

you'll
get
through
this

Stupid Won't Fix Stupid

Introduction

Have you ever watched people play dominos? There are really two ways to play. Older people know the rules, sit at tables, lay the pieces flat so they can match the dots to corresponding dots, and keep score. Kids, in general, play a very different game. They don't know or care about the rules. They lie on the ground and carefully set up the dominos on their edges, standing tall like soldiers in a row. Some kids might even get fancy and make the row of dominos twist and turn around their bedroom floor.

Once the dominos are all standing, the big moment comes. With excitement and anticipation they push one domino and watch as, click, click, click, the dominos all tumble over. No rules, no score, just a chain reaction of dominos scattered all over the bedroom.

Sometimes, in times of struggle and pain, Satan invites us to play his own sinister version of dominos. Peter warns us that the enemy of our souls prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). When we are tired, weary, and disheartened, the devil is always lurking in the shadows. He wants to entice us to make one small choice that will have long-term repercussions. Just one pill, one lie, one financial corner cut, one drink, one night of "pleasure," or one unwise decision and ... click, click, click, the dominos fall. In these moments, a single

choice can start a chain reaction that will cost more than we could ever dream.

One bite of forbidden fruit impacted the entire human race. One moment of weakness could change the direction of your life. Satan knows this. He also understands that we are more susceptible to temptation when we are tired, worn, discouraged, disheartened, and feeling like, “I’ll never get through this.”

In times like this we must be on our guard. Temptation is near. Sin can look a little more enticing. Satan is on the prowl.

Don’t push that first domino. Life is not a game.

Do what pleases God. Nothing more, nothing less.

Talk About It

How have you seen the enemy seek to entice and tempt you in times when you were tired, worn, or feeling discouraged? Why do you think Satan attacks so frequently in these times of life?

Video Teaching Notes

As you watch the video teaching segment for session 3 featuring Max Lucado, use the following outline to record anything that stands out to you.

When dumb becomes dumber

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Joseph becomes influential and powerful

Temptation comes crashing in—for Joseph and us!

It is easy to excuse sin in the hard times of life: rationalization

Look honestly at the chain reaction and consequences of saying yes to temptation

Do what pleases God

The blessings of hanging in there and saying no to temptation

| You will never go where God is not. |

Video Discussion and Bible Study

1. Max is honest and vulnerable in this video section, telling a story about a time he did something he considered “stupid.” He did not listen to advice or heed the warning signs around him. He kept going full throttle and ran aground on his own folly and stubbornness. Tell an honest story about a time when you raced past warning signs and ended up in a mess. How did you feel when this happened? What were some of the consequences and repercussions of your actions?

Read: Genesis 39:1–6

2. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, thrown into a pit, sold as a slave, exiled far from his loved ones and homeland, and then sold again. He was a stranger in a strange land. Yet, through all of this, he was not alone. How do you see God present and at work in Joseph's life, even in this very painful time?

How have you experienced God being with you when your life journey has been hard and painful?

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3. When times are tough, what are some the tactics the enemy uses to entice us to make a bad choice and push that first domino?

How have you personally seen temptations increase in times when you feel exhausted, worn, beat down, and generally discouraged?

| Don't make matters worse by doing something you'll regret. |

4. What are some specific ways we can fortify our souls, setting up hedges against the enemy's enticements when we feel discouraged and particularly susceptible to attack?

How can your small group become a source of support when you are facing spiritual attacks?

| You represent a challenge to Satan's plan. |

Read: Genesis 39:6–12

5. Some temptations lie outside of our normal reach. We have to really go after them and find our way into trouble. Other temptations don't bother knocking—they just invite themselves in and interrupt our lives. What kind of enticement did Joseph face and how did he seek to navigate around it? What did Joseph learn about temptations in this season of his life?

What are some of the best tactics you have discovered to help a Christian fight against bold, pushy, persistent, in-your-face kinds of temptation?

6. When we feel abandoned, discouraged, sick, or tired, rationalization can also come creeping into our minds and hearts. Respond to this statement: *The human heart has the ability to rationalize almost anything given the right (or wrong) circumstances!*

Justifications and rationalizations can pop up like weeds after a summer rain.

7. Joseph refused to accept the enticement of Potiphar's wife because he wanted to honor his master Potiphar, who had elevated him in the household and had entrusted him with significant responsibility. How can thinking about the people who will be impacted by our sin help us resist temptation?

