Control & Blessing? There’s a Holy App for that!

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Last week, the chips were on the table, and the bet was that you couldn’t eat just one. This week, we’ll see that good things come to those who wait. The HJ Heinz company used the phrase good things come to those who wait to advertise its ketchup during the 1980s in America, but it’s one of those timeless proverbs that promotes the virtue of patience. In our culture, however, few people want to wait for anything, and some in the public eye are quite vocal about their longing to quickly oblige their insatiable desires:

• Instant gratification is not soon enough.                  Meryl Streep
• I need instant gratification.                           Barbara Streisand
• Instant gratification takes too long.                   Carrie Fisher
• Fame introduced me to a world of instant gratification and decadence I hadn't seen before. Jesse Metcalfe

It seems like people are in a hurry to get what they want or to get where they are going sooner rather than later. For example, just think of the last time you were stuck in traffic and muttered an unutterable. How many times have you changed checkout lines at Publix and watched your original queue dwindle quickly while the octogenarian in front of you empties her change purse to pay for her groceries? We know we are an impatient people, and we can laugh about it when it is brought to our attention. Yet, we cannot overcome it ourselves. It’s built into our sinful nature. Scripture is filled with the heartaches of many like Achan or Samson who failed to control their appetites for that which was out of bounds. However, Scripture is also filled with stories about people like Joseph and Daniel who controlled their appetites – their desires – and God blessed them. The Scripture, too, tells us that when we fail to control our lusts, as King David did, consequences do come. As Pastor Steve said:

Appetites scream now; but later always comes.

So what do we do to control our appetites? How do we cultivate the ability to avoid sin, thus avoiding the consequences of sin that always follows? David had a prophet of God – Nathan – speak God’s words to him. However, that was after the fact – after David had already committed adultery and murder. Thinking Nathan was pointing out someone else’s sin, David’s anger boils over, and he verbally doles out the consequences the man should face, but:

2 Samuel 12:1-9 NLT  7 Then Nathan said to David, “____ are that man! The Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. 8 I gave you your master’s house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much ______. 9 Why, then, have you _________ the ______ of the Lord and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and _________ his wife.

David despised the word of the Lord by breaking what two commandments? (See Exodus 20)
After Nathan calls out David’s sins, he lists some of the consequences:

2 Samuel 12:10-12 NLT  

10 From this time on, your family will live by the _______ because you have despised me by taking Uriah’s wife to be your own.  

11 “This is what the Lord says: _______ of what you have done, I will cause your own household to _______ against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very ______, and he will go to bed with them in _______ view.  

12 You did it ________, but I will make this happen to ____ openly in the sight of all Israel.”

Once Nathan called him into account, David confessed to Nathan and said:

2 Samuel 12:13a NLT “__ have _________ against the ______.”

Nathan replied immediately:

2 Samuel 12:13b NLT “Yes, but the _____ has ___________ you, and you won’t ____ for this sin.”

David had to be relieved, for he wouldn’t die, but Nathan lowers the boom just as quickly by enumerating more of the consequences of David’s wicked deeds:

2 Samuel 12:14 NLT “Nevertheless, because you have shown utter _________ for the Lord by doing this, your child will ____.”

Ouch! It wasn’t that David didn’t know right from wrong, for he did. He just let his out of bounds desires get the better of him, and calamitous consequences followed. It didn’t get the best of him, for that part, his eternal soul, belonged to God, for he had been chosen by God to be king over Israel and for someone from his line – Jesus – to sit on that throne forever.

David knew; he just made a decision to ignore what he knew. An external stimulus, a hot babe in a hot tub, stirred his internal imperialness. So, he spent time looking at God’s creation instead of keeping his eyes focused on the Creator, and that’s easy to do from rooftops, laptops, or while lying on beach tops at Siesta Key.

As Christians, we often forget or ignore what we’ve gleaned from God’s word. Acting naturally, we sin against the Lord. Yet we, too, like David, have been chosen by God to be His children. We are forgiven and will spend eternity with God. Knowing what we’ve been given should make us want to live a life that’s pleasing to God:

2 Peter 1:3-7 NLT  

3 By his divine _______, God has given us everything we ______ for living a _______ life. We have received all of this by coming to ______ him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous _______ and excellence.  

4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious ____________. These are the promises that ______ you to ______ his divine nature and _______ the world’s corruption caused by human _______.  

5 In view of all this, make every _______ to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your _______ with a generous provision of _______ excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge,  

6 and knowledge with ______-control, and self-control with patient ______________, and patient endurance with godliness,  

7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with ______ for everyone.
Peter says God has given us everything we need to live a godly life, but He expects us to use His resources to escape worldly lusts, making great effort to do so. And if we do, positive consequences for our behavior are in order:

*2 Peter 1:8* NLT  The ______ you ______ like this, the more ___________________ and ___________ you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How can you be useful with the knowledge you have of Jesus? _______________________

However, there are consequences for failure to develop this kind of behavior, too:

*2 Peter 1:9-11* NLT  9 But those who _____ to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, ___________ that they have been cleansed from their old _____ . 10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has _______ and _______. Do these things, and you will never ______ ___________. 11 Then God will give you a grand entrance into the __________ Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul put what Peter wrote in verse ten this way:

*Philippians 2:12-13* NOG  12 My dear friends, you have always _________, not only when I was with you but even more now that I’m absent. In the same way continue to _____ ___ your ______________ with fear and trembling. 13 It is ____ who produces in you the __________ and __________ that __________ him.

