

Thinking of the GRADUATES?  
Here's another useful message from  
ARM!



## ARM Prison Outreach International

### "Ministers' Minute" Volume 12 Number 4

**"How Graduates and All of Us Can Overcome Temptation"      Matthew 6:13**

Hello, Friend of ARM,

This "MM" is the 4th of 2013 -- and the 136th email sermon overall. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon is the eighth in our current series on the Lord's Prayer. Parts 1-7 are archived at <http://www.abarc.org/Resources/Ministers%20Minutes/Ministers%20Minutes.htm>. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it!

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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## **ARM FAST FACT**

### ARM/ABS Bible Distribution Update

ARM and the American Bible Society partner together in Bible distribution.

ARM sent 708 cases of Bibles to prisons in Jan/Feb -- 17,520 Bibles!

In 2012, we sent almost 109,000 Bibles!

That's an average of 299 per day -- over 2000 Bibles a week!

Over the years, ARM has shipped over 1.1 MILLION BIBLES to prisons!

Our sincere thanks to the American Bible Society for their wonderful partnership!

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## "How Graduates and All of Us Can Overcome Temptation" **Matthew 6:13**

1) Andrew Carnegie, U.S. industrialist and philanthropist 2) Charles Chaplin, British actor and film director 3) William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, American scout and showman 4) Noel Coward, British actor, playwright, and composer 5) Charles Dickens, British novelist 6) Thomas Edison, U.S. inventor 7) Samuel Gompers, U.S. labor leader 8) Claude Monet, French painter 9) Alfred E. Smith, U.S. politician 10) John Philip Sousa, U.S. bandleader and composer 11) Mark Twain, U.S. humorist and writer 12) Henry M. Stanley, British explorer

What do all those have in common? None of them ever graduated from High School! In fact, NONE OF THEM EVER GRADUATED FROM GRADE SCHOOL! Why would I bring that up? Because I want the graduates-- yea, all of us—to realize that it takes more than our name on a diploma to lead us to true success.

H.M. Stanley isn't the best known of that list, but he was famous in his day as an English explorer and spent a lot of time in Africa. There is a great story about Stanley and the Bible. It seems he was traveling by foot across the great continent with the assistance of many native luggage carriers. He had lots of equipment and many, many books. He always said he benefited from the trip much more if he read during delays. However, it was a hard trip and they were losing many of the porters to illness. Unessential luggage was left along their path as the number of native luggage bearers dwindled. When he finally reached the other side of Africa Stanley said, "I have only two books left – Shakespeare and the Bible. If Africa had been any wider, Shakespeare would have had to go!"

We have given out Bibles to the graduates and that's not just a ritual or tradition. It is because we believe that the Word of God is the most important information in the world. We can learn everything EXCEPT the Bible and be destitute for wisdom. We can learn the Bible and nothing else and be equipped for living and dying!

Since this is graduate Sunday, I want to tie our current sermon series on the Lord's prayer into the theme of "Advice for Graduates." That shouldn't be too difficult since we are down to the portion of the prayer that says in **Matthew 6:13** *..lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

**Temptation!** There is no time in life when we are immune, but how appropriate for Graduate Sunday when we think about the young adults who are venturing from High School into college or the world of work.

A man was late for an appointment and couldn't find a parking place. He ended up parking in a "No Parking Zone". He wrote a note to seek to appease the policeman, then placed it under his windshield wiper. It said: *"I've circled this block ten times and I have to make this appointment or my boss will fire me. **Forgive us our trespasses**'*. When he got back he found a ticket on his car and officer had written

a note, "You've circled the block ten times, I've circled this block for ten years. If I don't give you a ticket my boss will fire me. **'Lead us not into temptation'**."

**Matthew 6:13** *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* Temptation is the world's oldest problem. Adam and Eve were tempted, lured, deceived into choosing their will over God's will. We all have our weaknesses: areas where we are weak and vulnerable to the attack of Satan, the Evil one. We all have areas in which we need better control. The good news is that God wants to help you get control of your life.

Here's some good news: **1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Common to man We always think our circumstances are unique, but actually, they are common, that is similar to what everyone experiences. The Employee who steals, the Spouse who isn't faithful, the student who cheats, all may think their situation is unique.

So there are some Common Solutions to temptation – and remember God promises to help us out by limiting temptation and providing a way out.

**Sermon in a sentence: In this life you will never be sinless, but you can sin less.**

TS. We ask God to "deliver us from the evil one". How can we cooperate with God so we can be delivered from evil? Here are some key scripture verses with some good and practical advice:

## **1. REFUSE TO BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED.**

Some are discouraged by the fact that they are tempted, wrongly equating being tempted with committing sin. IT IS NOT A SIN TO BE TEMPTED!

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)

This passage clarifies that Jesus was tempted and we will be tempted. When we are tempted, we should not react with alarm, frustration, or discouragement.

[1] Alarm- "How could I think such a thing?" [2] Frustration- "I keep falling in the same area!" [3] Discouragement- "I'm never gong to be able to change!"

