward.

DAY 2

2 Corinthians 10:5 (New International Version)

⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

DAY 3

Proverbs 4:14-15 (New International Version)

¹⁴ Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.

¹⁵ Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.

Proverbs 6:27-28 (New International Version)

²⁷ Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?

²⁸ Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

DAY 4

James 1:13-15 (New International Version)

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

DAY 5

1 John 2:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

1 John 1:9 (New International Version)

⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.