

Fireproof : *Breaking Free*

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1 Corinthians 10:11-13

Today we are going to talk about parasites. Perhaps you are wondering how that relates to your Christian walk. Well, hang in there with me and I'll show you.

My closest encounter with parasites happened when I was young girl. My dad was an avid hunter and fisherman. My brothers, sister, and I went with him often. When we would come home from these outings, mom would check us to see if we had picked up any ticks. Often we had and so dad would light a match and hold it to the back of the tick so that it would pull out of our skin. It always gave me the creeps – so you can imagine how excited I was when I knew I would be talking to you about parasites.

I went to a website to find out some info about these little pests – here is what I found out. The most common type of parasites that infect humans are: hookworms, tapeworms, roundworms, pinworms, and schistosoma.

I'll bet you don't remember reading about those little guys in the Bible

Fortunately, because of where we live and our level of hygiene, we don't have to worry about these guys very often. But parasites are very real and they diminish the quality of life for millions of people on our planet.

I want to suggest to you that there are relational parasites in this world as well. This type of parasite diminishes the quality of relationships in our world.

In the film we've been talking about for the last few weeks, *Fireproof*, Caleb Holt struggles with parasites in his own life.

Watch this clip and you'll see what I mean. (Play the Session Four clip from your *Fireproof Your Marriage DVD*. Clip length = 2:16. SHOW CLIP.)

WE NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR PARASITES.

A PARASITE IS ANYTHING THAT LATCHES ONTO YOU OR YOUR PARTNER AND SUCKS THE LIFE OUT OF YOUR MARRIAGE.

THEY'RE NORMALLY IN THE FORM OF ADDICTIONS LIKE GAMBLING, DRUGS, OR PORNOGRAPHY.

THEY PROMISE PLEASURE BUT GROW LIKE A DISEASE AND CONSUME MORE AND MORE OF YOUR THOUGHTS, TIME AND MONEY.

THEY STEAL AWAY YOUR LOYALTY AND YOUR HEART FROM THOSE YOU LOVE.

Gambling, drugs, pornography... parasites.

Because of the casinos popping up all over and TV showing the Texas Hold Em and other similar shows - **Gambling addictions are rising at an alarming rate.**

Alcoholism and drugs remain a challenge for our country.

And the authors of XXXChurch.com estimate that more than 90% of males are involved at some level with pornography.

I don't know that I agree with that percentage but I do know that pornography on the internet is a rising threat to many marriages.

Fireproof calls all of these "parasites."

TURN WITH ME TO 1 CORINTHIANS 10:11

1 Corinthians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to friends of his in the church in Corinth. Paul wants to help the Corinthians because he loves them. I want to do the same today with all of you because I love you. In chapter 10, Paul begins to talk to the Corinthians about lessons to be learned from the Old Testament. In v. 11 he says

(Read 1 Cor. 10:11-13).

(Repeat that last sentence with me, would you)

NO TEMPTATION HAS SEIZED YOU EXCEPT WHAT IS COMMON TO MAN. 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 STAND UP UNDER IT.

I want to make a bold statement for you this morning.

The greatest problem facing human beings today is temptation.

Let me say that again: The greatest problem facing human beings today isn't famine or wars or natural disasters. Those are problems and they require lots of attention. But our biggest problem isn't a circumstance; it's a state of the heart issue.

It's temptation.

If we weren't tempted, it would be very hard to get into trouble. If we didn't get into trouble, we wouldn't start wars or starve our neighbors, or take things that aren't ours, or hurt the people we love, or hurt ourselves the way we so often do. Wouldn't you agree?

The greatest challenge facing humanity is temptation.

It's a global challenge. It's also a personal one.

Because the greatest challenge you are facing, and the greatest challenge I am facing, is temptation to do and be and say things that we shouldn't, aren't and will damage people.

OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE IS TEMPTATION.

So God writes to us that no temptation has come upon us, or will come upon us, that others haven't faced before.

Let me share THREE FACTS ABOUT TEMPTATION with you:

1. EVERY TEMPTATION YOU FACE HAS BEEN FACED BY OTHERS.

We are not alone in our struggles.

2. YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TEMPTED BY SOMETHING YOU DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO RESIST.

It may seem like it at the time, but that's just a lie from Satan, trying to lower your resolve and your resistance.

3. GOD PROVIDES A WAY OUT OF EVERY TEMPTATION.

Your job is to look for that way out and take it the minute you find it.

Let's talk about this for a minute.

Because if we can get a handle on what holds us back, we'll be set free.

The Bible says there are really only three kinds of parasites—
three kinds of temptations in this world.

See the Bible does talk about parasites.

I John 2:16 says:

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.

THOSE THREE KINDS OF TEMPTATION:

- 1. THE CRAVINGS OF OUR BODIES***
- 2. THE LUST OF OUR EYES***
- 3. THE PRIDE OF OUR HEARTS***

The cravings of our bodies are what we call, "Materialism," or "Sensualism." **Materialism** is the temptation to consume things that don't belong to us or weren't meant for us - in excessive measure.

