

Victory Over Temptation

Introduction

Temptation, and to be tempted is not sin! Although sometimes the intensity and determination of temptation may feel wrong, you have not sinned. The trick of the enemy is to make the temptation so enticing, that as you grapple and struggle with resisting it, you feel defeat via indecision. To resist, is to win the victory over temptation. There is clearly one scripture text that lifts our prospect of victory and it is *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.

It is yielding to temptation which leads to sin. Often times, we just don't see the dangers of temptation which leads to sin coming. Temptation and sin come in all shapes, sizes, forms and situations. It is common and familiar to us, and it is oh so seductive. For sin to be out of the ordinary would make it readily recognizable. Because our enemy is the master of disguise and illusion, for him to be noticeable, this is out of character for him. Deception is one of his chief weapons, and without it we are able to easily identify that which is not of God.

To begin, let us look at the synonyms that title this lesson, and consider their definitions, of which they all speak to the misappropriation of truth and reality.

- *Temptation*—the desire to have or do something that you know you should avoid; Trial; a being put to the test. Ordinarily, however, the word means solicitation to that which is evil, and hence Satan is called "the tempter" (Matt. 4:3).
- *Alluring*—To attract with something desirable; To be highly, often subtly attractive; (as an adjective): highly attractive and able to arouse hope or desire
- *Enticement*— (a verb) : to provoke someone to do something through (often false or exaggerated) promises or persuasion;
- *Seduction*—enticing someone astray from right behavior 2: an act of winning the love or sexual favor of someone.

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I. TEMPTATION (A Historical Perspective from the Bible)¹

Broadly defined, temptation is the enticement to do evil. Satan is the tempter ([Matt. 4:3](#); [1 Thess. 3:5](#)). Beginning with Eve, Satan successfully tempted Adam, Cain, Abraham, and David to sin. He was less successful with Job, and Jesus was "tested in every way as we are, yet without sin" ([Heb. 4:15](#) HCSB). James explains that God cannot be tempted by evil, and He does not tempt anyone ([James 1:13](#)). Temptation may be for the purpose of destroying a person through sin leading to death and hell. This is Satan's intent. God may allow testing for the purpose of

¹ Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Topic: Temptation

bringing forth faith and patience, which ultimately honor Him, as in the case of Job. James further explains that a blessing awaits the one who endures temptation ([James 1:12](#)).

James describes the mechanism of temptation. "Each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires" ([James 1:14](#) HCSB). The origin of the temptation is attributed to fallen human nature ([Rom. 6:6](#); [Eph. 4:22](#); [Col. 3:9](#); and [2 Cor. 5:17](#)). On the other hand, God does not desire His children to be ensnared by evil but to overcome evil with good ([Rom. 12:21](#)).

Next James uses a metaphor, that of a woman bearing children, to paint a terrible picture. Once a person has been drawn away by his own desire, desire becomes pregnant and gives birth to sin. Temptation is not sin; yielding to temptation is. Jesus said that cherishing adultery in thought is to commit adultery ([Matt. 5:28](#)).

When the full cycle is completed, sin in turn brings forth death. For the unbeliever, spiritual death is to be separated from God forever in the lake of fire ([Rev. 20:10,15](#)). For the believer, "sin that brings death" may mean that he or she is disciplined by dying early ([Acts 5:1-5](#); [1 John 5:16](#); [Gal. 6:8](#)).

Paul explains that "*no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will provide the way of escape, so that you are able to bear it*" ([1 Cor. 10:13](#) HCSB). He desires us to withstand the temptation and glorify Him in our bodies, which have been purchased by His blood ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).

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II. TEMPT; TEMPTATION (Sign of Holiness?—Charles Stuart)

Origins of the word Tempt(ation)...tempt, tem-ta'-shun (nacah, "to prove" "try," "tempt" maccah, "a trial," "temptation"; peirazo, "to try" "prove" peirasmos "a trial," "proof"):

