

Rewired by Christ
Matthew 4:1-11, John 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:13

John 3:17 - “*God did not send his Son to condemn the world but to save the world through him.*”

Today we will see that overcoming temptation is possible in our lives.

Do you ever feel like your hardwiring is messed up? Do you ever try to change and get better, yet you become frustrated by your lack of progress? Remember, child of God, God does not condemn you. He came to save you! He sees your mess, and it doesn't scare Him. He understands, and He enters our lives to save us, not condemn us.

Today, we want to focus on our “hardwiring” as defined in the word *habitus*. **Habits are what we do; our habitus is who we are.** It comes from a French sociologist named Pierre Bourdieu. *Habitus* means *our internal, habitual, reflexive behavior*. When we automatically react to something, we are acting out of our habitus. Our habitus is the combination of our beliefs, our understanding, our personality, and our habits — everything. It's the core of who we are and why we do what we do. Our *habitus* can be either good or bad.

Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* - **The early church was full of people whose internal core had been completely rewired into something hopeful, optimistic, patient, and joyful.** They lived, loved, and reacted differently, “in ways that offered hope,” to the terrible problems life brings all of us. They lived with incredible love and self-control that strongly attracted non-Christians.

Ask yourself this: Is *my* habitual behavior “distinctive and intriguing?” Do I “face common and terrible problems in ways that offer hope?” Are my actions reflective of what I believe?

Some Observations of Matthew 4:1-11

--**Satan barked at Jesus.** Satan is demanding, bossy, manipulative, and hurried. Jesus is not like this. When Jesus confronted Satan, Satan obeyed Him! Jesus has all authority over demonic powers, including the devil. You have all of Jesus. He lives in you! Colossians 2:9-10

--**Satan tempted Jesus with comfort, security, wealth, and power.** Jesus rejected them all. These can become our idols, not because our desires for these are too strong, but because they are too weak. God, however, has greater things in store for us (and we long for these) love, justice, peace, purpose, and joy. These are better things. C.S. Lewis – *We are too easily pleased.*

How Jesus Responded

From His habitus through scripture, His relational trust in His Father, and with self-control.

--Jesus responded with scripture.

Three times the devil tempted Jesus and three times Jesus responded with scripture. Jesus could do this because the scriptures were planted deep within Him. (Here, He quoted verses from Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13) When we routinely read and reflect on scripture, it becomes part of who we are. When we suddenly find ourselves in a tempting situation, the Holy Spirit brings important verses to our minds to strengthen us and encourage us. Scripture gives a voice to the Holy Spirit in our heart and mind.

--Jesus responded out of relational trust in His Father

This takes the scripture response one layer deeper. Jesus responded with scripture, but beneath those verses was a relational trust in the Father to whom the Scriptures point. Jesus did not have a relationship with the Bible, He had a relationship with the God of the Bible. The Bible exists to point us to a *living* God, a loving Father. Relational trust is faith in the *Person of God, trust in His character*. It is an awareness of His abiding presence in our lives, that He never leaves us alone. Relational trust is walking with God through the ups and the downs of life, receiving love and life from Him in all circumstances. Relational trust knows that God is always present, is always loving, is always helping. It doesn't matter what happens to me, it matters Who is abiding in me. This relational trust was deeply ingrained in Jesus' habitus. It can be deeply ingrained in us also.

--Jesus responded with self-control

Jesus' habitus was also one of self-control. Now most of us feel we lack self-control, or at least we lack a large amount of self-control, but I want you to know that self-control is something we can all grow in. It can be part of our core response.

Here are two practical things you can do to practice self-control. Both ideas come from an outstanding book called *The Science of Self-Discipline* by Peter Hollins.

Urge-surfing

The next time you're tempted by something, don't resist the urge, because anytime you try to *resist* the urge, often the urge overpowers you and you will fail. Instead of *resisting* the urge, *surf* the urge. Our impulses, desires, and urges (i.e. our temptations) are like waves in the ocean. They start small, they grow, they grow even more, and then finally, they crash and go away.

Urge-surfing means you do not deny that you are facing a temptation. It means you admit to yourself you want to do something you shouldn't do. But instead of *resisting* the urge, you *surf* it. You ride it like a wave, knowing that if you surf it long enough, it will crash and go away.

Our urges are like that. They do not grow exponentially forever. They start, they grow, they grow stronger, and then they crash and go away, if we give them the space to do so.

The difference is in the mindset: when we try to resist, the urges get stronger, and our minds tell us they will keep getting stronger until we give in. We tell ourselves we cannot fight this urge because it will be too strong. That's a lie. That's a lie from the devil! The urge will grow, grow stronger, and then crash and go away. We just surf it until it crashes.

Adopting the urge-surfing mindset will help you grow in self-control. You'll find that the urges and compulsions you struggle with aren't as invincible as they appear. They are actually weak, but **YOU AND GOD ARE STRONG TOGETHER.**

The 10-10-10 Rule

A second idea to help you grow in self-control is to try the 10-10-10 Rule when you're facing a test or temptation. The 10-10-10 Rule is when you ask yourself, "If I do this thing, how will I feel about it 10 minutes later? How will I feel about it in 10 hours? How will I feel about it in 10 days?"

This approach helps you see your future self (10 minutes, 10 hours, 10 days from now) and how you will feel about your decisions in this moment. This is a powerfully effective way to overcome temptations and struggles.

You can also use the 10-10-10 Rule to the positive.

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

This means as we walk with Christ and abide in him, over time we will grow more and more in self-control. You have access to a *ridiculous amount of self-control!* God is infinite in his love and goodness, and He will give you good gifts!

No one was born with "a lot of self-control" because it develops over time. Have you ever seen a toddler with a ridiculous amount of self-control?

You have direct access to every bit of self-control that you need. God wants to develop it in relationship with us. That means we get to work it out together as we live in relational trust with Him and practice self-control.

Jesus can and will rewire our core as we wash our minds with scripture, live in relational trust with the Father, urge-surf our urges to grow in self-control. Our lives will be distinctive and intriguing as we overcome common hardships and temptations in a way that gives hope to others.

Choose one or two of the practices we went over today and try to implement them in your life this week. Who knows, maybe over the next 40 days you'll develop some life long, life giving habits.