Have you ever been in prayer or even partaking of communion and had an off the wall idea and think, "How could I think such a thing, I must not even be a Christian?" The answer is that Satan is allowed to

tempt us! You don't need to feel guilty about being tempted.

When **Galatians 5:16** says: *live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.* It doesn't say you won't have the desires of the sinful nature, it says DON'T GRATIFY, DON'T GIVE IN TO THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH.

Temptation simply means you are normal. Refuse to be discouraged.

## 2. RESIST THE TEMPTER.

The Bible says we are not resisting the temptation, as much as we are resisting the tempter- **James 4:7** *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you* [1] Give in to God! [2] Resist the devil. How?

**Ephesians 6:17** *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Notice the soldier analogy- get dressed for battle! There are too many spiritual "streakers" who go into the day without the armor of the Word and prayer and they become easy prey for the enemy. How do we get dressed in spiritual armor?

FIRST- It starts with accepting salvation. (Helmet of salvation) Realize that God made you and wants fellowship with you so badly that He sent Jesus to save you. Give your life back to God. This involves repentance, confession and immersion into Christ. The Bible never guarantees victory over temptation without the helmet of Salvation. God never guarantees victory over temptation if we fail to submit to Christ and become a Christian. Until you do this you have no resistance to Satan. Paul said, in **Romans 8:7,8** *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*

Then we must receive and learn and memorize and use the Word as a sword.

## 3. REFOCUS YOUR THINKING ON GOD'S WORD.

**James 1:14,15** *but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*

*15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.* 1. Temptation is a three step process- [1] Attention - Satan gets your attention [2] Fascination or excitement - Your emotions and feelings kick in [3] Action – giving in to the temptation – sin. The way you think determines the way you feel, the way you feel determines how you act. Temptation begins with your thoughts.

The key to overcoming temptation is to resist it by refocusing your mind. Change channels and focus on something else. Jesus didn't turn down the temptation to turn stone into bread by saying He wasn't hungry. Rather, His focus was: *"I've got better bread in mind"*. And He focused on the Word of God, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." SCRIPTURE!

**Colossians 3:2** *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.* Don't try to argue with the Devil.

When temptation calls on the phone, just drop the receiver and focus on something good. Quoting scripture is the best way. Jesus did it EVERY time Satan tempted Him.

**John 8:32** *Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

This was Jesus' method when He was tempted- He used the Word as a sword against the false idea Satan planted.. Three times- "*It is written*". The most effective thing you can do if you are serious about growing as a Christian and saying "no" to temptation isn't going to church, being in a small group, or even prayer-- those are all great. But the most effective is to memorize Scripture.

IE If you are tempted to be sarcastic, negative, or profane with your speech, then memorize- **Ephesians 4:29** *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.* When you are tempted to use sarcasm, criticism, or profanity, the Lord can remind you of these words.

As you read the Bible, pick out a verse or two a week to memorize- soon you'll have an arsenal against Satan. (Write it out on a card and carry it...) The Bible on the shelf is no threat to Satan, "Satan fears not the unused Bible." But the word hidden in the heart is powerful!

"*But I can't memorize!*" Know any Phone numbers? Zip codes? Ask God to help. **Psalm 119:11** *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

#### **4. REQUEST HELP FROM GOD.**

Psalm 50:15.. *call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.*

I Cor 10:13: *And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. ... he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

We need to develop the kind of attitude that produces what one man called "Microwave prayers" - quick and hot. One Scriptural example is Peter on the water- "Lord, save me" **HELP!!!** Occasions for microwave prayers- When you are...

- ... irritated with your kids and tempted to commit a felony.
- ... blamed for someone else's mistake and are tempted to make an angry reply.
- ... filling out your tax return.
- ... walking through the mall and smell the cinnamon rolls baking.

Remember: we should ask God for help because he understands. *He was tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

#### **5. REVEAL YOUR STRUGGLE TO A FRIEND.**

Don't tell everybody, but telling someone who will help you be accountable can be a big help.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9,10** *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up.*

We need each other! We need the church and perhaps a small group of Christian friends. And you need at least one person with whom we can be totally honest. (I am not talking about one way accountability to a superior!) Hiding behind masks only intensifies the problems and makes them seem bigger than they really are. We must drop our pride and do as James says: **James 5:16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.* Do you want to be healed or not? Don't conceal it, reveal it! Once we confess our faults they don't have as much power over us.

Do these steps work? A recent survey of Discipleship Journal readers asked them to complete a survey on temptation. Survey respondents noted temptations were more potent when they had neglected their time with God's Word (81 percent) and when they were physically tired (57 percent). Resisting temptation was accomplished by prayer (84 percent), avoiding compromising situations (76 percent), Bible study (66 percent), and being accountable to someone (52 percent).--Discipleship Journal, 11-12/92

Eph 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (NIV)

May our graduates, and all the rest of us, conquer Satan's onslaught by being dependent and committed to God and His Word! "Faith IS the victory that overcomes the world."

## ARM's Websites

[www.arm.org](http://www.arm.org) [www.abarc.org](http://www.abarc.org)

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