Paul was encouraging believers to let what God started on their inside show on the outside. And that’s something we need to be reminded about throughout our Christian lives:

*2 Peter 1:12-13* NLT  12  Therefore, I will always _________ you about these things—even though you already ______ them and are standing firm in the ________ you have been ____________. 13 And it is only _______ that I should keep on reminding you as long as I live.

Peter, an apostle and preacher of God’s word, would not let God’s people forget God’s word. And he did just that until the day he died. When the disciples walked with Jesus, our Lord constantly taught them, and He made them this promise:

*John 14:26* CEV  But the ______ ________ will come and _____ you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will _________ you everything and will __________ you of what I ______ while I was with you.

On my iPhone, there is an **app** called [Reminders]. To use it, I must type in something that I want to be reminded of at a later date. On the date I choose, I get an electronic reminder prompting me to action. It’s a helpful little doodad.

As Christians, we have a **Holy Apparition** – the Holy Ghost – that lives within us, within our operating system, so to speak. He was rebooted into the system when we were born again, and He will help us remember God’s word. First, however, we must learn God’s word, for you can’t remember to do what you’ve never heard, seen or learned, except for sin. We’ve read what Peter wrote about growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote this:

*2 Timothy 2:15* KJ21  ________ to show thyself approved unto ____, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the ______ of ________.
The Word of God was meant to be an integral part of every Christian’s life. As Christians, we should be hungry for the Word of God. We started this series with this:

*The most important app is the appetite for and application of God’s word.*

So, we will take a brief look at what Scripture itself says about God’s word, and then we will look at how Jesus used the word of God to deal with temptation from the devil.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV 16 ____ Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for ________, for reproof, for ____________, for ____________ in righteousness, 17 that the man of ____ may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good ____.

16 All scripture (graphe, a written thing) is given by inspiration of God, or God-breathed, And the apostle Peter reminds us in 2 Peter 1:20-21 that Scripture never had its origin in the will of man, but that holy men of God spoke as they were moved or carried along by the Holy Spirit.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for:

- **doctrine**, (teaching)
  Scripture teaches us what to believe. It lays a foundation of truth to govern our thoughts and actions.

- It is profitable for **reproof**, (which means to rebuke or confront)
  Scripture rebukes, opposes, and confronts everything opposed to it. It calls us back from error.

- It is profitable for **correction**, (which means to straighten up or lift up)
  Scripture can restore us to a proper spiritual position.

- It is profitable for **instruction in righteousness**:
  The word trains us in goodness, like we would train a child, by imparting right thinking, attitudes and words.

When tempted by Satan, Jesus used the word of God to answer him. He did not cave in, as Satan would have liked Him to do. He stood His ground and deflected the fiery arrows of temptation by repeating Scripture that He knew from the Old Testament. He did not try to rationalize using human effort. Jesus walked by faith, trusting God’s word to do what it was meant to do. Therefore, Jesus understands our plight:

Hebrews 4:15 NASB For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our _____________, but One who has been ____________ in ____ things as ___ are, yet without ____.

Jesus knows what we go through when we are tempted, because He was tempted, and:

Hebrews 2:18 NLV Because Jesus was tempted as we are and ____________ as we do, He understands us and He is able to ______ us when we are tempted.

So, let’s look at how Jesus handled the temptation presented by the devil:
Matthew 4:1-11 NIV  1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” 7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” 10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

The good doctor Luke adds this verse in his account:

Luke 4:13 NIV  When the devil had finished all this testing, he left him until an opportune time.

The opportune time would surely come for Jesus as He faced the cross, as He’d sweat great drops of blood in the garden. And there will be those timely moments in our own lives where temptation will spring upon us, for sin is always crouching at our door. Sin wants to rule over us, but we must learn to rule over it, for Paul wrote that we are actually dead to sin, as we saw last week.

Though we are dead to sin, we are not immune from temptation. At times, either visual stimuli or internal deceit tempts me to think on things that are not very wholesome. I’ve learned, over the years, to do what Jesus did and repeat Scripture from memory. Job made a covenant with his eyes, and that helps, but when my mind goes where all men’s minds go at times, I often repeat these personalized verses from the word of God:

Psalm 19:13-14 LV  13 Keep me, Your servant, from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless – innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

At that point, at least for that hour, the temptation is over. If I just keep ogling, I’ll remember Job’s covenant, look away, repeat the verses, and move on. Of course, an elbow to the ribs never hurts either. However, since the Spirit of Truth lives in every believer, and when we have meditated upon and hidden God’s word in our hearts, we can stand our ground when we are tempted:

Proverbs 2:6-10 TLB  6 For the Lord grants wisdom! His every treasure is a treasure of knowledge and understanding. 7-8 He grants sense to the godly—his shield. He is their shield, protecting them and guarding their pathway. 9 He shows how to distinguish truth from falsehood, how to find the right path every time. 10 For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with ___.
And as the Old Testament evangelist wrote, in Isaiah 12:2-3 TLB, Oh the _____ of drinking _______ from the fountain of salvation.

