

TEMPTATION

- WE ARE TO PERSEVERE IN TEMPTATION: James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
- WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND TEMPTATION: James 1:13-16 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (16) Do not err, my beloved brethren.
- WE ARE TO PREPARE FOR TEMPTATION: 2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also., 2 Timothy 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully., 2 Timothy 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.
- WE ARE TO EXPECT TEMPTATION: 1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

God has promised that He would ensure that we would not be tempted by the tempter beyond what we are able to bear. We can persevere in trials and temptation by using the practical “way of escape” the Lord said He would provide.

- 1) **YIELD YOUR BODY TO GOD**...as an instrument of righteousness (Romans 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.; Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.).
 - a. This includes the mind (Romans 16:19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.; -- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do

not war after the flesh: (4) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;).

- b. This means that God would have us be “pre-disposed toward obedience.” This should be a trait of every true believer (John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.).
 - c. Rom. 12:9, “Abhor evil and cling to that which is good.” -- Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
 - d. Rom. 12:21, “do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
- 2) RESIST SATAN....and he will flee from you
- a. James 4:7 KJV Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.;
 - b. 1 Peter 5:8-10 KJV Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (10) But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.
- 3) FLEE TEMPTATION...and those circumstances that would entice
- a. 1 Timothy 1:1 KJV Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:22 KJV Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.;
 - c. Romans 13:14 KJV But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof..
 - d. Abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).
 - e. Flee all evil influences (Psalms 1:1 KJV Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.,
 - f. 1 Corinthians 15:33 KJV (33) Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.)
- 4) MEMORIZE AND MEDITATE UPON SCRIPTURE...and you will not sin
- a. (Psalms 119:9-11 KJV BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. (10) With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. (11) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.).
 - b. Christ used the Word of God rightly applied to withstand the temptation of the devil (Luke 4:1 KJV And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,).
 - c. WALK IN THE SPIRIT... and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-25 KJV This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have

also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.).

- 5) PRAY... that you not fall into temptation (Matthew 26:38-41 KJV Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. (39) And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. (40) And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.).
- a. the Lord teaches us to pray for deliverance from evil and temptation (Matthew 6:13 KJV And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.).
 - b. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD... that you may be able to stand (Ephesians 6:10-18 KJV Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;).
 - c. this could very well be considered the “how to” for walking in the Spirit.
 - d. the Armor of God must be put on daily as you prepare for the days battles.

“Every temptation is an opportunity to trust God!”

True Discipleship – A Companion Guide

The Art of Following Jesus

John Koessler

Unit 2 - Lesson Four

HANDLING TEMPTATION

KEY PASSAGE: *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* (Matthew 6:13)

WISE WORDS:

Someday, in years to come, you will be wrestling with the great temptation, or trembling under the great sorrow of your life. But the real struggle is here, now in these quiet weeks.

PHILLIPS BROOKS

There are situations which will be dangerous to you; watch and pray, always be on guard lest you fall into temptation.

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

THOUGHT STARTER

When do you feel most vulnerable to temptation? _____

What do you do in such situations? _____

What do you do to protect yourself from temptation? _____

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Christ's work made us free from sin. Read each of the following passages and identify the kind of freedom it describes.

Romans 5:9 _____

Romans 6:12-14 _____

2Corinthians 5:21 _____

The Scriptures outline three major areas of freedom. First, we are free from the guilt of sin. The guilt that should have been ours has been transferred to Christ. Second, we are free from the divine wrath that is the natural consequence of sin. The Scriptures frequently warn that the deeds of the sinful nature provoke God to anger but Jesus is called the one "who rescues us from the coming

wrath" (I Thessalonians 1:10). Because His death and resurrection have made us righteous in God's sight, we will be spared the wrath that is to come. However, Jesus has done more than give us positional freedom from sin. We also enjoy freedom in a very practical sense. We have been freed from sin's power. It is no longer the ruling force in the believer's life. This is because a spiritual change has taken place. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, those who have trusted in Him have been made righteous. We now have the freedom to become the righteousness of God, 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us.

Does freedom from sin's ruling power mean that we should no longer experience temptation once we place our faith in Christ? If not, why not? _____

How did Paul describe his own struggle with sin in Romans 7:15-23?

What is Paul referring to when he speaks of "the law of sin" at work in his members?

Is Paul saying that sinful behavior is inevitable? _____

Although the presence of the sinful nature makes temptation a very real threat to the Christian, there are practical steps that we can take to deal with it. One of the most effective is to be proactive in our response. We do not need to wait until we are in the midst of temptation before setting up safeguards.

What safeguard does Jesus advise us to take in Matthew 6:13 and 26:41? _____

Is prayer alone sufficient to keep us from experiencing temptation? _____

What other strategy is encouraged in Proverbs 1:15? _____

Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! ... If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell. (Matthew 18:7-9)

Can temptation always be avoided? _____.

Do you think Jesus expects us to take the commands of this passage literally? If not, what does He really mean? _____

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. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

What hope do we have each time we face temptation, according to 1 Corinthians 10:13?

What does this verse say that God will never do? _____

What will He always do? _____

How will this help you when you are experiencing temptation?

