

# Temptation

Text: James 1:2-15

There are two types of temptations as seen in the Scriptures. One temptation is a trial, which is often inescapable. The other is a solicitation to do evil, which is always escapable. Temptations which are trials as seen in our text in James 1:2-4, 12. The temptation which is a solicitation to do evil is spoken of in James 1:13-15.

The temptations synonymous with trials are inevitable to all Christians. II Timothy 3:12:

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The Bible informs us that the godly shall, not might, suffer persecution. John 15:20: “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” How shall we expect to be exempt from that which our Lord experienced. I Peter 2:19-21: “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” This is the Scripture that has inspired the phrase, “What would Jesus do?” In the context of the Scripture we are retold that Jesus’ response to His trial was accepted and endured. Our Lord was doing this vicariously for us and that we should, in like fashion, accept and invest our trials as an opportunity to be blessed and be a blessing to others. In II Corinthians 1:3-7, Paul teaches us the same principle. II Corinthians 1:4: “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Therefore our attitude toward this type of temptation should be:

- 1) Acceptance: I Peter 1:12
- 2) Joyful: I Peter 1:13; James 1:2
- 3) Rewarding: Job 23:10; James 1:12

For the remainder of the message, I would like to discuss how we deal with the temptation to do evil.

## I. GOD NEVER TEMPTS YOU TO DO WRONG.

James 1:13: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”

## II. KNOW THE ORIGIN OF TEMPTATION.

James 1:14: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” In my teen years there was a very popular comedian named Flip Wilson. Mr. Wilson had an act in which he parodied a very weak person, constantly getting into trouble and then saying, “The Devil made me do it.” It was funny, but not Scriptural. The temptations which are trials are from without. The temptations to do evil come from within.

Paul understood this when he penned Romans 7:18: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

### III. TEMPTATIONS ARE VARIED.

I John 2:16: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Satan gives his methods away in the temptation of Christ in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). Notice the parallel between how John names three types of attempted temptations by Satan to Jesus. The temptation to turn stone into bread: "...the lust of the flesh..." The temptation accompanied with the view of all the kingdoms of the world delivered over: "...the lust of the eyes..." The temptation to jump from the pinnacle of the temple with the promised rescue of angels: "...the pride of life."

In the cycle of one's life, temptations take their turn.

#### (A) Youthful Temptations

The temptations in one's youth are often in the category of the lust of the flesh. II Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." This can be where the fires of sexual desires are at their height. I Corinthians 7:9: "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." The word for "burn" is taken from the Greek word *pyroo*, meaning to set on fire, to burn. Compare this to I Corinthians 7:1: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." The word for "touch" is from the Greek word *haptomai* that carries the meaning of attaching to, clinging to and the root *hapto* meaning to kindle or set on fire. In other words, don't get so close to someone that you start a fire. Contextually, this is exactly what is being said, because the next verse begins with "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication...."

#### (B) Mid-Life Temptations

In the mid-life experience, many of the temptations fall under the category of the lust of the eyes. They can now finance their desires. They see a material possession, and they have the wherewithal to obtain it. And the greed that burns at this stage of life often goes unrestrained, creating indebtedness and inevitable discontent. What they see, they lust after - then go to extremes, if necessary, to get it. I Timothy 6:6-10 warns of living with a craving for material gain as "...hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Timothy 9:b). Ecclesiastes 5:13: "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." Paul addressed it well when he said in I Timothy 6:2, "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

#### (C) Autumn-Life Temptations

In the autumn of one's life, many of the temptations that befall is the pride of life. To reminisce nostalgically over one's past and say, "Look what I have done." There is a pride that goes beyond bragging of one's grandchildren or how, through our industrial and

creative ways, we made this a better world. This is not to say we shouldn't aspire to leave this a better world and to ask God to use us in His great plans, but we should never boast. Proverbs 27:2: "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Psalm 34:2: "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." Compare Proverbs 16:18 and Proverbs 24:23. I suppose one of the greatest warnings against pride is found in Daniel 4:30-37 when Nebuchadnezzar boasted that all his opulence was the makings of his own strength and power. God struck him down to the ground to live as an animal for seven years. After seven years Nebuchadnezzar gave all glory to God (Daniel 4:37).

#### IV. HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

- (1) Know that overcoming temptation is possible. I 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." Deuteronomy 28:13: "And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them."
- (2) Don't place yourself in danger zones. Proverbs 4:14, 15: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."  
Proverbs 5:8; Proverbs 7:8-10; Genesis 39: 10-12; Matthew 6:13; Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:36; Luke 11:4; Luke 22:40; Luke 26:46.
- (3) Associate with those who bring you closer to God. I Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: communications corrupt good manners."  
II Samuel 3:2,3; I Corinthians 15:33; I Corinthians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14; Jeremiah 5:5; Proverbs 15:20.

-Pastor Pope-