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Suffering Temptations with Jesus

“And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*” (Romans 8:17).

How does the Believer suffer with Jesus? Oftentimes we feel guilt because our lives don't “measure up” to the sorts of suffering that “real” saints endure. How can we compare “common” temptations with the great acts of sacrifice that “heroes” of faith give?

This thinking can make us struggle with guilt over temptation because we are taught it shows weakness and enduring it isn't “real” suffering. We believe it's our fault if we struggle with it, and it certainly can't be compared to being tortured for your faith as a Christian. Yet the writer of Hebrews puts temptation in the midst of some of the worst things endured by Believers, who *“were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated”* (Hebrews 11:37).

A huge part of our suffering in life comes through enduring temptations, whether they are to give up, feed bitterness and anger, surrender to peer pressure, become angry at God, compromise the conviction of the Holy Spirit, take things into our own hands, defend ourselves, accuse others, justify ourselves, walk out on our responsibilities, etc. Sometimes it would be easier to move mountains than resist the urge to act on our temptations—they can be as tortuous as any device made by man.

One of Jesus' great trials was suffering and enduring forty days *“being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry”* (Luke 4:2). At the end of these tempta-

tions, in Jesus' mental and physical exhaustion, satan hit Him with three great temptations—things that would have “ended” His mental and physical suffering by ending what God asked Him to endure. Enduring these temptations was no less difficult than anything else Jesus endured, for *“He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted”* (Hebrews 2:17-18). *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:15-16).

But how do we deal with temptation? Jesus spoke the Word of God to the devil, and He told us to *“keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation”* (Matthew 26:41). Watch over your intimate relationship with Christ by being in His Word and in prayer, speak and relate to Him, include Him in every aspect of your life, as someone who deeply loves you, for He does. Give Him the honor and respect He deserves by confessing the trouble of your heart, and He *“will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it”* (1 Cor. 10:13b), for *“God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able”* (v13a). We can so easily blame God for what we endure, but Jesus did not, and He endured it for you. Take encouragement in enduring temptation—as a sign that *“we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world”* (1 John 4:17b). Amen.

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