Spend time in God’s word daily. Find those verses that bring comfort when you are tempted to do wrong, when your hot buttons are pushed. Read, meditate, memorize and pray. Seek the counsel of wise Christians who know how to deal with temptation. This will take time and effort on your part, but remember:

**Controlling appetites requires sacrifice but leads to blessing.**

God’s word is not limited to combating sexual lust. What about fear? What if you are a very fearful person? What verse(s) can you memorize to help you regain composure and walk on solid ground? What if your struggle is with depression? How about anger? What if it’s greed?

Psalms 37:8 ESV  Refrain from ______, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

You can make it personal, too.

Psalms 37:8 ESV-P  Refrain from anger, ________________, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself: Insert your first name ________________ it tends only to evil.

Do you want it all – financially? Are you working your fingers to the bone in an effort to get rich while you ignore your family? Here are some verses for you to memorize, personalize, and recall when tempted to miss your anniversary dinner, a T-ball game, or a dance recital:

Proverbs 23:4-5 NIV  4 Do not _____ _____________ ____ to get _____; do not trust your own cleverness. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are ______, for they will surely sprout ______ and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

Romans 12:10 NIV-P  Lord, let me be devoted to (names of your wife/children) in love. Let me honor (names of your wife/children) above myself. [This is in the form of a prayer.]

Tempted to think you can lose your salvation?

Ephesians 1:13-14 NIV-P  13 And I also was included in Christ when I heard the message of truth, the gospel of my salvation. When I believed, I was marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing my inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

Tempted to think you have to keep the Ten Commandments to be right with God?

Galatians 2:16 NLT-P  I know that I am made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And I have believed in Christ Jesus, so that I might be made right with God because of my faith in Christ, not because I have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.

Only God truly knows what insatiable desires lurk in your heart – those you crave to fulfill by painting a life that’s outside the numbers. To help control your appetite for the abysmal, spend time in God’s word finding those verses that will help you control your appetite for sinful things. As you meditate upon and memorize God’s word, the Holy Apparition – The Holy Ghost – will empower you with a godly appetite that will bring forth the fruits of righteousness.
As you spend time reading God’s word on a daily basis, the Holy Spirit will use certain verses to instruct you on proper doctrine, certain verses to rebuke, correct, and restore you, and other verses to instruct you in the ways of holy living. Memorizing those verses will transform the way you think and act, and as you recall them from memory, that will help you control your appetite when tempted.

Paul wrote this to the Philippians and us:

**Philippians 4:8-9 ERV**

8 Brothers and sisters, continue to ________ about what is ______ and worthy of praise. Think about what is _____ and honorable and ______ and pure and ____________ and respected. 9 And do what you ___________ and received from me—what I told you and what you ____ me do. And the God who gives ______ will be with you.

Christians have peace with God because of what Jesus did for us. The peace of God comes as our relationship with Him is developed through the study of His word, prayer, meditation, Scripture memory, and fellowship with other saints. And the peace of God comes from knowing that we are living holy lives that are pleasing to Him. Remember, the Holy Spirit is working in us to give us the power and the desire to do what is right, so make it a habit to ask Him for help. Ask Him to help you recall the word of God that’s hidden in your heart when you are tempted.

We started this lesson with the proverb good things come to those who wait, and the Scripture agrees. Good things do come to those who wait — to those who wait on the Lord!

The Hebrew word – wait – means to wait for eagerly with expectation or hope. When we trust God, or take Him at His Word, to fulfill His promises to us, we can rest easy as we wait for those good things to come. We can expect Him to keep His word, for we have guaranteed hope. We will still battle daily in our fight against sinful behavior, in our fight to control our appetites, but because we know Jesus and His word, we know that even as we struggle, fail, and are pressed on every side by troubles, we won’t be crushed. We know that when we fail, we will get up again and keep on going by the grace of God.

As Christians, our trust in Christ gives us hope for the future, an eternal future with God in heaven. However, while we remain on earth, we struggle when we are tempted. Fortunately, we are not powerless in the struggle to control our sinful appetites, because:

We have a **Holy App** for that!

**Memory Verse**

God is working in me, giving me the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

**Philippians 2:13 NLT/P**

Over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, spend some time meditating upon and memorizing Scriptures that help you quickly defeat those pesky temptations that come your way. It’s a gift to God that keeps on giving glory to Him, and it’s a gift for yourself that will bring you joy and peace. See you in February when we study the Book of Philippians.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and may you have a blessed New Year!

Scripture Memory Resource