

Temptation

- *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. Jas 1:13*
- Temptation was not created or devised by God.
- Not part of our being in image and likeness of God.
- It arises and comes into being within our own heart.
- We are responsible for the temptations we have.
- Like Paul and all others we were born without them.
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- *I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. Rom 7:9*

Source and Origin of our Temptations

- *14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts (desires) and enticed. Jas. 1:12*
- ***each one is tempted of his own lust, drawn away and enticed.*** – Greek word order
- All temptations originate in our lusts.
- Until a lust is activated, temptation has no real power.
- But a lust is activated, the temptation grows in power
- Temptation offers the opportunity to be drawn away
- The longer that enticement is allowed to remain, the power of the temptation continues to grow.

The Source of Temptation

- *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ...Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:16, 19-21*
- As we look at this list we can identify our lusts.
- We can also identify lusts that have never been activated or felt and the temptations are weak are non-existent.

The Destination of Temptation

- *each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death*
- The activated lust and the enticement creating the temptation must be removed immediately.
- They cannot remain together long or sin will be born.

Degree/ Intensity of Temptations Vary

- Most lusts have no power in our heart.
- We never activated them.
- They never found life within us.
- This is how Jesus dealt with all temptations:
- *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Heb. 4:15*
- He saw them, recognized them, but they had no power because He never allowed them to activate

We are Like Jesus in Many Temptations

- We see the lusts, know they exist but have no power.
- Yet some lusts do create strong temptation.
- We are responsible for them.
- We are not victims ... there are no excuses.
- Our previous choices are the sole reason.
- *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. Jas 1:13*
- We created them, they are ours.
- Full repentance requires we take full responsibility for them.
- That is the first step to the way of escape

Paul Described it Perfectly

- *I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. Rom 7:9*
- Sin came alive and I died.
- Evil companions, time and chance a foolish choice
- First lustful look, lie, theft, or jealousy
- First ungodly thought, hatred, or vengeance
- First drink or drug, fight, or dance
- At first awkward and clumsy.
- We did not know what we were doing.
- Like when we learned to ride a bike.
- Yet as everything else, practice made perfect...

Practice makes Perfect

- Practice also made habits.
- Each time we practice – we add another thread.
- Easy to break in the beginning, but over time.
- Threads become ropes that bind us.
- Most of us were accomplished sinners when we obeyed the gospel (Eph. 2:1-5; 4:17-24).
- In order to move as quickly as possible from “mature sinners” to “mature Christians,” we need to find and learn “*the way of escape*.”

The Way of Escape

- *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Cor 10:11*
- Four Axioms of Temptation:
 - (1) They are common to man.
 - (2) Never tempted above what we are able.
 - (3) Always makes the way of escape
 - (4) You may be able to bear it.

They Are Common to Man

- There is nothing extraordinary about ours.
- If we think: “*no one has ever struggled with temptations as difficult as mine*”
- We are wrong!
- It is dangerous if we consider ourselves victims.
- Thinking like this is no different than 10 spies who thought they were only grasshoppers.

God is Faithful!

- God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.
- Classic test: *trust in the Lord with all your heart and not lean on our own understanding.*”
- We must believe God is faithful and will help us
- We **can** overcome this temptation / enticement!
- We have both the resources and the ability.
- We only need to learn how.

The Problem for Most

- The way of escape is excruciating and painful.
- It requires denial, a cross, and cutting off or plucking out.
- *If any man would come after me, **let him deny himself**, and **take up his cross**, and follow me.*
- *"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. Mt. 16:24; 18:8-9*
- *if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you.*
- God doesn't do this for us, we have to do it.
- It takes courage, endurance, and diligence.

The Must be Put to Death

- Some things have to be “*put to death*”
- *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Col. 3:5*
- They do not die easily or quickly
- Threads of habit became a cable, binding us to sin by hundreds and even thousands of previous acts.
- We must put them off the same way we put them on ... one victory at a time.
- *But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth Col 3:8*

Jesus Showed The Way

- *Luke 4:2-8*
- *being tempted for forty days by the devil*
- With each of the three temptations for the lust of the flesh and eyes and pride of life.
- Jesus responded exactly the same way.
- *But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written"*
- Instead of allowing Satan to define the desire and they action, He quoted the Scripture that shined the light of truth and exposed it as evil.
- It is much easier to resist temptation when we see it as evil and not as enticing.

Paul Also Showed the Way

- *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” Gal 2:20*
- How did he get there and maintain his purity?
- *“I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.” 1Cor. 9:27*
- We must go through this process to find the way of escape.
- *They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. Gal. 5:24*

An Absolute Truth

- *“God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Gal. 6:7-8*
- True before and after we become a Christian.
- Lusts we contend with and enticements falling into our path are like weeds.
- We sowed them ourselves.
- The way of escape can only be found in the painful process of pulling them out by the roots.