Temptation: How to have Victory

Intro

This the first Wednesday of the month and so that means that we are going to be considering our growth plans for the month. In Phil. 3:12 Paul says,

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but **I press on** to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

Paul says he “presses on,” that he “strains ahead.” This is not because he hasn’t already been fully accepted by God in Christ but because he already is accepted by God.

In Phil. 3:16 Paul says, “Only let us live up to what we have already attained.” His acceptance by God motivates him to want to continue to grow.

So this week we are going to talk about temptation. We are all tempted but if we can learn to overcome temptation then we can experience victory.

Temptation is one of Satan’s weapons that he loves to use against us in the spiritual battle. If he can tempt us and deceive us so that we yield to temptation he can defeat us.

I. Is being tempted the same as sinning?

Hebrews 4:15, “Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin.”

II. How is sinning different from temptation?

James 1:13-15

“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; **14**but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. **15**Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Temptation becomes sin when we give in to it “after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.”

III. What does it mean to be tempted?

A. Temptation is the enticement to have legitimate human needs met through the resources of the world, the flesh, or the devil instead of through Christ (Phil. 4:19).

B. Temptation is an invitation to live independently of God.

“I believe this sin will make me more happy than God will.”

IV. How does Satan tempt us

A) He is too smart and clever to try to get us to go and commit some obvious sin like armed robbery or murder. Instead, he pushes something good beyond the boundary of God’s will until it becomes sin.

The following is a list of good things that God created that Satan tries to push beyond the boundary of God’s will:

* physical rest becomes laziness
* quietness becomes non-communication
* ability to profit becomes avarice and greed
* enjoyment of life becomes riotous living/no moderation
* physical pleasure becomes sensuality
* enjoyment of food becomes gluttony
* self care becomes selfishness
* self respect becomes conceit
* communication becomes gossip
* cautiousness becomes unbelief
* anger becomes rage and bad temper
* loving kindness becomes overprotection
* judgment becomes criticism
* same-sex friendship becomes homosexuality
* sexual freedom becomes immorality
* conscientiousness becomes perfectionism
* generosity becomes wastefulness
* carefulness becomes fear

B) Satan uses three channels through which he tries to get you to act independently of God or tempt you: the lust (cravings) of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (boasting of what he has and does) (1 John 2:15-17).

1) The lust of the flesh (deals with our physical desires): Satan will invite you to fulfill your physical needs in ways outside of God’s will.

a. Eating is necessary, but eating too much or the wrong kinds of food is wrong. b. Sex is from God and is a good thing, but sex outside of marriage is wrong.

c. Gen. 3:6a, “The woman saw that the tree was good for food”

Matt. 4:3, “Rock to bread”

2) The lust of the eyes (deals with self interest and selfishness)

a. Satan will try to get us to do what we think is right in our own eyes and destroy our confidence in God and His Word, so that our attitude is “prove it to me” God.

b. Gen. 3:6b “Pleasing to the eye”

Matt. 4:5 Satan quotes Scripture and tries to make Jesus doubt God

3) The pride of life (deals with self promotion and self exaltation)

a. Satan will invite you to be your own god.

b. He wants us to stop obeying God and take charge of our lives for ourselves.

c. Matt. 4:8: Make Jesus ruler of earth’s kingdom

Gen. 3:6c: “Desirable for gaining wisdom”

V. Why do we entertain tempting thoughts which are contrary to God’s Word and God’s Will?

A. Because we want to!

1. We aren’t tempted by foods we don’t like or members of the opposite sex we find unattractive.

2. We believe these things will satisfy us.

3. But you can never satisfy the desires of the flesh

4. Ecc. 6:7, “Man’s appetite is never satisfied.”

Matt. 5:6: “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Eph 4:19 “Continual lust for more”

B. Whenever we give in to temptation instead of being satisfied, it just makes us crave more.

VI. How Can we Overcome Temptation?

A) Realize there are two laws at work in us:

1) Romans 7:2

“So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful nature[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28117a)] a slave to the law of sin.”

a) In the sinful nature, the law of sin

b) In the mind: the law of the Spirit

2) Romans 8:2

“Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28119a)] free from the law of sin and death.”

