

The Bible Doctrine Of Sin

Lesson 3

Temptation To Commit Sin

Introduction

Since sin is not something we "inherit" or are "born into," we must understand how we can become so entangled in it (**Heb. 12:1**). It is not something done to us against our will (*little children taking their medicine, eating their vegetables, or cleaning their room*). Sin happens when we make a choice to do or not do something. And the most compelling factor in this "equation" is temptation.

If we properly understand temptation, we have made an excellent start toward refraining from sin. This lesson will contain 3 segments:

- 1) Defining temptation
- 2) Distinguishing temptation from "testing" or "trials"
- 3) Overcoming temptation

Defining Temptation

Webster's Dictionary => "enticement to do wrong by promise of pleasure or gain; inducement to do something"

Thayer's Greek Lexicon => "a trial or proving; the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue; an enticement to sin, whether from desires or outward circumstances"

Temptation has nothing to do with whether or not the one solicited gives in. Even if one refuses to yield, he has still been tempted. The classic proof of this is Jesus Himself (**Heb. 4:15**).

Distinguishing From "Testing" Or "Trials"

Originally, the verb "tempt" (*peirazô*) meant "to try or attempt; endeavor" [*Thayer Greek Lexicon*]. This meaning was irrelevant of whether the attempt was morally good or bad.

How is this meaning shown in the following passages?

Acts 9:26 _____

Acts 16:7 _____

There was nothing morally wrong (*sinful*) with these "attempts." This illustrates the different ways the Scripture uses the word at the root of the term "temptation."

Sometimes the point being made is a "test" to ascertain one's character or quality. What one thinks or how he will behave will be uncovered in such a "test."

How did Jesus do such to Philip? (**Jn. 6:6**) _____

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At other times, God "tests" one to determine his genuineness in faith.

How did God "test" Abraham? (Gen. 22:1-2, 9-12; Heb. 11:17-19) _____

God didn't "test" Abraham to find a flaw in his faith; rather, He "tested" him to allow him to show his faith. God wanted Abraham to pass, not fail. When God "tests" us through His word, it is never His intention to discredit us or cause us to miserably fail. It is always His intention to allow us the opportunity to rise to higher levels of faith.

How does Jas. 1:13 prove this about God? _____

"Temptation" is also different from "trials." All of us will face times of adversity, hardship, or even persecution. The "trial" may not necessarily involve evil or inducements to do wrong, but it could.

How does Job illustrate this? (Job 1:13-22; 2:1-10) _____

How do the following passages illustrate a failure by some to indict God of sending such adversity?

Job 4:7-8 _____

John 9:1-2 _____

Yet, God does allow us to see adverse times...they can strengthen us.

How do these passages indicate saints are strengthened? (Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6).

What we want to focus on is the use of "temptation" when referring to a solicitation (*seducing*) to commit sin. Solicitation is the devil's work...not God's (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:7). God "tests" us to make us stronger. Satan "tempts" us to destroy us...separate us from God. Satan's temptations are solicitations for us to go astray. We might even reduce the process by which Satan tempts us to a "formula" (Jas. 1:14-16)

Step 1 => Enticement to do evil, violate God's will

- lusts cry out to be satisfied; Satan provides the allurement
- the temptation can be endured, not yielded to (v. 12)

TEMPTATION = DESIRE + OPPORTUNITY

Step 2 => Sin itself is "born"

- temptation becomes when one chooses to act

SIN = DESIRE + OPPORTUNITY + ACTION

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Step 3 => Death results when sin is all "grown up"

- the tragic results from our sinful actions, weakness re: Satan's allurements
- now the one who yielded to sin is separated from God (*just what Satan wanted*)

DEATH = DESIRE + OPPORTUNITY + ACTION + NO REPENTANCE

Overcoming Temptation

The best way to overcome temptation is fill (*saturate*) ourselves with God's word (**Col. 3:16a; 1 Jn. 2:1a**). Jesus is always our example. He helps us with our own temptations when we read how He handled His.

How did Jesus deal with temptation? (**Mt. 4:1-11**) _____

What reminder does **Lk. 4:13** give us? _____

We can also help ourselves overcome temptation by limiting our exposure to sin. If we place ourselves right in harm's way, what do we expect? The recovering alcoholic has no business going into a bar for a Coke. He has made it too easy on himself to realize carbonated soda will not satisfy him...the alcohol he still loves is too easily within reach.

How do Lot's actions illustrate this? (**Gen. 13:10-13; 2 Pet. 2:6-8**) _____

Some situations just need to be fled (**1 Cor. 6:18**). Hanging around too long in a dangerous place only makes easier to rationalize yielding to Satan's temptations.

How do the following examples illustrate this?

Gen. 39:7-12 _____

2 Sam. 11:1-4 _____

Instead of just "fleeing," we must also fill the void with something helpful.

How does **2 Tim. 2:22** teach this? _____

Finally, we can't underestimate the value of prayer. Jesus told His disciples on a very dark, foreboding night, "*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (**Mt. 26:41**). Prayer indicates a desire for Divine help because we appreciate the strength of the adversary. Not just prayer, but "watchful prayer" (**1 Pet. 5:7-8**).

How does Paul conclude his discussion on the Christian's armor? (**Eph. 6:10-18**) _____

Even though the primary responsibility is upon each of us to limit our exposure to Satan's temptations, what reassuring principle does Paul give us in **1 Cor. 10:13**?