

# In the Way of Temptation

by Tim Challies <https://www.challies.com/articles/in-the-way-of-temptation/>



We do not often speak of duty today, but Christians traditionally spoke of it often. In fact, Christians understood the means of grace as duties, responsibilities of every believer toward God. And while these duties are the means through which God provides us with his grace, they are also the means through which God guards us against temptation. Christians who wish to overcome the inevitable temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil must remain dutiful, alert, and disciplined.

This means that if and when we fall away from the spiritual disciplines, we should not be surprised when we face increased temptation and when we more easily succumb to it. Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “Idle people tempt the devil to tempt them.” And indeed, the devil is most active when we are most idle, especially in the spiritual disciplines.

In a similar vein, Matthew Henry warned that “when we are out of the way of duty, we are in the way of temptation.” If that is true, so is the inverse: When we are in the way of duty, we are out of the way of temptation. This is not to say, of course, that when we take full advantage of the habits of grace we will face no temptation, but that when we do face it, we will readily avail ourselves of the means through which we can face it and triumph over it. God chooses to work through means, and it is only a foolish Christian who will not joyfully and consistently take advantage of them.