

Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Last week I took some vacation time to return to California and spent some time with my kids and grandchildren. It was fantastic! However, my eating habits immediately changed, and temptation was the theme for the week. The day after I arrived there we had a special party for my birthday where many of my old friends came. We celebrated my 55th birthday! I guess I am old enough now to qualify for Seniors 55+ only communities! At that party, one of my daughters brought a chocolate cake and ice cream, The other daughter picked up one of my favorite pies - a very berry pie from Costco. These desserts topped off a wonderful brat and burger barbecue. Of course, I had a piece of it all!

A few days later we celebrated the first birthday for my Granddaughter, Sofia. At that meal we had some great smoked beef and topped it off with some custom Bundt cupcakes smothered with butter cream frosting. Needless to say... the diet wasn't working too well. Temptation took over again. Could have I made better choices? Yes. This only proves once again that dieting doesn't work and that in order to maintain a healthy weight one needs to make some serious lifestyle changes. Traditional diets usually do not work because we are vulnerable weak people. We fail to address the permanent lifestyle changes that are necessary for successful long term health benefits.

Dieting encourages short-term thinking. Dieting isn't sustainable, or else it would "work" for everyone for life, and we wouldn't see so many diets and trends pop up. Weight loss diets should be tailored to fit your lifestyle and the foods you want to eat. This usually means making some changes in eating habits.

Our faith life is a lot like living a healthy lifestyle,,, including diet. All I can say is... "Thank God" for grace! Grace allows us to make mistakes, learn from them as we pick ourselves up and move on. Diets don't work because during the diet, most people feel deprived and frustrated, which ultimately causes them to break and binge.. This means we will follow the rules for a period of time, and then slip up. Instead of giving ourselves a break, (GRACE) most people throw up the white flag of defeat, and return to their unhealthy choices, often eating more than they did before the diet began.

As soon as I returned from my vacation I jumped on the scale to see the damage done in my little temptation trip. The damage is done. However, I have already learned that in order for me to stay healthy, I need to return to the practices I have put into place these past 6 months and rid of those additional pounds that I put on. Within a day or so... I have already seen results and have lost most of the weight I put on in the past week. ROUTINE works.

Temptation. We all have it. We all know how to live strong faithful lives, yet we sin. How can we resist life's many temptations? Willpower comes to mind but I don't have much of that. Sometimes we have willpower and a lot of it; other times we have none or very little of it. It fluctuates.

For my eating habits, I have found that I needed to simplify my life and improve my will power. Really, instead of thinking of my eating habits as a diet, I look at it as a lifestyle change. To now try to resist all refined sugar and stay away from most things with sugar. I also decided to limit the number of carbohydrates I eat.

Again... Thank God there is grace. Yes... I have to give myself some "cheat" days. Every day of our lives we try to avoid circumstances that will make temptation harder to resist. Modern life is stressful. We all

have decision overload and hectic schedules that cause us to make bad decisions and choices. . When we resist, we remember that temptation does not have to win.

There are some ways that we can respond to temptation... to food, or anything else. Here are some suggestions:

1. Try to understand why you're tempted. Come up with a plan to resist.
2. Recognize potential temptation. Implement a routine to change direction away from the temptation.
3. Remove yourself from temptation.
4. Be honest with yourself and FORGIVE when you slip up. Then learn and move on.
5. Visualize yourself resisting temptation.
6. Think of the long-term consequences.
7. Have some mercy! Know yourself and be kind to yourself
8. No matter what's leading you astray, choose to trust God and pray!. PRAY for guidance from the Holy Spirit