

Understanding Temptation

INTRODUCTION

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB)

Understanding Temptation

I. Our Hearts

A. We often say, “Well, God knows my heart!” like that’s a good thing! But what does God say about the heart?

1. **Jeremiah 17:9-10** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

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I. Our Hearts

B. **James 1:14-16** - But each person is tempted when he lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

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I. Our Hearts

C. Bank Robbery Analogy – your flesh, the world, and the devil

2. **Galatians 5:16-17** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Understanding Temptation

II. Overview of the Three Temptations

- A. Your flesh and your heart's incorrect beliefs reinforce the doubting of God's character and His Word.
 - i. Lust of the flesh: "Do whatever you want to do"
[usually in the form of comfort]
 - ii. Lust of the eyes: "Have whatever you want to have"
[usually in the form of covetousness]

Understanding Temptation

II. Overview of the Three Temptations

A. Your flesh and your heart's incorrect beliefs reinforce the doubting of God's character and His Word.

iii. Pride of Life: "Be whatever you want to be"
[usually in the form of control]

iv. And your heart agrees! "Yes, I can do what I want, have what I want, and be what I want to be!"

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II. Overview of the Three Temptations

B. Each temptation was presented to Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3:6**

- i. Lust of the flesh in **Gen. 3:1** “Did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?” as if God is withholding good from them
- ii. Lust of the eyes when Satan tempted Eve that her eyes will be opened to see new things in **Gen. 3:5a**
For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened...

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II. Overview of the Three Temptations

C. Jesus defeated all three temptations of the heart.

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect had been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

- A. Lust of the Flesh: To Do [usually in the form of COMFORT]
 - iii. Accusation against God's Goodness as though God is holding back His best for you.
 - iv. Matt. 4:1-2 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

B. Lust of the eyes: To Have [usually in the form of COVETOUSNESS]

i. Temptation to have anything you desire to possess that God has not given (yet)

ii. Gen. 3:6b ...that it was a delight to the eyes...

1. Satan also said to her in Gen. 3:4 ...you will not surely die...

2. Satan said Gen. 3:5a ...your eyes will be opened...

3. Living by what is seen rather than living by faith.

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

B. Lust of the eyes: To Have [usually in the form of COVETOUSNESS]

iii. Accusation against God's WISDOM

iv. Luke 4:5-7 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

B. Lust of the eyes: To Have [usually in the form of COVETOUSNESS]

v. Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”

vi. Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

vii. Worship of God is the antidote for the lust of the eyes.

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

C. Pride of Life: To Be [usually manifests in the form of LOVE OF CONTROL, especially of one's own reputation]

- i. Temptation to be anything you want to be, receive praise and attention, and be in control of how others see you.
- ii. Gen. 3:6c that the tree was to be desired to make one wise and Satan encouraged Eve in Gen. 3:5 ...to be like God...

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

C. Pride of Life:

iii. Accusation against God's sovereignty and power

iv. Luke 4:9-11 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

C. Pride of Life:

v. Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

- Not my will but Your will be done is what Jesus modeled for us.

vii. Luke 22:42 “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

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III. Three Temptations of Your Heart: Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

C. Pride of Life:

viii. Doing the will of God for the glory of God is the antidote for the pride of life.

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IV. Empowered by Christ

- A. All of these temptations have been defeated by Jesus according to **Heb. 4:14-16**.
- B. The Holy Spirit inside of a Christian gives the power to will and to do what God requires. **Phil 2:12-13**
- C. Note how all three antidotes require belief, faith, and trust in God (in 3 different attributes of His character). **Heb. 11:6**

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V. God's Redemptive Power: the WORD, WORSHIP, and WILL of GOD

A. Lust of the Flesh: To Do

- i. WORD Matt. 4:4: But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
- ii. Repent: By trusting the Word of God [instead of my own feelings, desire for COMFORT; ultimate source of Comfort is the Holy Spirit understanding of the Word of God]
- iii. God wants you to experience pleasure but just connected to him and obedient to His Word.

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V. God's Redemptive Power: the WORD, WORSHIP, and WILL of GOD

B. Lust of the Eyes: To Have

- i. Worship Luke 4:8: And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"
- ii. Repent: By learning to Worship, or serve/give, [instead of wanting the desires of my eyes] I find ultimate satisfaction in the One true God, not in the possession of temporal things of this life.
Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

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V. God's Redemptive Power: the WORD, WORSHIP, and WILL of GOD

C. Pride of Life: To Be

- i. Will of God **Luke 4:12**: And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"
- ii. Repent: By doing the will of God [instead of my will to make others impressed by me], I accomplish God's plan and allow Him to determine my reputation.
- iii. God wants you to do things with excellence

Understanding Temptation

V. God's Redemptive Power: the WORD, WORSHIP, and WILL of GOD

D. Ultimately, the goal is to become more like Christ for God's glory.

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Recommended Resources

- Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart Mark Shaw
(Focus Publishing: Bemidji, 2014)
- The Heart of Addiction by Mark Shaw