

Temptations Endured

October 22, 2023

Most people consider temptation to be something like, “psst, hey buddy, I got something for ya.” In a way, it can be like that. But it can also be troubles and adversity beyond anything you have ever experienced. The ultimate goal of any temptation is to get us off of walking on the Word and off of believing God’s Word.

John 10:10 (KJV) - The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Here are the two descriptions and two agendas. One is Jesus Christ and a life that is more than abundant; the other is the thief, the adversary who’s agenda is to steal, kill and destroy. Two opposing agendas, two points of view and a clear description of who wants evil things to happen, and who wants good to happen in our lives. This is the true nature of God and His Son Jesus Christ, and the true nature of the devil which is evil.

The Bible has a wealth of information about God and the adversary, about good and evil, about temptation and standing against it. Sometimes we forget that temptation is going to be part of life in this world. It’s always going to be around for us to deal with until Christ returns to gather us together.

I Peter 1:3-7 (WT)

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy caused us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to be born again with a view to a living hope, 4 that is, with a view to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance reserved in heaven for you. 5 Through believing, you are protected by the power of God unto a salvation [deliverance] ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this, you are very glad, even though it may be necessary for a short time at present to be grieved by many kinds of temptations 7so that the proof [genuineness] of your believing (which is of much more value than gold, which perishes and which is proved by fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

There is no medication that we can take to be immune from temptation. So it is wise to learn as much as we can to avoid situations where temptation is likely, and to learn about standing on God’s Word by putting on the mind of Christ. Here’s a great example and great starter:

I Corinthians 10:13 (WT) - No temptation has taken hold of you except what is common to humans. God, however, is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are capable of enduring, but with the temptation He will even make the way of escape so that you are capable of enduring it.

This is good information to know! We are blessed that God is on our side in this life. The two major methods that the adversary uses against the believer to tempt us off of the Word are with **#1 Pleasures**. Pleasures that present sense-knowledge information or situations so appealing that they appear to be coming from God the Father; a mental “tropical paradise.” These types of temptations usually come when we have made a decision to do something for God that will require our time and commitment, and a “good opportunity” just happens to come along that appears to be a one time offer that you just cannot refuse or turn down. **#2 Pressures**. Of course, pressure can come from anywhere: our jobs, our family, our environment, our physical health or it can come from “natural” disasters. It can be mental or physical pressure.

Hebrews 4:15-16 (WT) - Moreover, we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things in the same manner as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

The unique aspect of temptation from the devil is that he tries to “custom make” the temptation just for us. What may be a temptation for one person, may not be a temptation for a different individual. He tries to attack us at our weakest point with pleasure or pressure. Jesus Christ was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV) - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' 7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

In retrospect, this record begins by telling us that Jesus went into the wilderness and was going to be tempted of the devil. No surprise and no immunity from temptation. If anyone could or should have been immune to temptation for redeeming the world from sin and death, it would have been Jesus Christ. However, even he was not exempt from temptation. In Hebrews it stated that he was tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin. So he is able to help and strengthen us in times of temptation.

Hebrews 2:18 (WT) - Moreover, by what he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

We have help in times of temptation! Christ was tempted in all points like we are, but he did not cave into it. He did not give up. He did not succumb to it or faint in his mind. He stood and so he is able to help and strengthen us in times of temptation. It's clear that temptation will come at us at times. So being prepared for it is a big step in being able to triumph over it.

James 1:2-4 (WT) - Consider every joy, my brothers, whenever you encounter various temptations, 3 knowing that the proving of your believing produces patience. 4 Let patience bring about a perfect work so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

God knows that we will be tempted, He tells us that. But He also tells us to believe His Word and stay put on it. Be patiently enduring, because the temptation may last awhile but not forever. The prophets of old endured temptation as did Job, who was a man who patiently waited through temptation.

James 5:10-11 (WT) - Brothers, take an example of suffering hardships and of long-suffering, namely, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider them blessed [happy] who patiently endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you saw the outcome from the Lord, because the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

**Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.
Job 42:12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.**

Sometimes when we are living through a hardship of temptation, there are more that follow. Temptations inside of other temptations. Job is a good example of a person who was faced with numerous challenges. He lost his land, his livelihood, his livestock, his family and his health.... Almost all at once! But the Word of God states that God truly blessed his life in the outcome, and God has not changed since then.