The words have a sinister connotation in present-day usage which has not always attached to them. Originally the words were of neutral content, with the sense of "putting to the proof," the testing of character or quality. Thus, God is "tempted" by Israel's distrust of Him, as if the people were actually challenging Him to show His perfections (Ex. 17:2; Ps. 78:18; Acts 15:10; Heb. 3:9, and often); Abraham is "tempted," being called upon to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:1); and Jesus is "tempted" to a spectacular Messiahship (Matt 4:1-25 and parallel passages). No evil is implied in the subject of these temptations. *Temptation therefore in the Scripture sense has possibilities of holiness as well as of sin.* For as all experience witnesses, it is one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall. *To be tempted--one may rejoice in that (Jas 1:2), since in temptation, by conquering it, one may achieve a higher and nobler manhood.*

Holiness in its best estate is possible only under conditions which make it necessary to meet, resist and triumph over temptation. Thus, Jesus Himself became our Great High Priest in that,

being tempted in all points like as we are, He never once yielded, but fought and triumphed (Heb. 4:15).

One must not deceive one's self, however, in thinking that, because by the grace of God one may have profit of virtue through temptation as an instrument, all temptation is equally innocent and virtuous. It is noticeable in the case of Jesus that His temptation was under the direction of the Spirit (Mark 1:12); He Himself did not seek it, nor did He fear it. Temptations encountered in this way, the way of duty, the way of the Spirit, alone constitute the true challenge of saintship (James 1:12); but it is the mark of an ignoble nature to be perpetually the center of vicious fancies and tempers which are not of God but of the devil (James 1:13-15). One may not escape entirely such buffetings of faith, but by any sound nature they are easily disposed of. Not so easily disposed of are the trials (temptations) to faith through adversity, affliction, trouble (Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19; James 1:2; 1Pet. 1:6); and yet there is no lack of evidence to the consoling fact that God does not suffer His own to be tempted above what they are able to bear (1Cor. 10:13) and that for every crisis His grace will be sufficient (2Cor. 12:8-9).

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III. TEMPTATION²--Q & A (*Attraction, Seduction, Trap*)

EXPERIENCING TEMPTATION

Why is it so easy to give in to temptation?

BIBLE READING: [Genesis 3:1-7](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"* ([Genesis 3:1](#))

Temptation is part of a crafty plan that appeals to our natural desires in attempt to separate us from God. Disguised as a crafty serpent, Satan came to tempt Eve. Satan at one time was an angel who rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven. As a created being, Satan has definite limitations. Although he is trying to tempt everyone away from God, he will not be the final victor. In [3:14-15](#), God promises that Satan will be crushed by one of the woman's offspring, the Messiah.

Temptation is an invitation to live a self-serving life that leads to rebellion against God.

Temptation is Satan's invitation to give in to his kind of life and give up on God's kind of life. Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. Ever since then, he's been busy getting people to sin. He even tempted Jesus ([Matthew 4:1](#)). But Jesus did not sin!

Temptation feeds off our own tendency toward self-reliance. The serpent, Satan, tempted Eve by getting her to doubt God's goodness. He implied that God was strict, stingy, and selfish for not wanting Eve to share his knowledge of good and evil. Satan made Eve forget all that God had given her and instead focus on the one thing she couldn't have. We fall into trouble, too, when

² Handbook of Bible Application

we dwell on the few things we don't have rather than on the countless things God has given us. The next time you are feeling sorry for yourself and thinking about what you don't have, consider all you *do* have and thank God. Then your doubts won't lead you into sin.

BIBLE READING: [Deut. 12:28-32](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *Do not be trapped into following their example in worshipping their gods. Do not say, "How do these nations worship their gods? I want to follow their example."* ([Deut. 12:30](#))

Temptation is subtle; what it offers may seem harmless at first glance. God did not want the Israelites even to ask about the pagan religions surrounding them. Idolatry completely permeated the land of Canaan. It was too easy to get drawn into the subtle temptations of seemingly harmless practices. Sometimes curiosity can cause us to stumble. Knowledge of evil is harmful if the evil becomes too tempting to resist. To resist curiosity about harmful practices shows discretion and obedience.

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BIBLE READING: [1 Kings 11:1-13](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. The LORD had clearly instructed his people not to intermarry with those nations, because the women they married would lead them to worship their gods. Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway.* ([1 Kings 11:1-2](#))

Temptation often hits hardest in our areas of weakness. For all his wisdom, Solomon had some weak spots. He could not say no to compromise or to lustful desires. Whether he married to strengthen political alliances or to gain personal pleasure, these foreign wives led him into idolatry. You may have strong faith, but you also have weak spots—and that is where temptation usually strikes. Strengthen and protect your weaker areas, because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If Solomon, the wisest man, could fall, so can you.

