

June 27, 2004  
A. M. Service  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“God and Your Problems” (Part 1)  
1 Cor 10:13 NLT

But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

Everyone has problems, some more severe than others. Everyone has something that is a major temptation and struggle for him or her. There are thoughts or even actions that you want to keep hidden, it brings guilt and / or shame and you don't want others to know about it. You want to change, you've tried to change, but you need help. God can help you. As a matter of fact, only God can help you. But first you must take responsibility for your problem, and humbly ask God for help.

It is rare today that someone will take blame or responsibility. We want to blame our parents, or some other individual. We blame our upbringing; we blame the dog, we blame the weather, or anything and everything else. Things haven't changed much in thousands of years for even our first parents played the blame game: Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on.

Actual excuses told to police officers:

Please excuse me from this speeding ticket. My wife ran off with a state policeman and when I saw your flashing lights I didn't stop because I thought you might be the trooper who is trying to bring her back to me.

Oh, officer, I've been living in Germany for so many years that I forgot how to read the signs in miles per hour. I sure am glad to be home and have someone remind me!

Oh, I know what happened, my brother told me that he had some really good tires for my old car here, but they were a little bit bigger than the old ones. That must have thrown off the cruise-control, because I had it set at 67 mph, like usual."

I dropped a cigarette in my lap, and while lifting my butt up to retrieve it, I must have inadvertently pushed down on the gas pedal...

(True excuse actually used) Sorry officer I was leading in the Indianapolis 500...but I think I took a wrong turn!

I ran out of beer about 2 miles back and I was in a hurry to get some more!

With desperation in your face and say, "I'm sorry. I know I was speeding but I have to go to the bathroom soooooo badly that I'm about to explode!" You could also add, "Do you know of a restroom really close by that I can get to in the next 60 seconds?"

Sorry, Officer, I know I was speeding. But I was trying to catch up to that red Ford to tell him that his turn signals were not working!

Sorry, Officer, I know I was speeding, but I was trying to get to the gas station in a hurry before I ran out of gas!

One guy told (a police officer) he was hurrying to get home because he was too drunk to be driving.

I'm 2 months pregnant, and trying to make it to McDonalds down the street because I'm sick.

"Well, yes, officer, (I know I was speeding) but I just need to go to the grocery store; I won't be out more than half an hour."

A lady showed the cop her shoes and explained that they were platform shoes and were very heavy and it was because of them that she was going fast because the shoes were pulling my foot down.

I'm sorry Officer, I never would have done that if I had seen you were behind me".

I keep a hubcap on the passenger seat of my van. If I get stopped, I tell the officer that it came off a car in front of me. Being a good Samaritan, I stopped to pick it up and was trying to catch back up with him to return it!

The only way my truck will drive without stalling is when it's kept at the speed between 65 and 75 mph..

"I'm sorry officer, but I was trying to blow a leaf off my windshield".

"I was cold so I wanted to get home fast"

"I was speeding because I did not see the radar."

I just got my car washed and I was trying to dry it!

I'm sorry officer for speeding, but without my glasses I can't see the speedometer.

(Stopped for not signaling) I'm sorry officer, but my blinker fluid ran out and my boyfriend told me not to use them.

NO really the parked car ran into me!

A woman hit a pole between the drive thru lanes at a bank. She was furious and complained that if the pole wasn't there she wouldn't have hit it.

I was 8 months pregnant and had my other 2 kids in the back seat of the car fighting. A policeman pulled me over for an expired tag. I told him to just take me to jail, I needed the rest. He said to get a new tag and have a good day. I guess he realized I meant it.

We've all used excuses rather than take responsibility for the things we've done wrong.

Have you ever said or heard the following: "If you had a wife / husband like mine you would understand why I did what I did." Or "If you knew the stress I've been under..." or "Oh, mom / dad my friends are allowed to do it." Or "you would have done what I did, if you were treated the way I was treated."

Basically these excuses boil down to this, "I should not be responsible for my actions because *my* problem is unique."

But is it? Paul says, "No! Your problem is not unique." There is never an excuse to avoid thinking and acting like a Christian on the grounds that your circumstances are different than anyone else has ever experienced.

### ***It Is Not Unique***

Listen again to the words of 1 Cor 10:13 "But remember that the temptations that come into your life are *no different* from what others experience." Instead of making excuses, take responsibility. There are no excuses for bad behavior and there are no exceptions, because from the beginning of time every person has faced the same basic problems. The specifics may be different. There may be unique features to each problem. No two situations are ever exactly alike. But beyond that the temptations that come into your life are not significantly different from what others have experienced. Therefore the message of the Bible is just as fresh today as it was to the people in Corinth and to the people who lived before them: God's forgiveness thru the work of Jesus on the cross and thru His resurrection is the only answer to the problems of this life.

