

UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH TEMPTATION BIBLICALLY

What is temptation? Where does it come from? What are the sources of Temptation? How has Satan operated in the past to tempt God's people? What are God's purposes? What does He want to do in my life through it? How did Jesus deal with it? How can I overcome sinful temptations in order to live victoriously? What happens if I give in? or don't care?

These questions are just a few that will be answered Biblically in the course of doing this study.

What does the word "tempt" mean?

The original New Testament Greek word is "peirazo" which is a very general term used very broadly throughout Scripture. It means "to test, try, prove". It is not always referring to enticement to sin against God, even though that's been what many have limited it to. Satan's purpose is obvious in temptation - to corrupt us with sin so that we choose it over God's righteous ways. However God has a purpose too, and that is in a good sense - to benefit us by strengthening our Christ-like character by choosing obedience to His Word in the testing. So temptation is a testing designed to strengthen and benefit or corrupt and destroy us - it depends on which way we choose. One man distinguished the two words in this way:

- "a test is something I don't like to do but should"
- "a temptation is something I like to do but should not"

Another has combined both "testing and tempting" in the word, "trial" and says:

"A trial is any circumstance in your life whereby you are responsible to obey God and make the right decision" - Dr. David K. Johnson

Is there ever a time that we're not being tried and tested?

Look up the following verses and make observations in answering the question: What is the purpose of temptation of "trials"?

Js.1:2-4	Lk.8:13
Jer.33:8-9	Matt.5:14-16
Ex.16:4	I Pet.1:3-9
Gen.22:1	

As you've observed, God does tempt or test but not for evil purposes. Read Js.1:13-14.

With that in mind, let's look at the real enemy, Satan, the author of sin. Scripture tells that we are not to be ignorant of his devices or strategies (2 Cor.2:11). So look at the following verses and observe what the Bible reveals about his character.

Jn.8:44	Rev.12:9
Job 1:6-12	I Thess.3:5
I Jn.2:13	Eph.2:2
Matt.4:3	2 Cor.7:5
2 Cor.11:14	

Now look at the following and observe how he works specifically.

I Chron.21:1	Job 2:3,7
Matt.13:9	Lk.22:31
Jn.13:2	2 Cor.4:4
2 Cor.11:3	2 Cor.12:7
2 Cor.2:11	I Thess.2:18
2 Tim.2:26	I Pet.5:8 (continues present tense action)
Rev.12:10	Eph.6:16

From the following passages in order to gain further insight into just how he tempted people in the past, list your observations as to how and what he does. (Incidentally, the more you observe from these verses, the more alert you'll be to the enemy).

Eve: Gen.3:1-6

Job 1:6-12

Ananias and Saphira: Acts 5:1-5

Paul: 2 Cor.12:7

Samson: Judges 14:15

16:1-21

Peter: (Note the seven steps in Peter's Downfall)

- (1) Matt.16:33 (pride)
- (2) Matt.26:40 (ease)
- (3) Jn.18:10-11 (rashness)
- (4) Matt.26:58 (following afar off)
- (5) Jn.18:18 (evil associations)
- (6) Jn.18:25 (open denial)
- (7) Mk.14:70-71 (blasphemy)

Christ: Matt.4:1-11; Lk.4:1-13 (Incidentally Satan didn't quit at this point but tempted Christ throughout His ministry (Lk.22:28; Matt.16:23))

- (1) to distrust the Providence of God in His life
to do things His way (not in God's or God's timing)
- (2) to presume upon the power of God
- (3) to worship Satan over the person of God
to fulfill ambitions his own way

Think about it: What does it mean to you that Christ experienced temptation to the fullest of its pressure? (Heb.4:15; 2:18) This also means the temptation is not sin - but it's what we do with it.

What else does Scripture reveal regarding the SOURCES that tempt us?