Sensualism is the desire to stimulate our senses beyond what God intended or in ways God never intended. Sexual lust falls into this category.

The lust of the eyes we call, "**Greed**."

Greed is the temptation to possess things that aren't ours or that we don't need.

The pride of our hearts is called, well, "**Pride**." Pride is the temptation to want to be well-thought of. It's the temptation to elevate ourselves in the eyes of others in ways that put others down, make us appear better than we are, or compete with God's rightful place and glory.

There is no temptation you have encountered that does not fit into one of these three categories.

Jesus experienced all three of these in His encounter with Satan, and He overcame them all without sinning. So it's possible to face temptation and resist it.

LUKE 4 describes the very beginning of Jesus' ministry.

It starts out by saying: JESUS, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, RETURNED FROM THE JORDAN AND WAS LED BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE DESERT, WHERE FOR FORTY DAYS HE WAS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL. HE ATE NOTHING DURING THOSE DAYS, AND AT THE END OF THEM HE WAS HUNGRY. – LUKE 4:1-2

I'll bet He was hungry. But notice that He was also full of the Holy Spirit.

THE DEVIL SAID TO HIM, “IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, TELL THIS STONE TO BECOME BREAD.” – Luke 4:3

This is Jesus’ first temptation. It’s the “craving of the sinful nature.” Satan tempts the material/sensual side of Jesus: “Jesus, make yourself some bread. It will taste so good and feel so good in your stomach. Bread is a good thing, and you’re fully capable of making some. Come on, do it now.”

JESUS ANSWERED, “IT IS WRITTEN, ‘MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.’” – LUKE 4:4 He’s quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, from the Old Testament.

THE DEVIL LED HIM UP TO A HIGH PLACE AND SHOWED HIM IN AN INSTANT ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD. AND HE SAID TO HIM: “I WILL GIVE YOU ALL AUTHORITY AND SPLENDOR, FOR IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME, AND I CAN GIVE IT TO ANYONE I WANT TO. SO IF YOU WORSHIP ME, IT WILL ALL BE YOURS.” – LUKE 4:4-7

Satan is offering Jesus possessions here.

It’s the temptation of the lust of the eyes: “Have this without working for it.” “Possess this, it can be yours. Take a short-cut for it.”

JESUS ANSWERED, “IT IS WRITTEN, ‘WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” Another quote from the Old Testament(Deut. 6:13).

Satan only has one type of temptation left, so he tries this one too.

THE DEVIL LED HIM TO JERUSALEM AND HAD HIM STAND ON THE HIGHEST POINT OF THE TEMPLE. ‘IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD,’ HE SAID, ‘THROW YOURSELF DOWN FROM HERE. FOR IT IS WRITTEN, “HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING HIM TO GUARD YOU CAREFULLY; THEY WILL LIFT YOU UP IN THEIR HANDS, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.”’

Satan says, “If you’re going to use Scripture, I’ll use Scripture.”

But, whenever Satan uses Scripture, he always twists it.

This third temptation is the pride of the heart.

If Jesus throws Himself off the high point of the Temple, everyone will see the angels come and rescue Him and they’ll all say, “Look at Him, He really is the Son of God!” and they’ll worship Him and Jesus will look good.

JESUS ANSWERED, “IT SAYS: ‘DO NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’” This is a third quote from Scripture, Deuteronomy 6:16.

At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Satan throws at Jesus the same temptations he throws at us every day: the cravings of the body, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the heart.

He says, “Consume this. Possess this. Show people how great you are.”

And Jesus resists.

Now I shared with you last week that men and women are different. We both experience the same three kinds of temptations - but the way those temptations come are a little different for each sex.

Since I am not a man - I spoke with some men and I read the material included for us in the Fireproof series and here are some of the results that they mentioned.

Two of the biggest temptations for men are usually pride and lust.

Pride of the heart and cravings of the body.

Not that they don't face greed- wanting to possess more – but Men's addictions tend to be about achievement, which gets them into workaholism and status symbols, and sometimes out-and-out lying about what they've done or achieved.

And on the sensual side, the addictions are about drugs, or alcohol or pornography. And as I said a growing one is indeed pornography.

Often men will slip into one or more of these without ever meaning to.

It just feels so good that you don't notice until you've built habits that are hard to break.

And those habits can damage your character and hurt those you love.

Workaholism short-circuits your time and energy for friendships and family relationships, alcoholism short-circuits your ability to love and care for people, and pornography desensitizes you to the wonders of the true and right feelings of intimacy God intended you to find with Him and with one special woman to whom you've pledged your faithfulness for life.

Women, we on the other hand also struggle with these same temptations but they show themselves a little differently sometimes.

In the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve sinned, God spoke with them and told them the consequences of what they'd done. To Eve he said, **“YOUR DESIRE WILL BE FOR YOUR HUSBAND, AND HE WILL RULE OVER YOU. - GENESIS 3:16**

We can allow men to “rule over” us (so to speak) by wanting so much to have a close, intimate relationship with a man that we make **bad decisions**.