Jesus Himself faced the same basic temptations we all face: hunger, misunderstanding, betrayal, hatred, discouragement, pain, impurity, loneliness, hard decisions, weariness, yet He endured. Heb 4:15 NLT - "(Jesus) This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin."

Because of that He knows that with His help we, who trust in Jesus, can follow in His footsteps. And if He says (as He does thru Paul) that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience, than you can count on that being true.

I once was in beautiful Colorado Springs. Near where I was staying was a place called the "Garden of the Gods." In this beautiful place there are rocks balanced on a pinpoint;

there is beautiful colored scenery all around. It is really beautiful... I didn't get there, but I heard that it was beautiful. (We passed it on the way from the airport, but ...I didn't get there...but I heard it was beautiful). Some who were able to get there told how they were driving along slowly, viewing the marvels about them, when suddenly they were confronted with a problem: directly ahead of them was a wall of sheer rock, and the road they were traveling on disappeared into what seemed to be just a crack in this wall of rock. A crack so narrow that it looked as though you could not get the smallest car ever made through it. As they looked for a place to turn around and go back, their eye fell upon a small sign that read: "YES YOU CAN – A MILLION OTHERS HAVE!"

They were assured that they could make it because of the success of others before them.

### ***You Are Not Alone***

Again listen to what the Bible says: "...remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what *others experience*." We are helped in facing our problems successfully because of the assurance that others before us have done so. Our problems are the same as those faced by Christ and by other Christians and Paul wants us to be encouraged and have hope, if others have gone through these things and have overcome then so can you. You are not alone. We are all in this together. It is helpful and encouraging just knowing that others have and are going through the same things you are. But it is even more encouraging to know that others have not only gone through what you are going through but have been helped. God says you can solve your problems. Others have and with the help of God you can too. Jesus had the same temptations you have, except that your temptations are not as intense as what He faced. And the same resources He had are also available to you. Those resources are: The truth of the Bible, faith in God and in His Word; Being right with God, because of the Good News of Christ and the Salvation you have because of Christ; You have the resources of prayer and the Spirit of God Himself. Paul mentions all of these in Eph 6:13-18 (NLT)

13 Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of *truth* and the body armor of *God's righteousness*. 15 For shoes, put on *the peace that comes from the Good News*, so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In every battle you will need *faith* as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. 17 Put on *salvation* as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*. 18 *Pray* at all times and on every occasion *in the power of the Holy Spirit*. *Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.*

One time when Jesus was being tempted He called upon the Scriptures three times and successfully avoided giving into the temptations. He also clung to faith and the help from the Holy Spirit. The temptation was an attempt to divert Him from His goal to go to the cross to suffer and die for the sins of the world. It was a temptation to avoid the torture, betrayal, taunting on earth and the wrath of heaven. Jesus remained steadfast even after 40 days and 40 nights of fasting. He did not give into His feelings, intense feelings, but quoted and stayed faithful to the Word of God.

Matt 4:1-11 NLT

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by the Devil. 2 For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. 3 Then the Devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, change these stones into loaves of bread."

4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say,  
'People need more than bread for their life;  
they must feed on every word of God.' "

5 Then the Devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, 6 and said,  
"If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,  
'He orders his angels to protect you.  
And they will hold you with their hands  
to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.' "

7 Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'Do not test the Lord your God.' "

8 Next the Devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him the nations of the world and all their glory. 9 "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will only kneel down and worship me."

10 "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,  
'You must worship the Lord your God;  
serve only him.' "

11 Then the Devil went away, and angels came and cared for Jesus.

Notice how with each temptation Jesus quoted from the Bible. When Jesus said, (Matt 4:4) "People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God." He was giving us the key to solving our problems. The solution of our problems lies in following the Bible. What the Bible did for Jesus, in the way it sustained and guided Him successfully through the deepest trials, it can also do for you. We need to know the Bible, but we must also know the One Whom the Bible tells us about. Knowing Jesus, trusting Christ and knowing and obeying His Word is the key to solving our problems. Because of Jesus God is with us and He promised, (Heb 13:5) "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Christian, no matter how serious your present problem may be, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem, be encouraged! You are not alone.

When others around you who do not know Christ cave under life's pressures, you can stand. No, you must stand and demonstrate that God keeps His word. In a day when we want to blame everyone else but our selves, Jesus still calls us to take responsibility for our actions. So stop making excuses, stop blaming others, and instead, by the power of God's Spirit, "(I pray ... that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way" ( Col 1:10).