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Js.1:13-15 (flesh) | Ik.22:31-32 (devil) |
| I Tim.6:9-10 | Prov.28:20 |
| Rom.12:2 (conformity) | Prov.1:10; 7:6; 16:29 (peer pressure) |
| 1 Jn.2:15-17 (world) | Prov.30:9 |
| - the lust of the flesh | Rom.8:13 |
| - the lust of the eyes | |
| - the pride of life | |

How do these 3 connect up with the temptations of Christ? Eve? others? you?

Satan appeals to us through seemingly "innocent" things such as: TV, movies, music, friends...what else can you think of?

Sin doesn't look that bad but notice what happens when we choose our own way and don't care! Notice the price that's paid - the consequences!

Gen.3:7-19

2 Sam.12:9-19 (David)
Acts 5:1-11
Matt.27:3-5
Prov.4:14-19

Prov.5:22
Mark 14:72
Prov.6:32-35
Prov.7:21-27

To do further study, read through Proverbs and list the consequences of sin and the benefits of doing what's right.

Giving in to temptation brings sin, guilt, fear, depression, and a long list of consequences, so it's never worth it! If we could get rid of temptation, we'd be getting rid of sin, but that is not possible at this point. So how do we deal with it? By knowing where Hope is!

Where is promised deliverance?

2 Pet.2:9
2 Cor.12:7-9

Rev.3:10
I Cor.10:13

Why is there deliverance? Satan is a defeated foe! Look at:

Rom.16:20
Jn.14:30
Col.2:15

Heb.2:14
I Jn.3:8
Rev.20:10

Rewrite I Cor.10:13 in your own words and why there is hope (and also from the following verses:

Rom.5:8

2 Cor.5:21

Rom.6:1-13

2 Tim.3:16-17

2 Pet.1:3-4 (His promises)

Eph.2:1-6

Phil.4:13

Heb.2:18

Heb.4:15

Jn.16:33

I Jn.4:4

What are the "weapons" we have?

Eph.6:10-18

Jn.15:3

Ps.119:9-11

Eph.6:17

(Note how Jesus used the Word of God in Matt.4:1-11 to overcome Satan's temptation)

Our sin and God's judgment is what sent Christ to the cross. He paid the death penalty in our place that we deserved! He took the judgment, punishment and wrath of God upon Himself as our substitute (2 Cor.5:21). We not only are forgiven but delivered from the power of sin over our lives. With the Word and Spirit of God, we are more than conquerors (Rom.8:28-39). We now can learn How to Overcome Temptation: (Write down the principles observed from the following)

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In conclusion, some of the key principles in overcoming temptation are:

1. Knowing you're a Christian (Jn.1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Rev.3:20; 2 Cor.5:17,21; I Jn.5:11-13)
2. Being committed to Christ (Rom.12:1-2).
3. Being alert to temptation and the enemy (I Pet.5:8-9) by prayer (Matt.26:41).
4. Resisting by submitting to God (Biblical principles) (Js.4:7) knowing His way of escape (I Cor.10:13).
5. Having Godly friends who can help you (Heb.3:13; 2 Tim.2:22).
6. Avoiding any situation (place, things, people) that you know you'd be tempted by (Rom.13:14).
7. Live one day at a time, abiding in the Word and in prayer (Jn.15:1-17). That's how to be controlled by the Spirit of God (Eph.5:18-20).
8. Cooperate by obedience to the Word/Spirit of God and make a new focus of cultivating the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23). and God's love (I Cor.13)
9. Maximize and emphasize your responsibilities to serve Christ and others (I Cor.15:58; Acts 1:8; Phil.2:3-4) rather than a self focus.
10. See temptations as "friends", opportunities that God is using to strengthen and develop your spiritual life of daily dependence on Him. See them as the very ways in which He will build Christ like qualities and character into your life ever time you obey and take the Biblical way of escape!

Since your strength comes from prayer and the Word - Keep your eyes on Him
- Keep His thoughts in your mind
(Phil.4:8)
- Keep conversing with Him
(I Thess.5:17)

PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE! (Ps.16:11)