My Response

1. Think of a time when you were tempted but refused to give in _____
2. How did God provide a way out? _____
3. How did prayer play a role in your victory over sin? _____
4. Think of a time when you gave in to temptation. Can you identify the “way out” that you failed to take advantage of at the time _____
5. Have you asked God’s forgiveness? _____

CONCLUSION

To deal with sin proactively prayer should be coupled with the commonsense strategy of avoidance. In the Cord's Prayer we pray that God will keep us from those circumstances of temptation that we do not know about. Sometimes, however, we knowingly place ourselves within the range of temptation. Avoiding temptation means that, whenever possible, we will keep away from those circumstances where we know we will be tempted. When others invite us to join them in sin, Proverbs 115 advises "do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths." To accomplish this we may need to replace old interests or friends with new ones. God does not tempt. Nor does He allow the believer to be tempted beyond his or her ability to bear it. Instead, He enables us to endure temptation by providing a way out. Your greatest weapons, in the battle against sin may be your own two feet!!

Prayer

Make a list of the areas where you feel most vulnerable to temptation and pray for each one individually. Think of someone else you know and pray that God would keep him or her from temptation.

THE STAGES OF TEMPTATION

KEY PASSAGE: *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)*

WISE WORDS

It is your greatest honour, and your highest wisdom, peremptorily to withstand the beginnings of a temptation, for an after-remedy comes often too late.

THOMAS BROOKS

Better shun the bait than struggle in the snare.

JOHN DRYDEN

THOUGHT STARTER

When is the best time to resist temptation? _____

Where does temptation come from? _____

When was the last time you were tempted? _____

How did you respond? _____

SCRIPTURE STUDY

James 1:13-15 describes three major stages in temptation. The first is the stage of desire. This is the stage when we feel the draw to sin on two fronts. We are drawn to it internally as we are "dragged away and enticed" by our own evil desire. But we also feel it externally as we are attracted to "the pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25). At this point, although we are attracted to it, we have not acted upon the desire. Like the fisherman's bait that hides the sharp barb of the hook, the attractiveness of sin masks the ultimate disappointment and eventual bondage that is its result.

When does James say that the desire to sin originates? _____

What does James say is never the source of temptation? _____

Is the appeal of temptation itself a sin? _____

James describes the second stage of temptation as conception: "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin" (James 1:15a). During the conception stage, it is not unusual to begin to rationalize the decision to sin. We may reason, for example, that what we are contemplating is only a "small" sin. Of course, there is no such thing. There are no "little" sins.

According to James 2:10, how many sins does it take to make us guilty of violating all of God's Law? _____

Read the passages below. *In what sense might the actions described have been viewed as little sins? What was God's view of each?*

Moses (Numbers 20:8-12)

Nature of sin: _____

God's response: _____

Uzzah (1 Chronicles 13:9-10)

Nature of sin: _____

God's response: _____

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

Nature of sin: _____

God's response: _____

Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. To us it seems like a small thing, but in God's eyes it was a failure to honor Him as holy. Uzzah reached out to steady the ark of the covenant when it seemed about to topple from the cart that was transporting it to Jerusalem, and he was struck down. Ananias and Sapphira "fudged" in their accounting to God. They sold a piece of property, kept back part of it for themselves and gave the rest to the church-leaving everyone with the impression that they had given all the proceeds to God. They had lied to the Holy Spirit and were struck dead as a result. There are no "little" sins. When it comes to God's Law, it only takes offending at one point to make us guilty of breaking it all. Our smallest sin was enough to require Christ to suffer and die.

Once sin has conceived, it is not finished. The final stage is one of development and eventual bondage. "Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15 b). Certainly physical death is part of what James has in mind. However, as we have seen, the biblical concept of spiritual death encompasses much more. Sin leads to slavery.

What does Paul say is true of the one who chooses to obey sin, according to Romans 6:16?

The three stages in temptation – desire, temptation, and eventual bondage – are on display in the temptation of the first couple. Analyze Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve, described in Genesis 3:1-24. Where do you find these three stages reflected in their experience?

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

Sin always promises more than it can deliver. For proof, we need only look at the first instance of temptation in the Garden of Eden. Satan promised Eve that if she ate the fruit, she would "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). This appeal was strengthened further by the fact that it was rooted in legitimate desires and normal appetites. Deceived by Satan's false promises, however, Eve lost sight of God's warning that disobedience would result in death.

MY RESPONSE

James compares the appeal of temptation to the fisherman's bait that hides a sharp hook. The initial attractiveness of temptation masks the ultimate disappointment and eventual bondage that is the result of sin. Think of a common temptation you face.

1. What is its attraction? _____

2. What is the "hook"? _____

3. What practical steps can you take to avoid this temptation?

CONCLUSION

Today's "little" sin paves the way for tomorrow's bondage. It may be conceived in momentary pleasure, but it will produce a harvest of regret. What began as an occasional "mistake" quickly develops into a practice. That practice eventually becomes a habit of life. Why do some who profess to be Christ's disciples live as though they are slaves to sin? It is not because they have to. In fact, they are commanded not to. It is because they offer themselves to the flesh in voluntary slavery. It is time for them to discover that they have been serving a corpse. All who would be Christ's disciples must bear the cross. Yet all who do find, to their eternal joy, that it is really the cross that bears them.

PRAYER

Pray about the temptation mentioned above. Thank God for His protection and deliverance from it in the past. Ask for His help in avoiding it in the future.