

Temptation – Incitement to Sin

Temptation is the act of tempting or the state of being tempted. There are two angles of temptation: In the bad sense: to tempt, to entice to sin. In the good sense: to try, to put to test. In this article, we are going to discuss temptation as to enticement to sin.

Temptation is an enticement to sin when a man who is designed to worship and serve God serves and worships creatures instead (Rom. 1:25). The issue of temptation strikes at the heart of our relationship with God and His purposes. Temptation is the incitement of natural, God-given desires to go beyond God-given bounds. For every privilege of blessing that God has given to man are limited by certain boundaries. To go beyond this boundary is to fall into temptation. The result served by temptation is spiritual alienation for God and enslavement to moral evil.

There are three major sources of temptation: Satan the god of this world (1 Thessalonians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 11:14) is the greatest source of temptation for mankind. The world or cosmos diabolicus (1 John 2:16, 1 Cor. 10:12) refers to the kingdom under the domain of the devil. The old sinful nature (OSN) within every person (James 1:14) will continue to harass and take advantage of every flaw and weakness of man to commit sin.

Temptation therefore, is the incitement from the world, the flesh or the devil, to serve and worship the creatures rather than the Creator. Any situation in life may be an occasion of temptation or testing. God designed tests for believers but Satan may use it as medium for temptation. Testing or trials comes from God but temptation comes only from the devil, the world or from man himself. No temptation can come from God (Jam. 1:13).

God allows the way in and He makes the way out. No believer should tempt another believer (Luke 17:1-2). To *cause one to stumble* is to incite or provoke another person to sin. Every believer ought to take action to correct sources of temptation in his own life (Mat. 18:8-9).

There are practical factors to overcome sexual temptations (1 Cor. 7: 2, 5, 1 Tim. 5:1-2). The controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is necessary for overcoming temptation.

The moment of temptation is when the doors of evil are more beautiful than ever before, the opportunities are more glorious, the reasoning are more convincing, pretense are more splendid, execution is more urgent, and the hope of immediate recovery is more evident.

Practical things to exercise to correct the factors leading to temptation:

- Do not lessen your annoyance or righteous anger at your own sins
- Do not associate attractions to evil with reputable things.
- Do not willingly go to places contributing to your temptation
- Do not allow idleness to lead you to moments of weaknesses.
- Do not agree with your OSN to create your own temptation.
- Do not hesitate to run away from temptation if necessary.

Temptations are appeals to legitimate needs and desires. It is when a person places the fulfillment of his own will before the will of God and gives way for the old sinful nature (OSN) to take control that it becomes sin (James 1:14, 15). To overcome any temptation is to refuse to wrestle with God and start to rest in Christ.

To overcome temptation, one must refuse to satisfy his needs, desires, and passions or fulfill his purpose in any way that will take him outside the will, plan and purpose of God. The believer must resist his temptation to adopt the world's view of greatness, success, and glory (Acts 5:9). No believer will ever overcome temptation without knowing the plan and purpose of God for his life.

Satan avoids making a frontal attack immediately on God's probationary command and its threatened penalties. Instead, he sows the seeds of doubt, unbelief, and rebellion. The temptation of Eve is typical. She is made to feel that God has unwisely and unfairly withheld a legitimate objective good from man. In Job's trials the strategy is different, but the end sought is the same, the rejection of God's will and way as just and good. The process of temptation is always deliberate rather than swift because human volition must be involved.

The additional use of *peirazo* and its related forms are complex. The words may refer to exterior circumstances which try the believer's faith and are designed to strengthen his faith (James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6). Although these circumstances are held to be under the absolute control of God, the explicit causal ascription of them to God is not prominent, suggesting that these desires should be fulfilled in a way contrary to God's will and plan.

Perhaps some reasoning by analogy is permissible here. Paul recognizes that his "thorn in the flesh" is under God's sovereign control (2 Cor. 12:8-9). But the "thorn" is "a messenger of Satan" (vs. 7). The same phenomenon may be viewed from two aspects. The *peirasmon* is a trial of one's faith controlled and, even in some sense, sent by God. But God is not the author of the prompting to sin that such a trial seems to bring with it.