How can writing down and thinking about all the repercussions and consequences of sin help us resist moments of temptation?

| Joseph placed his loyalty above lusts. |

Read: Psalm 51:1–4 and Genesis 39:9

8. Both King David (the writer of Psalm 51) and Joseph had a deep sense that any sin they committed would ultimately be against God. How is all sin truly an offense against God? Why is it important that we consider the heart of God when we are tempted to make a sinful decision?

Read: Genesis 39:13–21

9. Joseph did everything right. He resisted; he refused to rationalize; and when the heat was on, he ran. What were the final results of Joseph's commitment to holiness and honoring God?

Tell about a time you tried to do everything right but things seemed to turn out all wrong.

| You will never go wrong doing what is right. |

10. Max makes this statement: "Egypt can be a cruddy place. It can be a petri dish for brainless decisions." What is an Egypt you are facing right now? What are some of the potentially "brainless decisions" you need to be careful to avoid at this time of your life? How can your group members pray for you as you walk through this time?

Closing Prayer

Spend time in your group praying in any of the following directions:

- Pray for wisdom to notice when you are starting to rationalize sin rather than repent of it.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see when the enemy is attacking your life, be it overt or covert.
- Lift up a group member who is facing a challenging time. Ask God to fortify them, protect them, and give them strength to avoid making things worse by falling for any form of temptation the enemy might send their way.
- Pray for all of your group members to become people who are passionate about doing what pleases God.

Between Sessions

Building a Strong Fortification

In ancient times, cities would build huge walls or dig moats as a line of defense against enemies. As followers of Jesus, we need to fortify our lives against the enticements, temptations, or flat-out attacks of the enemy of our soul. One of the best ways to do this is to seek strength in numbers. We do not have to stand or fight alone.

Consider some of these ideas that might help fortify the defenses around your heart and life:

- Join a men's or women's group (or find an accountability partner) and create a place where you can be honest about the struggles you face as you seek to walk with Jesus in the easy and hard times of life.
- Invite godly friends and family members to pray for you when you are facing a difficult time.
- Memorize two or three passages of Scripture to strengthen yourself when facing a specific area of temptation: for example, sexual lust, greed, or selfishness. Use a Bible concordance or do an Internet search to find applicable references.

Lay claim to the nearness of God. "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Make a List

Max talks about the value of making a list of all the people who would be hurt and impacted by your sin. It is also helpful to look at other potential collateral damage such as the impact on your reputation, finances, etc. Try this exercise with two or three areas of sin you regularly confront.

**If I were to follow the enemy's enticement to _____
and this became public and known by all ...**

Consequences for family members:

Consequences for friends:

Consequences for other people in my life:

Consequences for my reputation:

Consequences for my finances:

Consequences for my future:

**If I were to follow the enemy's enticement to _____
and this became public and known by all ...**

Consequences for family members:

Consequences for friends:

Consequences for other people in my life:

Consequences for my reputation:

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Consequences for my finances:

Consequences for my future:

**If I were to follow the enemy's enticement to _____
and this became public and known by all ...**

Consequences for family members:

Consequences for friends:

Consequences for other people in my life:

Consequences for my reputation:

Consequences for my finances:

Consequences for my future:

Sing It Out

There is something powerful in a song. When the lyrics are locked in your mind and heart, something beautiful can happen. Max tells the story of Thomas Dorsey and the turning point that occurred in his life when God put a song on his heart. People have drawn strength and comfort from that song for almost seventy years!

Find a few great hymns or powerful praise choruses and commit their tune and words to memory. When times are hard and temptation is near, try singing. Seriously, try it. God might just infuse that moment with the power of his Holy Spirit and set you free from temptation as he sweeps you into his presence in worship.

Journal

Use the space provided below to write reflections on any of the following topics:

- Note some of the repetitive ways the enemy seeks to entice and tempt you. Look for a pattern.
- List some of your most common rationalizations when facing temptations in hard times.
- Ask this question: “If I were the devil, where would I attack me?” Then write down three or four ways you can fortify this specific area of your life.

Recommended Reading

As you reflect on what you have learned in this session, read chapter 4 of the book *You'll Get Through This* by Max Lucado. In preparation for session 4, you might want to read chapters 5–8.