

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. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Jas 1:13-15*

● Temptation was not created or devised by God.

● God has nothing to do with evil or temptation.

● It arises from within our own heart.

● We created our own temptations and sins

● Like Paul, we were born without them.

● *I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. Rom 7:9*

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 greater the desire or the greater the enticement,
- The greater the temptation becomes

Degree/ Intensity of Temptations Vary

- Most of the temptations identified in the Scriptures 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. Like weeds that can't get into soil.

We are Like Jesus in Many Temptations

- We see the lusts, we know they are there, and that they tempt others, but they do not entice or create any desire within us.
- Yet some of those lusts of the flesh have taken root in our heart.
- They have become powerful and mighty in the control they exert.
- We are responsible for them. Period!!!
- There are no excuses or rationalizations.
- We created them, they are ours.

Paul Described it Perfectly

- Sin came alive and I died.
- There is a first time for everything
- Evil companions, time and chance create it
- 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 makes 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 to our ability to withstand and overcome them.
- If we consider ourselves victims.
- Enticements far more powerful than others.
- Thinking like this is no different than 10 spies who thought they were only grasshoppers.

God is Faithful!

- He 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.

We Got Ourselves into This Mess

- God has given to each of us what we need to get ourselves out of it.
- What might have been, if we never opened the door, still can be if we trust God.
- Through His providence, protected from all temptation / enticement beyond our capacity.
- God is faithful and He will never put us into a position where we have no options.
- There is always a way of escape.

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.

We want Quick Fixes / Easy Solutions

- If we have not yet found this way of escape.
- We haven't yet endured the slow process of death by crucifixion. Must stay in the cross until the lust is dead.
- Some temptations are deeply rooted.
- Practiced again & again and part of our existence
- Flesh craves them as a drug or alcohol addiction.
- Multitudes have gone through the painful process of withdrawal and can now withstand enticements

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
- The threads of habit have become a cable, binding us to sin by hundreds and even thousands of previous acts and thoughts.
- Must deny and fight these temptations with perseverance and self-control.

Jesus Led 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 Help Show 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*
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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.
- Lusters 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.