BIBLE READING: [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by the Devil.* ([Matthew 4:1](#))

Temptation can strike any area of life. The devil focused on three crucial areas when he tempted Jesus: (1) physical needs and desires, (2) possessions and power, and (3) pride (see [1 John 2:15-16](#) for a similar list). But Jesus did not give in. [Hebrews 4:15](#) says that Jesus "faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin." He knows firsthand what we are experiencing, and he is willing and able to help us in our struggles. When you are tempted, turn to him for strength.

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RESISTING TEMPTATION

To fully and truly resist temptation, it takes the help of Almighty God, and lessons of precept and example that are literally of biblical proportions. One such example comes from the life of Joseph as presented in Genesis chapter 39. In his August 2020 article on Bible.org titled, "[*Conquering Temptation, \(Genesis 39\)*](#)" Greg Brown, Phd., cites 8 precepts to conquer temptation. He writes...

*How can we conquer temptations?*³

No matter, who we are or where we're from, we will encounter temptations. Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden. Israel was tempted in the wilderness. David was tempted while walking on the roof of his house. Christ was tempted, and we'll be tempted as well. We will all experience temptation, the only question is, "How will we respond to it?" In this section of Joseph's narrative, he experiences major temptations: He was tempted to be upset and bitter at his circumstance of being sold into slavery. When he became successful, undoubtedly, he experienced temptations towards pride and independence from God. He experienced sexual temptation from his master's wife, which is the major temptation in this narrative. After being wrongly imprisoned, it is very possible that he was tempted towards hopelessness and despair. In all these temptations, God was faithful to provide ways of escape, and he does the same for us.

To conquer temptation we must...

1. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Submit to God's Discipline Instead of Becoming Bitter at It
2. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Practice Integrity in All Areas of Life
3. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Especially Guard Ourselves in Times of Success
4. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Seriously Consider the Consequences
5. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Recognize How Evil Sin Is
6. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Avoid It Persistently
7. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Be Willing to Pay the Cost
8. To Conquer Temptation, We Must Trust that God's Plans Are Better

...How can we resist temptation?

BIBLE READING: [Genesis 3:1-7](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too.* ([Genesis 3:6](#))

Resistance begins with being aware of temptation when it strikes. How could Eve have resisted temptation? By following the same guidelines we can follow. First, we must realize that temptation *in itself* is not a sin. We do not sin until we *give in* to the temptation. To resist temptation, we must (1) pray for strength to resist, (2) run, sometimes literally, and (3) say no

³ Copyright © 2020 Gregory Brown, Phd., From the series: [The Bible Teacher's Guide, Joseph: Trusting In God's Sovereignty And Goodness](#), August 2020

when confronted with what we know is wrong. [James 1:12](#) tells of the blessings and rewards for those who don't give in when tempted.

BIBLE READING: [2 Samuel 11:1-27](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *Late one afternoon David got out of bed after taking a nap and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath.* ([2 Samuel 11:2](#))

Resist immediately; any delay makes it more difficult. As David looked from the roof of the palace, he saw a beautiful woman bathing, and he was filled with lust. David should have left the roof and fled the temptation. Instead, he entertained the temptation by inquiring about Bathsheba. The results were devastating.

Have a plan for resisting temptation. To flee temptation, (1) ask God in earnest prayer to help you stay away from people, places, and situations that may tempt you. (2) Memorize and meditate on portions of Scripture that combat your specific weaknesses. At the root of most temptation is a real need or desire that God can fill, but we must trust in his timing. (3) Find another believer with whom you can openly share your struggles, and call this person for help when temptation strikes.

BIBLE READING: [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

KEY BIBLE VERSE: *For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. Then the Devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, change these stones into loaves of bread."* ([Matthew 4:2-3](#))

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Remember that temptation to seemingly harmless sins can lead to harmful consequences. The devil, also called the tempter, tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, and here he tempted Jesus in the desert. Satan is a fallen angel. He is *real*, not symbolic, and is constantly fighting against those who follow and obey God. Satan's temptations are real, and he is always trying to get us to live his way or our way rather than God's way. Jesus will one day reign over all creation, but Satan tried to force his hand and get him to declare his kingship prematurely. If Jesus had given in, his mission on earth—to die for our sins so that we might have eternal life—would have failed. When temptations seem especially strong, or when you think you can rationalize giving in, consider whether Satan may be trying to block God's purposes for your life or for someone else's life.

