

WILDERNESS SURVIVAL MANUAL

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8

Gulf Coast Bible Camp (Lucaledale, MS)

Tuesday Night Service by Ray Reynolds

Surviving Temptation in the Wilderness

This week we are studying about surviving the wilderness. We face temptation every day, and not everyone is prepared to overcome those temptations. At some point most people are faced with the desire to submit to sin. Some of those temptations are minor and easy to overcome. Other times the desire seems too great and we may get overwhelmed.

We need to remember that the temptation is not the sin, because even Jesus was tempted. We only sin when we give into the temptation! I want to share five things I think we can do to overcome temptations (five volunteers):

1. Identify Your Temptations (select one person to look in the mirror)

Everyone is a little different, so it is important to know what temptations are difficult for you to overcome. Some people may find gossip alluring, or maybe its gorging themselves on food. Others people might find it really hard not to cheat off someone else's paper in class. Or maybe you are tempted to lie when your parents ask if you've hit your brother or sister. Whatever it is you have to be honest with yourself. Look in the mirror. How good is the reflection?

When you know what tempts you the most you can be proactive about handling that temptation. You need to identify it quickly. Let me share a few Scriptures with you (**Proverbs 20:27, I Corinthians 4:16-18, James 1:22-25**). This is the first step.

2. Pray About Your Temptations (select one person to say on their knees in prayer/head down/eyes closed)

Most Christians know the temptations that are difficult to overcome. For instance, if you find gossip a great temptation then pray every night for the strength to overcome the gossip. Ask God to provide you with the strength to walk away from the gossip and to know what information is gossip and what is real information. If your temptation is cheating, pray for God to place you next to the dumbest kid in school. If your temptation is on the internet, pray that God will send you a text message or an IM at just the right moment to keep you off the internet. Pray that God will use your parents and siblings to distract you.

Prayer is probably the most powerful tool in the whole armor of God... that and the Bible... WE NEED TO PRAY FOR EACH OTHER!

Let me share a few Scriptures with you (**Matthew 6:13, 26:41, I Corinthians 10:13**). This is the second step. Pray about it.

3. Avoid Your Temptations (select one person to run in place)

When we know what temptations are being the most difficult, we can prepare ourselves for those situations. In some cases we can even avoid the temptation itself. For instance, if you find yourself in temptation more with certain friends, just start hanging out with different friends, then you can avoid being in situations where you might find yourself giving into that sin. If someone makes you angry and you want to fight, don't walk near them or stand near them. If someone shows you something inappropriate or sends you something... delete it immediately. Tell someone what has happened. Run away from it!

ILL - Toad baked some cookies. "These cookies smell very good," said Toad. He ate one. "And they taste even better," he said. Toad ran to Frog's house. "Frog, Frog," cried Toad, "taste these cookies that I have made."

Frog ate one of the cookies, "These are the best cookies I have ever eaten!" said Frog.

Frog and Toad ate many cookies, one after another. "You know, Toad," said Frog, with his mouth full, "I think we should stop eating. We will soon be sick."

"You are right," said Toad. "Let us eat one last cookie, and then we will stop." Frog and Toad ate one last cookie. There were many cookies left in the bowl.

"Frog," said Toad, "let us eat one very last cookie, and then we will stop." Frog and Toad ate one very last cookie.

"We must stop eating!" cried Toad as he ate another.

"Yes," said Frog, reaching for a cookie, "we need willpower."

"What is willpower?" asked Toad.

"Willpower is trying hard not to do something you really want to do," said Frog.

"You mean like trying hard not to eat all these cookies?" asked Toad.

"Right," said Frog.

Frog put the cookies in a box. "There," he said. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog.

Frog tied some string around the box. "There," he said. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can cut the string and open the box." said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog. Frog got a ladder. He put the box up on a high shelf.

"There," said Frog. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can climb the ladder and take the box down from the shelf and cut the string and open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog.

Frog climbed the ladder and took the box down from the shelf. He cut the string and opened the box. Frog took the box outside. He shouted in a loud voice. "Hey, birds, here are cookies!" Birds came from everywhere. They picked up all the cookies in their beaks and flew away.

"Now we have no more cookies to eat," said Toad sadly.

"Not even one."

"Yes," said Frog, "but we have lots and lots of willpower."

"You may keep it all, Frog," said Toad. "I am going home now to bake a cake.")

If you are prone to cheating, then you may want to position yourself during a test so that you cannot see the paper of the person next to you. Or even better... study! If stealing is a temptation, stop borrowing things. Be happy with what you have, look at good things. Let me share a few Scriptures (**I Chronicles 29:17, I Timothy 6:9, II Timothy 2:22**). YOU don't pet sin...1990 Bronx Zoo two little boys saw teddy bears/bears saw lunch!

4. Find A Spiritual Outlet (select one person to repeatedly plug in a cord)

We are surrounded by worldly people in a worldly environment. Use your Bible for inspiration. Seek out Bible verses to help.

The Bible is there to offer Christian teens advice and guidance, so why not use it? Scripture verses like **I Corinthians 10:13**, "*You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptation*" (CEV), can help inspire you in moments of temptation. Try to look up what the Bible says on your areas of temptation for inspiration and guidance. We have a lot of negative outlets. Choose a positive one!

In the Australian bush country grows a little plant called the "sundew." It has a slender stem and tiny, round leaves fringed with hairs that glisten with bright drops of liquid as delicate as fine dew. Woe to the insect, however, that dares to dance on it. Although its attractive clusters of red, white, and pink blossoms are harmless, the leaves are deadly. The shiny moisture on each leaf is sticky and will imprison any bug that touches it. As an insect struggles to free itself, the vibration causes the leaves to close tightly around it. This innocent-looking plant then feeds on its victim... like a Venus fly trap.

Seek out spiritual people! Do you have a friend or leader that you can trust to guide you in facing your temptations? Sometimes it helps to have someone else you can talk to about your issues or even brainstorm ways you can avoid temptation. You may even ask to meet regularly with your friend to hold you accountable.

Let me share a few Scriptures with you (**Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:8, James 4:8**)

5. Praise God When You Overcome (select one person to hold up an AMEN card)

While avoiding temptation makes life a lot easier, it can be discouraging when we do give into that sin. We all make mistakes. That is why God offers us forgiveness. While you should not sin knowing that you can be forgiven, you should know that God's grace is available. However, when we overcome we need to praise God for what He has done.

Think about all the ups and downs of High School, especially sports. All my accomplishments in HS are not as good as when I've studied with someone and they've decided to follow Jesus. Not as good as when I've watched a young person make a tough spiritual decision. Nothing is as good as knowing that a person has overcome an obstacle in their life.

Let me share a few Scriptures with you (**Psalms 150, Galatians 5:22-23, I John 4:4**).

CONCLUSION... Many physical battles are one and done. Here's the things about spiritual battles...You have to fight it more than once to win it! BUT YOU ARE NOT ALONE! God is with you! You can endure the wilderness!