

As is customary at the beginning of each new year, people will again be making new year's resolutions, where they set out to do more of something (eg exercise), or less of something (eg smoking). Some of us will exceed expectation, others will not.

Back in 1976, Nadia Comaneci a Romanian gymnast, exceeded all expectation when she performed a flawless routine and received a 'perfect 10' from all the judges. So surprising was this, that the scoreboard had not been manufactured to cope with such a result!

Now even if I resolved this year to train really hard at gymnastics, I know I would get nowhere near that perfect 10 performance, and this is the same for life in general.

Again and again, I can resolve to live a better life, I can even aim for that perfect 10 performance, but I am never going to get there. The truth is that I will regularly reject God and give in to temptation.

However, in Luke chapter 4 we see that Jesus was able to live that perfect life, he succeeds where we fail.

And in chapter 4vv1-13 there are three important truths for us to take to heart at the beginning of this new year.

### **#1 - Jesus' encounter with the devil reminds us that temptation is very real**

Whilst the temptations Jesus faces are unique to him (when was the last time you were tempted to turn a stone into bread?), at their root all temptations are the same, for they tempt us to act independently of our creator God.

### **#2 - Jesus resists the tempting of the devil... He succeeds where we fail**

Jesus is tempted three times: Firstly, to doubt God's provision. Secondly, to deny God's rule. Thirdly, to test God's promises.

Thankfully for us, Jesus resisted all temptation. He went and lived that perfect 10 life. Jesus went through a life of struggle, pain, and attack from Satan; without doing one wrong thing. And Jesus was willing to go through all that because of His great love for us.

We needed Him to live a perfect life, because we've all failed to do it ourselves. Where Jesus was faithful and obedient, we are faithless and disobedient. This leads to us facing God's condemnation, and being cut off from him forever. But wonderfully for us, God is in the business of wanting to restore us. That is why God sent Jesus. Jesus faced the condemnation we deserve and died in our place. Jesus was cut off from God so we don't have to be.

### **#3 - The Holy Spirit gives the Christian believer the power to resist temptation in 2016 and beyond**

The same Holy Spirit which is leading Jesus in vv1-2, and still leading Jesus in v14, is given to all those who put their trust in Jesus. This means that the Christian believer can make progress in resisting temptation... but not on our own!

There are 3 steps...

1. Remind yourself that Jesus has already taken the punishment for all your sins; that way we will not give up when we give in.
2. Humbly recognise that you still can't resist temptation on your own; the devil can & will still tempt us.
3. In prayerful dependance on God, ask *"please empower me by your Spirit, that I may resist"*

When it comes to temptation, the Christian believer admits they couldn't resist on their own before, and recognises that left on their own, they still can't!

... But with God's help, empowered by His Holy Spirit - they now can!