The believer may rejoice in a trial because he detects God's good purpose in it (James 1:2-4, 12). But the subjective use of trying situations, the internal incitement to sin in connection with trials and testing is not and cannot be the work of God.

Enticement to sin and to impatient rebellion is the work of Satan (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Rev. 2:9, 1 Thess. 3:5). In this he is immensely aided by the deceptive power of *epithymia*, lust, in the old nature (Jam. 1:14-15). While Satan's role in temptation is usually assumed rather than stated, in 1 Cor. 7:5 Paul explicitly warns Christians to observe his charge with respect to marital relationships, "that Satan tempts you not because of your impatience" (Mat. 4:1; Mk. 1:13).

Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13), and the Bible is complete with warnings to be watchful because of the ever-present danger of falling into temptation (Luke 22:40; Gal. 6:1; 1 Pet. 5:8-9).

But the Bible assures the believer that God will make a way of escape from temptation (1 Cor. 10:13), and that "the Lord knows how to deliver the one who is tempted" by the Jewish leaders (Mark 8:11).

But these temptations were designed either to force Him to prove His Messianic mission in terms of the preconceptions of His enemies or to compel Him to show Himself incapable of being a true rabbi (Luke 10:25) or to cause Him to make self-incriminating statements (Mark 12:15, Luke 23:2). Very likely Jesus was subject to temptation throughout His ministry (Luke 4:13; 22:28). But the great temptation is the crucial temptation in redemptive history (Matt. 4:1-), was just the summary of His daily temptations while in the flesh.

This temptation confronts one with the question, how could the sinless Son of God be really tempted? Granted that appeal could be made to legitimate desires in His human nature, what force could temptation have on a divine person who cannot be tempted? Efforts to solve the problem run the risk either of impairing the "without sin" of Hebrews 4:15 or of making the temptation unreal.

Our understanding of the matter is beclouded by the fact that our awareness of being tempted immediately involves us in at least a momentary inclination to yield to the temptation. This was not true of Jesus Christ, and yet the temptation was real, so that He is able to "succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). The necessity of the temptation in view of Adam's fall is evident.

Jesus Christ triumphed over Satan with His immediate and obedient use of the Word of God. He thereby proved that He was qualified to be the "Last Adam." "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). The believers are designed by God to overcome and win over any temptation through the victory of Jesus Christ. Giving in to temptation is denial of His victory. dly out of temptation ..." (2 Peter 2:9).

When God does not give what you wanted:

- Maybe you don't really need it
- You are better off without it
- Maybe you need to wait on God's timing
- Bear in mind God is committed to meet your needs
- What God is providing is what you need for the moment
- You have to align your belief with what God has provided

The Desires from the old sinful nature (epithumia) commonly known as lusts. The epithumia is operational both with the unbelievers and carnal believer's produces:

- The desire to dishonor the body
- The desire to rebel against God
- The desire to allow the OSN to rules
- The desire to make provisions for the flesh and obey its lusts (Rom. 13:4)
- The desire for the riches and glory of the world (1 Tim. 6:9)
- The desire to enjoy the pleasure of sin – Titus 3:3
- The desire to be drawn away from God (Jam. 1:14)
- The desire to be conformed to evil – 1 Peter 1:14
- The desire to enjoy the worldly lusts 1 Peter 2:11
- The desire to do all the old sin nature desires (2 Peter 2:10)
- The desire to love the world and things of the world -1 John 2:16
- The desire to reject the Gospel for unbelievers and Bible doctrine for the believers

The Desires from the new man (epipoteo) the desire for spiritual life is rooted in the work of the Holy Spirit. This desire is exclusive domain of the believers when filled with the Holy Spirit. Epipoteo produces:

- The desire for God, His plan (Gal. 5:17) and heavenly riches
- The desire to please God (James 4:5)
- The desire to function spiritually in God's plan
- The desire for resurrection body – 2Cor. 5:2
- The longing for fellowship with others believers
- The desire to gain most of the spiritual benefits
- The desire for the milk and meat of God's Word
- The desire to understand spiritual things
- The desire to submit to God's will
- The desire to submit to God's authority
- The desire not to love the world and the things of the world
- The desire for wisdom of God
- The desire for divine approval

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