Realize that temptation, in itself, is not a sin. Jesus was tempted by the devil, but he never sinned! Although we may feel dirty after being tempted, we should remember that temptation itself is not sin. We sin when we give in and disobey God. Remembering this will help us turn away from the temptation.

Do not be surprised by temptation at unlikely times and in unlikely places. Jesus wasn't tempted inside the temple, or at his baptism, but in the desert where he was tired, alone, and hungry, and

thus most vulnerable. The devil often tempts us when we are most vulnerable—when we are under physical or emotional stress (for example, when we are lonely, tired, weighing big decisions, or faced with uncertainty). But he also likes to tempt us through our strengths, where we are most susceptible to pride. We must guard at all times against his attacks.

TEMPTATION, Scriptural support on How to overcome it...⁴

- [Proverbs 7:1-5](#)
- [Matthew 4:1-11](#)
- [Matthew 6:13](#)
- [Mark 14:38](#)
- [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)
- [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)
- [James 1:12-15](#)
- [James 4:7](#)
- [Jude 24](#)

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IV. Important Points to consider regarding TEMPTATION⁵

- resisting it when under pressure. [Genesis 39:9](#)
- sometimes you must literally run away from. [Genesis 39:10-15](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#)
- danger of letting yourself be tempted. [Deuteronomy 12:30-31](#)
- don't entertain it. [2 Samuel 11:3-4](#)
- attacks at our weak spots. [1 Kings 11:3](#); [Matthew 4:1-2](#)
- pride made David fall to. [1 Chronicles 21:1-3](#)
- attacks those strengths that can lead us to pride and works at our doubt. [Luke 4:3](#)
- satisfying right desires in wrong ways. [Matthew 4:3-4](#); [Luke 4:3](#)
- use Scripture to combat it. [Matthew 4:3-4](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)
- often comes in attractive and convincing forms. [Matthew 4:6](#)
- God never leads us into. [Matthew 6:13](#); [James 1:13-14](#)
- attacks after victories. [Luke 4:1](#)
- never leaves us permanently. [James 1:13-14](#)
- resisting temptation of sexual sin. [1 Corinthians 7:3-5](#)
- recognize your areas of weakness to. [Romans 14:1](#)
- marriage won't eliminate sexual temptation. [1 Corinthians 7:28](#)
- snowball effect of. [James 1:12-15](#)
- people often give into it gradually. [Revelation 9:20-21](#)

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V. TEMPTATION (Anecdotal Wisdom)

- ❖ *The biggest human temptation is ... to settle for too little. —Thomas Merton*
- ❖ *Don't worry about avoiding temptation—as you grow older, it starts avoiding you.*

⁴ God's Word Application Index

⁵ Life Application Bible Notes Index

- ❖ *Opportunity knocks but once, but temptation leans on the doorbell.*
- ❖ *When you run from temptation, don't leave a forwarding address.*
- ❖ *There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice. —Mark Twain*
- ❖ *Every moment of resistance to temptation is a victory. -Faber*
- ❖ *God is better served in resisting a temptation to evil than in many formal prayers. -Penn*
- ❖ *It is easier to stay out than to get out. -Twain*
- ❖ *No degree of temptation justifies any degree of sin. -Willis*

It is incredible the messages and meaning that we learn and live by in the music we sing. This is no less true of the time tested melody and lyrics from that great hymn of the church Yield Not to Temptation, with which we appropriately conclude this lesson...

*“Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; Each vict'ry will help you Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue; Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.*

*Shun evil companions, Band language disdain; God's name hold in rev'ence, Nor take it in vain
Be thoughtful and earnest, Kind heated and true, Look ever to Jesus He'll carry you through*

*To him that o'er cometh, God giveth a crown; Thro' faith we will conquer, Tho' often cast down
He who is our Savior, Our strength will re-new; Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.*

CHORUS

*Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”*