

THE TRUTH

Instructor: Evangelist Carlton Knott

Lesson 28 - The Truth About Temptation

No growing Christian can be unconcerned about the traumatic problem of temptation. There is no age level where moral choices and struggles of the spirit do not confront us. Temptation may attack at different points, on different issues, but it will always be with us as long as we are in the flesh.

1. Is it a sin to be tempted? [James 1:2-3] Ans. _____

NOTE: Apparently, the Bible writers were assured that temptation was not a sin and they were also convinced that temptation could be a good thing. We certainly need to understand that there are some redeeming features about temptation. First of all, it proves that we have moral insight. No one can be tempted unless there are meaningful choices to be made. If you find yourself tempted, it certainly implies that you are seeing the issues correctly.

LET US TALK ABOUT TEMPTATION

a. Temptations are _____ [Revelation 3:10]

This verse contains a wealth of inspired encouragement for anyone who is struggling against a recognized evil. The apostle warned against making an exception of ourselves.

b. Temptations are _____ [1 Corinthians 10:13]

Oftentimes our burden appears heavier and our battle seems more severe than any which others have experienced. Paul said that this is simply not true, and we must not allow ourselves to think it for a moment. No matter what we suffer, the very same temptation has come upon a million others long before we were born.

c. Temptations are _____ [1 Corinthians 10:13]

Our heavenly Father measures and weighs every trial before He permits it to come upon the believer. He considers the circumstances and the strength of the one who is to stand under the proving and testing of God, and He never permits the temptations to be greater than the capacity of resistance. If the soul is overborne, the person overpowered, this can never be charged to God, but the one tempted was not vigilant and prayerful and did not appropriate by faith the provisions God had abundantly in store for him. Christ never failed a believer in his hour of combat. The believer must claim the promise and meet the foe in the name of the Lord. [Our High Calling, 323]

d. There is always a way of _____ [1 Corinthians 10:13]

Does this mean there will always be an easy road out of every temptation experience? No. It just means that in every moral trial God will provide us an alternative. There will always be two paths leading out of each temptation—one, the alluring path of evil; the other, an appealing path of good. When we are tempted to be dishonest, the Holy Spirit draws us to use integrity.

e. We should _____ during temptations. **[James 1:2]**

NOTE: A new, satisfying picture begins to emerge in these verses. Temptation provides opportunity for spiritual _____ and _____. It is not a disgrace to be tempted. If there are no battles, there can be no victories through strong decision. Neither can there be any nobility of character. The person who avoids all temptation by avoiding contact with all people may do no harm, but neither does he do any good. He is morally anemic.

2. Since there are great benefits in resisting temptation, should I then purposely seek out temptation? [Matthew 6:13] Ans. _____

NOTE: If temptation can be such a glorious opportunity to develop character, why not pray "Lead us into temptation" instead of "Lead us not into temptation?" Some might reason that they need an injection of new strength and begin looking for a nice, juicy temptation so that they can gain a victory and build their character. We do not understand our own strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, no one is justified in deliberately seeking for a testing situation. We have no promise of deliverance under those circumstances. Fire controlled in the stove is great, but it is not very good out of control on the roof. It is better to shun the bait than to struggle in the trap after it has sprung.

3. Does God actually tempt me with evil? [James 1:13] Ans. _____

- **[Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:9]**
- **[Genesis 22:1-2]**

The word temptation has two meanings: to _____; to _____

When we read that God tempted Abraham, we are by no means to understand that He enticed Abraham to anything that was evil; the meaning of the word in that place, doubtless, is simply and only that God tried him. God is the only one who is qualified to arrange the circumstances of our test. He will permit to develop around us only that which He sees we are in need of and have the strength to endure.

"God tempts no man. For God to tempt, in the sense of enticing to sin, would be inconsistent with His nature, and altogether contrary to His known character." **[Spurgeon]**

VARIATIONS OF TEMPTATIONS

4. Are we all tempted in the same manner? [James 1:1-2 14-15] Ans. _____

- _____ tendencies to sin **[Numbers 14:8]**
- _____ tendencies to sin **[Hosea 8:7]**

5. What are the two common points of temptation that assail all humanity?

➤ _____ **[Genesis 3:6; Matthew 4:3]**

Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome. "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 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." [Desire of Ages, 117.3]

➤ _____ [Romans 8:5, 8, 13]

NOTE: Theologically, the flesh is here taken to mean the impure lustings of the flesh, pride, and envy; so a man must hate his own flesh. The apostle saith, 'Fleshly lusts war against the soul.' [1 Peter 2:11]

Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God. [Desire of Ages, 122]

THE RIGHT METHODS TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS

➤ Have a _____ up _____ before the act. [Daniel 1:8; Proverbs 23:7]

NOTE: Daniel's purpose, was known to the heavenly Watcher and as Daniel placed himself on the side of God to keep his ways, the Lord placed himself on Daniel's side to keep him.

The body is to be brought into subjection to the higher powers of the being. The passions are to be controlled by the will, which is itself to be under the control of God. [Education, 57]

A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before the Christian commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding, we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to Him. [Patriarchs and Prophets, 459]

➤ Use the _____ Bible texts. Avoid using vain religious speeches. [Psalms 119:11; Matthew 4:4, 7]

Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity, they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." [Isaiah 59:19] [Great Controversy, 599]

➤ Wrestle with God in _____ [Genesis 32:26; Luke 11:1]

Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! [Great Controversy, 621.2]

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when

prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation. **[Steps to Christ, 94.2]**

- Schedule weekly _____ **[Matthew 7:21; Jonah 3:5-10; Daniel 10:3; Acts 12:5-17]**
- Do all in your power not to place yourself _____ on temptation's _____ **[1 Thessalonians 5:22; Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4]**

If we venture on Satan's ground, we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us. **[Adventist Home, 402.4]**

- Seek to _____ _____ _____ to the tempter. **[Isaiah 22:2; Matthew 5:29-30; Proverbs 26:20]**

NOTE: Withdraw the fuel that may make lust burn. Avoid all temptations. Take heed of that which doth nourish sin. They, who pray that they may not be led into temptation, must not lead themselves into temptation.

"Although in the wilderness, he was not exempt from temptation. So far as possible, he closed every avenue by which Satan could enter, yet he was still assailed by the tempter. But his spiritual perceptions were clear; he had developed strength and decision of character, and through the aid of the Holy Spirit he was able to detect Satan's approaches, and to resist his power." **[Desire of Ages, 102]**

Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. **[Acts of the Apostles, 518]**

- Have a _____ awareness of God's abiding _____ **[1 Peter 3:12; 2 Chronicles 16:9]**

6. When tempted to sin, whose presence was Joseph conscious of? [Gen. 39:9] Ans. _____

- If all else fails... _____! **[Genesis 39:12]**

THERE IS HOPE

Have you fallen into sin? Then without delay seek God for mercy and pardon. When David was convicted of his sin, he poured out his soul in penitence and humiliation before God. He felt that he could endure the loss of his crown, but he could not be deprived of the favor of God. Mercy is still extended to the sinner. The Lord is calling to us in all our wanderings: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." The blessing of God may be ours if we will heed the pleading voice of His Spirit. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." **[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 177]**