It is still the cravings of the body temptation but - Women are less visual than men— we tend to be drawn more by emotions and relationships.

I have spoke to many women who have confessed that they are sharing their most intimate thoughts or feelings with a male co-worker or friend –totally innocent.

There was even a time in my life when I was talking with a male pastor friend of mine and telling him some things I was feeling and thinking.

Totally innocent.

But later when I got home, I was talking with Kevin, about nothing specific, and it hit me like a ton of bricks.

If I could share those thoughts with a friend, I should be able to share them with my husband – in fact that is who I should be sharing them with.

He is the one who is my friend and confidante.
 Jesus had said, “Let nothing separate a husband and wife.”

Sometimes we don’t realize all of the ways in which people can “separate” a married couple. Letting someone else take the emotional role that should belong to a husband, or to a wife, is one way of being “separated.”

I have also seen countless women sell themselves short on who they are and how they should be valued because they want to be in a relationship with a man so badly.

Good fathers love and protect their daughters, and want the very best for them. What they want for their daughters in a relationship is a man who will value, commit to, love and protect their daughters as much as they themselves would.

I know that not everyone of us has had a good father.

But Ladies, we have a heavenly Father, and He’s very loving and protective of us. And,

GOD HAS RULES FOR DATING HIS DAUGHTERS. You can read those rules...in here
(hold up a Bible.)

Women, especially our young women, struggle with what the media and society tell us we should look like. So we have problems with anorexia, bulimia, and over-eating – all trying to either achieve that perfect body or comfort us in the reality that we don’t have that perfect body.

If you are here today and struggle with any of the parasites I’ve mentioned,

Or with any parasites I haven’t mentioned

- I want to tell you that there is hope.

More than hope. What you are experiencing has been experienced by countless others.

Most importantly - I want to tell you that you have the power to resist and overcome the parasites in your life. God has provided a way out so that you can resist the parasites that want to cling to you. Paul tells us, “There’s always a way out of temptation.”

With every temptation we face, our minds go through a process.

The steps may happen quickly, in micro-seconds,

but they don’t happen instantaneously.

It is a process.

***THE KEY then, TO KEEPING PARASITES AWAY FROM US
 HAPPENS FIRST IN OUR MINDS AND THEN IN OUR ACTIONS.***

On your sermon notes there are 7 suggestions for breaking free from temptations, along with some scriptures to help you.

Look at those quickly with me.

1. PRAY THAT THE LORD WILL KEEP YOU FROM TEMPTATION.

Jesus taught us to pray this in the Lord’s Prayer: ***LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. – MATTHEW 5:13***

2. MAKE A COVENANT WITH YOURSELF.

JOB 31:1

If you're going to break free from whatever is slowing you down, you'll need to make a covenant, a pact, a deal ahead of time with your mind that you will not start the process of indulging in that which has previously tempted you.

3. LOOK FOR A WAY OUT.

1 Corinthians 10:13,

Usually, there is more than one way out of a temptation.

4. DIVERT YOUR THOUGHTS.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Force your mind to think about something else.

Think about solving a problem that you're currently having.

Recite Scripture or a poem or piece of literature that you've memorized.

Think about Jesus and all that He's done for you.

Divert your mind to righteous things.

5. REMOVE YOURSELF.

Paul puts it very simply to a young man facing temptation. He says, "**FLEE THE EVIL DESIRES OF YOUTH AND PURSUE RIGHTEOUS, FAITH, LOVE AND PEACE.**" – **2 TIMOTHY 2:22**

The two great things about fleeing are (1) it puts distance between you and sin and (2), if you're fleeing on foot, you're draining blood from your brain to your muscles, slowing your thinking process a bit.

6. EVALUATE WHEN YOU FALL DOWN.

From time to time we all fail. Paul says he did in Romans 7. John says in 1 John 1:10 if you say you don't sin, you're a liar. So evaluate and learn from your mistakes.

7. ASK FORGIVENESS, RESOLVE TO DO BETTER, AND START AGAIN.

1 JOHN 1:9 Lamentations 3:23

Here is your Love/Dare Challenge for the week:

LOVE/DARE CHALLENGE:

IS THERE A PARASITE FROM WHICH YOU NEED TO BREAK FREE?

Be honest with yourself.

ON YOUR MESSAGE NOTES, CIRCLE WHICHEVER STEPS YOU WANT TO BEGIN PRACTICING THIS WEEK

I encourage you to take this challenge seriously this week?

Let's make good covenants with our minds and determine to find ways out and think better thoughts while flat out fleeing if we have to.

Some of us may need some counseling about our parasites. That's okay.

We can recommend a great counselor to you.
And let's begin this process of fleeing by praying together the Lord's Prayer.
And when we get to the temptation phrase, pray it like you mean it.

***OUR FATHER
WHO ART IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE THY NAME.***

***THY KINGDOM COME.
THY WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.***

***GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD
AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS
AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS***

***AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.***

***FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM
AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER.
AMEN.***

Friends, God is with you and He 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 stand up under it.