

Dealing with Temptation

INTRODUCTION:

1. Sin is a reality in life, even for those who turn to Christ for relief from its bondage (1 John 1:8 – “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”).
2. And, of course, we are generally led into sin through the temptation of the devil.
3. So, it should be no surprise that God warns us of the devil’s action and our need to be ready for them (1 Pet. 5:8 – “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to **devour.**”)
4. Unfortunately, despite the many warnings, temptation is not always met with the fear and hatred it deserves. Instead, most of us must admit that we often struggle to avoid it, sometimes even inviting it into our lives and choosing to put ourselves in harm’s way.
5. So, it is vital to our spiritual wellbeing to know *how to deal with temptation*.
 - A. That is what I want to do today—to look at how to deal with temptation.
 - B. Doing so necessitates that we consider:
 - i. That God allows to be tempted.
 - ii. How Satan/Devil works
 - iii. How we must not allow Satan to intimidate us

BODY:

● I. God allows temptation:

- A. Christians are not shielded from temptation.
 1. I wish we were considering how devious it is and how destructive its results can be.
 2. Temptation for the child of God is real (Jas. 1:12-15 – “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when **he is tempted**, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”).
 - a. So, though God allows us to be tempted we cannot blame God for temptation in our lives.
 - b. For, temptation comes and gains its power through *our* lusts, *our* desires!
 3. So, in many ways, the amount of temptation we face and the power it has is up to us, to whether we truly resist it through submission to God (Jas. 4:7 – “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”).
- B. God allows us to be tempted *within limits*.
 - 1. God actively filters temptation for His people (1 Cor. 10:13 – “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who **will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation **will provide the way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it.”).
 - a. God assures His people that no temptation will face us that is beyond our ability to endure, and that He will always provide a way to escape it.
 - b. So, not only can we *not* blame God for temptation, but must acknowledge that it is God working behind the scenes that makes it possible for us to overcome temptation—to make the right *choice*—even though our desire to do otherwise comes from within!
 - 2. God’s assurances are only for those who desire victory over temptation.
 - a. We must be willing to “**flee** from youthful lusts and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22).
 - b. We must actively seek God’s direction to be led *away from temptation* and *delivered from evil* (Matthew 6:13).
 - c. Therefore, we cannot choose to put ourselves in tempting situations and hope for God to intervene (Rom. 13:14 – “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.**”).
 - i. Provision – to give it forethought, to think of how to provide for something.

- ii. Christians do not put themselves in situation that we know beforehand provide and avenue of temptation for us to fulfill the lusts of the flesh!
 - iii. For, to do so is to sin!
 - 3. Understand that as a free-will being, you will be tempted. But for those who live in Christ, you can always make the right choice and follow the path to escape!
- **II. Know how Satan works!**
 - A. Satan's process of temptation (Gen. 3:1-6):
 - 1. Step one: He seeks to identify and stimulate a desire within us.
 - a. Satan **probes** and observes to learn our desires and exploit them.
 - b. He did this with Eve (Gen. 3:1 – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”).
 - i. This was not a friendly question or an attempt to make conversation.
 - ii. Satan asked this to gauge Eve's response, to learn what she might reveal about her feelings concerning God's command and its “restrictions.”
 - c. Satan observed that Jesus had fasted 40 days and used His *hunger* as the basis of temptation (Matt. 4:2-3 – “And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”).
 - d. To defeat temptation, we need to know that Satan reacts to the information *we give Him*.
 - i. If we show a willingness to give in to certain desires, be sure that Satan will attack us based on those desires.
 - ii. So, how we deal with every encounter with temptation is important. It is never good to let down your guard and punt to the next temptation.
 - iii. Know your *desires* and the *situation(s)* that make you the most vulnerable to Satan's attacks and constantly be on guard!
 - 2. Step two: Satan seeks to create doubt in God's care and provision for your life.
 - a. Satan knows that we are far more likely to give in to temptation if he can get us to question, or have doubts about, God's providential care.
 - b. This was Satan's approach with Eve (Gen. 3:4-5 – “The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ For **God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.”).
 - i. Satan wanted Eve to question God's motives behind the restriction.
 - ii. He wanted Eve to ponder “what could be” if she ignored the Lord's will!
 - c. This was Satan's approach with Christ (Matt. 4:5-6 – “Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “**If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,**’ and “**On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.**”).
 - i. He was trying to get Jesus to doubt the Father's care and protection enough to test it.
 - ii. But, as mentioned above, Jesus was unwilling to put himself in a situation that called God's hand to intervene.
 - iii. For, as Jesus said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (Mt. 4:7).
 - 3. Step three: Deceive!
 - a. Satan is always lying, even when what he says contains some truth.
 - i. He did this to Eve (Gen. 3:4 – “The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will **not** die!”) as well as what followed about being like God in knowing good and evil!
 - i) There was a shred of truth here because Eve did not physically die at that moment.
 - ii) And, what followed about knowing good and evil was true as well.

propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, **He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.**”).

2. Your obedience of Christ in faith brought you into that freedom (Rom. 6:17 – “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”).

- C. Seek God’s help with confidence (Heb. 4:14-16 – “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with **confidence** to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”).
 1. Come with confidence because Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted, having faced the greatest force of temptation ever applied in this world. And, He will help you overcome.
 2. Come with confidence seeking God’s grace and mercy to **forgive** because Jesus lived as a human and knows our weaknesses...and use that forgiveness as motivation to resist temptation in the future.

CONCLUSION:

1. Temptation is something God allows us to face and cannot ultimately be avoided in this life.
2. But the prevalence of temptation is not reason to be defeated by it, seeing God has...
 - A. Promised that no temptation will come upon you that is greater than you can bear but will always provide a means of escape so that you can resist.
 - B. Revealed the mechanics of temptation, or how Satan works, so that we can know temptation when we see it and how to deal with it.
 - C. Provided the means by which even sinful people can overcome sin and death (1 John 2:1-2 – “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”).
3. Do you want victory over sin and the hope of eternal life that goes with it? It is only found in Jesus’s blood that He shed for your sins on the cross. Will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-B?