

Doctrine of Temptation

1. The word for temptation in the *Old Testament* is *maccah* (*mas-saw'*) and *peirasmos* (*pi-ras-mos'*) in the *New Testament*. The idea is to put to a test for the purpose of approval.
2. The Exodus Generation was tested in the dessert to trust God. Time and again they failed to believe God would provide them protection, food, water, and guidance. In seeking human solutions to divine problems the Exodus Generation provoked the Lord to anger. The *New Testament* church is warned not to allow the heart to grow hard.
 - *Psalms 95:8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*
3. Jesus taught the believer to pray not to be led into times of testing and to plead for deliverance from evil. The basis for this prayer request is that the kingdom and the power and glory belong to the Father and not to the Evil One.
 - *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.*
4. As the Christian prays for divine deliverance from times of testing there is personal responsibility. The believer must watch and pray. The heart must be guarded against encroachments by the world, the flesh and the devil.
 - *Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
 - *Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*
5. Jesus was tempted in all points or manner as the Christian, yet without sin. Because of this He is able to comfort all who are being tested.
 - *Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*
6. The manner in which Jesus was tempted is the same manner by which the Christian is tempted which is threefold in nature: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.
 - *1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*
7. Jesus endured various forms of temptation by different individuals.
 - Satan tempted Jesus in the dessert. *Luke 4:13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

- ❖ Jesus was tempted by the lust of the flesh. He was invited to exert His divine power in an inappropriate manner. *Luke 4:3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*

Jesus resisted this temptation by remembering the Word of God. *Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*

- ❖ Jesus was tempted by the lust of the eye. *Luke 4:5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.*

Jesus resisted this temptation by taking authority over His enemy and by the Word of God. *Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

- ❖ Jesus was tempted by the pride of life. He was tempted to remember His uniqueness and play with his life like a toy. Let the angels protect him for sport. *Luke 4:9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Jesus resisted the temptation by the Word of God having a fundamental respect of the holiness of the Father. *Luke 4: 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

- The scribes and Pharisees tempted Christ to perform a sign. *Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:*
- Herod Antipas tempted Jesus to perform a miracle as a show. *Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.*
- The people at Calvary tempted Jesus to come down from the Cross. *Mark 15: 29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.*

8. God permits temptation in order to test the heart of individuals. Jesus spoke of individuals who hear the Word, receive it with joy but in time of temptation fall away.
 - *Luke 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

9. Many a person has turned away from the church and from the faith because they could not pass the test of approval. So they give themselves to sensual pleasures, or worldly pursuits or the making of money at the expense of their faith. The apostle Paul spoke of one such person named Demas.
 - *2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

10. In matchless grace God has promised He will never test a soul beyond what it is able to endure and even in the temptation will provide 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.*

11. The temptation or testing one person is called upon to bear may become the source of revulsion and the basis of rejection, but it does not have to be.
 - *Galatians 4:14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

12. A particular form of temptation to every Christian is that of covetousness. Paul warns Timothy of wanting more in life than what God sees best to give.
 - *1 Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

13. Blessing and reward awaits those who endure temptation.
 - *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.*

14. Those who love the *Word of God* and seek to obey will be rewarded with protection from more temptation.
 - *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.*

15. For those who find themselves struggling with any temptation in general, and an addictive behavior in particular, the following pastoral counsel is proved.

- Seek continually on the other side of the acts of evil for divine deliverance. Remind God the Father of the promise of the angels who told the shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus that He “*shall save his people from their sins*” (*Matthew 1:21*).

Jesus said of Himself that He came to set the captives free. *Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

- Seek for the practical wisdom needed to break the cycle of sin. *James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- Ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*
- Make no provision for the flesh. *Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.* Stop putting yourself in the path of temptation and stop setting aside time for evil.
- Become accountable to a trusted person. *Eccl 4:9-12 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
- Remember that there is not a man or woman worth going to hell over. *Romans 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*

- Remember not only who you are but to Whom you belong. *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*
- Put no confidence in the flesh to subdue or overcome sexual passions. *Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision [converted], which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*
- Do not merely rely on the Holy Spirit to slay sexual passion, yield wholly to His sovereign work. *Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
- Do not doubt the reality of salvation but hope in God. *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*
- Believe there is a way of escape from temptation and then use the simple solutions the Sovereign provides. *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. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. In Scripture covetousness is declared to be idolatry. One of the root causes of sexual sins is covetousness or an inordinate desire to have more than we should or something we should not have.*
- Run to the mercies of God as many times in a day as necessary for God will forgive without limit the sincere repentant. *Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- Ask God to write His law upon your heart according to promise. Seek to have a principle within that will regulate attitude and actions. *Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

“I want a principle within of watchful, godly fear,
A sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.

I want the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire,
To catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.

From Thee that I no more may stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make;
Awake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.

Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy power impart;
The mountain from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.

O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,
And drive me to that blood again, which makes the wounded whole.”

Charles Wesley

- Practice the presence of God. *Psalm 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
- As time is taken to do evil and give full expression to sexual passions so give time to repentance. *Hos 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.*
- Never call wrong right. Never justify what is being done or the sins that have been committed. *Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*
- Accept the consequences of your actions without comment. In as far as sexual sins are not easily overcome, the judgment of God will fall in some form upon the life. Receive the chastening of the Lord without comment. *Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Hebrews 12:6 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*