When you become a Christian, you have been set free from the law of sin, so that you don’t have to sin

B) Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

“No temptation[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=i+cor.+10%3A13+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581a)] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=i+cor.+10%3A13+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581b)] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=i+cor.+10%3A13+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28581c)] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Therefore, we can overcome temptation

C) Two different battlefields

1. The internal battlefield

a. Where is the place that all temptation is introduced? (In your mind)

b. Therefore, the first step for overcoming temptation is to control what we feed our minds, to take control of every thought as soon as it enters your mind (2 Cor. 10:5). Evaluate each thought on the basis of Phil. 4:8 test.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

c. Does it pass this test?

(1) Does it line up to God’s truth?

(2) If this thought becomes action, will it be lovely and contribute to excellence in life?

(3) Will other believers approve of my action?

(4) Is it something for which I can praise God?

d. If it doesn’t and you dwell on it and consider it as an option, you will eventually act on it and sin

e. If it does pass the test and you dwell on it (Phil. 4:8), and practice these things (Phil. 4:9), then the God of peace will be with you (v9).

Phil 4:9

“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

f. How do you change the desires of the heart?

(1) What you feed will grow and become stronger.

(2) What we must do, then, is being to starve the flesh and feed the spirit: to learn to have new appetites.

Gal. 5:16

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

g. How do you walk by the Spirit? How do you feed the spirit to develop new appetites?

(1) You need to spend time in God’s word, this feeds the soul.

Matthew 4:3 Jesus said, “Man shall not live on bread alone (physical nourishment) but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

(2) You take your requests to God in prayer and He will help you.

(3) You obey what God tells you to do. If you disobey you are feeding the flesh.

2. The external battlefield

a. These are the things that are outside of us.

b. We need to remove the things of this world that tempt us.

1 Cor. 10:14 “Flee from idolatry.”

c. 2 Tim. 2:22 “Flee the evil desires of youth.”

d. In moments of strength put barriers in place so that in moments of weakness when you are tempted it is harder to sin.

VII. What if I Keep Sinning-Confessing-Sinning-Confessing the Same Sin and Can’t Seem to Get Victory?

My question would be: have you stopped feeding the flesh? IF we confess our sin and make no changes to begin walking in the Spirit by spending time daily in prayer and in God’s Word, memorizing Scripture, regularly in fellowship with other believers, we will fail again. As we guard our minds and fill our hearts with truth, as we deal with sin and submit our will to God, we will be able to resist, BUT we must be proactive and not just defensive in the battle.

James 4:7

“Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

The order is important.

Conclusion

What is it going to take for you to grow in your walk with the Lord in the area of temptation?

1. Realize that in Christ you can have victory

Temptation is not the same as sinning unless you give in to it.

2. Repent- if you have blown it ask for forgiveness

3. Refocus your heart back onto the Lord with a desire to please Him more than anything.

The reason it tempts you is because of your desires.

4. Replace

We need to commit ourselves to using the weapons that God has given us to reprogram our hearts/minds with scripture, prayer, obedience, and accountability.

Small group questions

1. If Satan were to try to defeat you what would be his mostly likely form of attack in your life?

Another way to ask that question is what do you feel like you have to have other than God for life to be worth living? Do you need to repent of any of these desires?

2. Do you believe with God’s help you can have victory? Why?

3. What kind of stuff are you putting into your minds? Does it pass the Phil 4:8 test? What will you do if it doesn’t meet the test? 2 Cor. 10:3-5

4. What external steps do you need to make so that you aren’t so quickly tempted and if you are it is harder for you to sin? (consider friends you hang with, the media you put into your mind: TV, youtube, tiktok, Instagram, books, movies, etc, places that you go)

5. Who will hold you accountable to the decisions you make to apply this lesson?