

Temptation

Temptation will always be with you. That's why we need to learn to manage it, not get rid of it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

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.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man”

- **Everybody** faces temptation. You are not less of a Christian because you have a desire for something sinful. You are not doing something wrong because temptation comes your way.

You are not the first person to face the struggle or temptation that you are facing in your life.

Even Jesus, the God-man, was tempted by the Devil in the desert.

Hebrews 4:15-16

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

- Whatever temptation you might face in life, realize that you are not the first person to face it. And because of this, realize that there is help available for you.

“but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

- Does this mean that Jesus faced all of the exact same temptations that we faced? No.
- Jesus was never tempted to go pop some pills, or shoot up heroin.
- Jesus was never tempted to surf the web and look at pornography. He was never tempted to go to the news stand and pick up a playboy.
- Jesus was never tempted to write hateful things about other people via social networking.

- Specific temptations change, but underlying fleshly motives have remained the same throughout human existence.

If we look at the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4, we will see 3 categories of temptation.

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Let's briefly back up to the two verses immediately preceding Matthew 4.

Matthew 3:16-17

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

- The same Spirit that was “well pleased” with Jesus in Matthew 3:17 led Jesus into the wilderness in the very next verse, Matthew 4:1.
- Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil because God is **pleased** with Him, **not displeased** with Him.

Hebrews 12:6

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

First Temptation: Meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way.

- We all have appetites in our lives placed there by God. They are legitimate and God tells us through His word the proper way to satisfy these appetites.

- There are right ways, and wrong ways to satisfy these appetites.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Second Temptation: Use God for our own means or presuming on God's mercy.

- This is when we intentionally do something that is against God and presume on God's mercy to bail us out.
- Presumptuous Christians always think that the commandments of God's Word, the requirements of His church, and instruction of godly leadership are for someone else. They always see themselves as the EXCEPTION. They become professionals at ignoring God's voice, until they fall flat on their face – and then they expect His mercy to come through for them! The problem is, over time, they become hardened to this constant cycle of falling and forgiveness, until they can't withstand even the slightest temptation!

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Third Temptation: Worship another

- This is when we put anything else in the place of God.

All of our temptations can fit into one of these three categories.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Back to our opening scripture...

1 Corinthians 10:13

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 didn't put appetites in you just to taunt you and drive you crazy.
- God has a proper way to satisfy our desires and appetites; He always provides a "way of escape."
- The question is: Are you willing to take the time and look for it?

A lot of times we face temptation and we just quickly give in before we allow our brain to become fully engaged and think through the consequences.

Our brains become engaged afterward, and the enemy doesn't mind one bit because he wants us to think through and dwell on all the condemnation he heaps on us.

God has a way of escape and He has a perfect plan, but sometimes we have to slow our flesh down, and **wait** on God to provide it.

Look at the story of Achan:

- God promised the Israelites victory over Jericho.
- God gave specific instructions on how to obtain that victory (march around for seven days, don't speak at all while marching, and shout the last time around.).
- They obeyed all that God commanded, and just before they shouted, God said this:

Joshua 6:17-19

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.

- Then the Israelites shouted and the walls fell down flat!

- In the very next chapter, however, one of the Israelites (Achan) disobeyed God's command.

Joshua 7:1

1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

- Achan's sin caused Israel to be defeated in their next battle against Ai, and cost him and his family their lives!

In the very next chapter, God tells Joshua to go up against Ai again:

Joshua 8:1-2

1 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

2 And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: **only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves:** lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

- If Achan would have been obedient to God and **WAITED** during the victory at Jericho, he would have been able to have all the plunder that he wanted during the next battle against Ai.
- All Achan needed was a little bit of **patience**.

Our society today has a major patience problem. People want things now and they don't care the cost.

We need to have patience in our lives if we are going to live for God!

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **longsuffering** (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- One of the signs that you have the Holy Ghost at work within you is that you are patient.

Patience is paramount in overcoming temptation.

The Bible says that Achan took from the spoils of Jericho (1) a Babylonish garment, (2) 200 pieces of silver, (3) and a wedge of gold. A **small** amount of plunder to say the least.

If Achan would have been satisfied to be obedient to the command of God and would have been patient, he would have been able to have so much more. He would have been able to take all that he wanted from the spoils of Ai. He could have decorated his whole tent with gold trinkets, silver coins and fine linens rather than just have a few meagre treasures hidden under his tent. Not to mention he would have been able to keep his life. But instead, he gave in to temptation at Jericho.

What the enemy tempts us with always **pales in comparison** to what God wants to give us. But if we want what God has, we have to be patient for it. It comes in His timing, and it is always worth the wait!

The enemy comes knocking with temptation and says you need to act fast, right now. But we need to **slow down** and think through the consequences of our actions.

- If Achan could have exercised a little bit of patience and allowed the time for his brain to become engaged in the situation, he could have thought through all the consequences of his potential actions. He would have remembered the curse that God pronounced and that all Israel would be troubled.

We need to learn to **PRESS PAUSE** and exercise patience in the midst of temptation.

James 1:2-4

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers **temptations**;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh **patience**.

4 But let **patience** have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.