James 1:12-17 (WT) -Blessed [happy] is the man who patiently endures temptation, for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of the life that He promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," because God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one [with evil].14 Each person is tempted when he is allured and enticed by his own cravings. 15 Then, when the craving has conceived, it bears sin, and the sin, when it has reached its final course, gives birth to death. 16Do not be misled, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation nor shifting shadow [like the moon].

Happiness is an evident outcome for the man who patiently endures temptation. No one likes to be fooled or deceived by temptation, and it is not always evident that temptation is occurring when it does. But as we put on the Word of God in our minds, and keep renewing and refreshing our minds with it, it makes temptation more recognizable when it comes.

1 Peter 5:8-11 (WT) - Be sober. Be watchful. Your adversary, the slandering devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, being firm in the [right way of] believing, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by members of your brotherhood in the world. 10 The God of all grace, Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ /Jesus, after that you have suffered a little while, will Himself fully equip, establish, strengthen you and give you a firm foundation. 11 To Him be the strength forever and ever. Amen.

Preparation is important in resisting temptation. Consistent and repeated preparation is ideal.

A heavy-weight prize fighter once said, *"Everybody has a plan... until they get punched in the face."* There is no set course or line to walk that keeps temptation away. It is going to come. But we can be alert and diligent in our preparation with each new day.

After the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he didn't walk away from Christ never to return again. He came back at another time, trying to tempt Jesus in everyday life. Temptation to doubt, worry or fear and not believe God's Word. There is a great example in the Gospel of John, chapter eight.

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Imagine yourself being in this situation like Jesus was. You're endeavoring to teach God's Word to people, help people, love people and then this happens. What kind of thoughts must have arisen in Christ's mind? Do you think this may have been a potentially explosive situation for him emotionally? Do you think you would have been tempted with defeat, rage or panic? Yet, he controlled his mind and the situation with the love of God and spoke what God wanted him to speak.

Temptations will come to us by way of the five senses. It's not a little angel on one shoulder and a little devil on the other shoulder whispering in our ears. It comes to us by our senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching. It could be from something we hear from the radio, something we see on tv, someone who says something at our job, someone in our family, something that happened in the past or something that we may fear about the future. It always attacks us by way of the five senses with senses information. We must recognize it for what it is and squelch it as soon as we can.

1 John 2:15 (WT) - Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him, 16 because everything in the world (the craving of the flesh and the craving of the eyes and the boastful arrogance of the earthly life) is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 Furthermore, the world and its cravings are passing away, but he who makes a practice of the will of God abides forever.

We can practice the Will of God. The Word of God is the Will of God. As we practice the Word of God, we get better with each passing day. We must make a resolve to stay put, stay on the Word. The results will be

Godly and our lives will bear much fruit. The parable of the sower is a great illustration of those who are distracted away by temptation and those who stand on the Word during temptation, and bring forth fruit.

Luke 8:4-15 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

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.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Time and again, we see that patience is a vital part of success through temptation. Job patiently endured. Christ patiently endured temptation and we are instructed to do the same. In this record of the sower, there is no less "seed" of God's Word being sown, but rather what is being done with it after it is sown. Do we let temptation get the best of us? Or do we take the "seed" of the Word of God, hear it, keep it, nurture it and bring forth fruit? We are ones to decide which way this outcome will go.

In I Corinthians 1, there are verses that describe how the growth of a planted seed works.

I Corinthians 1:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Galatians 6:9 (WT) - Let us not be discouraged as we do the good, for in due season we shall harvest, provided we do not become exhausted.

We set our mind's eye, our vision, our focus on the things of God's Word. We study to show ourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. This diligent effort will allow us to endure temptation so much better each time we are attacked... whether it's physical health temptations, or mental anguish temptations, or financial temptations... having the armor of God's Word solidly embedded in our minds will make it much easier to endure. The hope of Christ's return is our focal point of what is to come in our future.

I Thessalonians 5:6-9 (WT) - So then, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober.

7 As a matter of fact, those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

8 However, let us who are of the day be sober, clothing ourselves with the breastplate of believing and of love and with the head covering, hope of salvation [*deliverance*], **9** because God has not appointed us to wrath but to the acquisition of salvation [*deliverance*] by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our future is set on the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ! It is an immovable Rock, it is a safe Rock, the Rock on which we can stand and endure the temptations of this life, and look forward to a bright future throughout all eternity. Then will see the rewards of all of the temptations that we have endured.