

Doctrine of Temptation

1. As Jesus was tempted so shall every Christian be tempted. No one is above the Master. As Christ had to endure satanic suggestions so shall the saints. Someone has asked, "*Why is it that opportunity knocks only once, yet temptation bangs on the door?*"
2. There is no real sin in temptation; there is only sin in succumbing to temptation. Martin Luther used to say that you cannot keep the black crows from flying around the head but you can keep them from landing. Billy Graham has often said that temptation is the first look; sin is the second or lingering look.
3. There are several purposes for the times of testing.
 - To separate the true from the false. Judas looked like all the other disciples but he was different and the difference was manifested when he was tempted to trade his faith for thirty pieces of silver in exchange for the Saviour.
 - To keep the heart humble. The Pharisees and the Scribes were proud of their religious inclinations because they felt they had no sin. That spirit is alive today for there is a dangerous doctrine being taught by many Protestant groups called Perfectionism. Times of testing are often simple reminders of how deceitful the heart is and desperately wicked. Even Paul cried out "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Romans 7:24)
 - To promote holiness. When the moment of temptation comes and is passed without shame, the soul is stronger and the Father is pleased.
 - In order to receive a blessing. *James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*
4. To enhance victory over sin in the time of testing the proper application of Scripture remembered is essential. It is significant that Jesus responded to every temptation with a scriptural quotation (and they all came from Deuteronomy).

However, care must be taken. Knowing Scripture and being able to quote it is not enough to keep the soul from sinning. David knew the Word of God and fell into grievous sin as did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Peter. The world is filled with former ministers, Sunday school teachers, and religious leaders who fell into sin despite knowing full well what the Bible teaches.

5. If reflected upon, temptation can be anticipated and prepared for. We have already discovered that there are only three categories of temptation, so that is the first line of defense against sin: be aware of the broad assaults. A second line of defense is to consider how others have been specifically tempted to sin.

- Adam and Eve. They were encouraged to become like God. Beware of the intellectual seductions to sin as is found in Self-esteem theology, the New Age Movement, and the cults such as Mormonism.
- Abraham was tempted to love his family more than he loved the Lord.
- Isaac was tempted to lie.
- David was tempted to lust, deceit, and murder.
- Paul was tempted to unjustified anger.
- Peter was tempted to compromise his doctrinal convictions.

Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

- All the disciples were tempted to forsake Christ.

A third line of defense against sin is to remember that God is always watching. *"The father of a small boy would occasionally sneak into a neighbor's orchard and pick some of the best fruit. He always made sure, however, that "the coast was clear." One day with his son tagging along, after carefully looking in every direction and seeing no one, he crept through the fence. He was just about ready to help himself when the youngster startled him by crying out, 'Dad! Dad! You didn't look up! You forgot to see if God was watching.'* When temptation comes and we are inclined to yield because it is dark or no one is around, if we are a Christian, we remember that God is always watching.

5. Christians are to pray specifically **not** to be led into temptation.

- *Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*
- *Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

- *Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*
6. While it is the right of the Sovereign to test His subjects (James 1:13), those who are created have no right to tempt God (Matthew 4:7), though this has been done (Mal. 3:15). When the children of Israel forgot that God was good and would provide for their needs, the Bible says they tempted Him (Exodus 17:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:16)
- *James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*
 - *Malachi 3:15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.*
 - *Exodus 17:1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*
 - *Deuteronomy 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.*
7. As it is wrong to tempt God the Father, so it is equally wrong to tempt God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- *Acts 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*
 - *Matthew 22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*
 - *Luke 20:23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?*
 - *Acts 5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.*
8. There will always be an end to every temptation, though new ones will emerge.

- *Luke 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*
9. God has promised that He will not let anyone be tempted above what they can endure and will make a way to escape.
- *1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*
10. Sometimes God will keep individuals from the hour of special testing.
- *Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*
11. The Lord knows just how to keep the godly out of temptation.
- *2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:*
12. Ultimately, every person is tempted when they are drawn away of their own lusts.
- *James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*