

Temptation

Harmony M.B.C., March 8, 2009 (Morning)

Robert P. Myers

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, forever. Amen.**

The single greatest persuasive force that works against the peace and happiness of the people of God is the force or element we call temptation. Temptation's impact is measured by comparing the number of right and wrong choices we make. It is the sounding device that discovers the depths of our human weaknesses and propensities. As seismologists use seismographs to discover the magnitude, depth and frequency of an earthquake, so temptation discovers to us how far we will go in transgressions, and how susceptible to sin we are.

Not only does temptation work against our peace and happiness, but it works against our strength and resolve as believers, and it does that simply by stealing our peace and happiness. It is the single most effective force left as a tool for Satan's use against those who have been preserved by the blood of the Lamb, and he uses it frequently and with great effect upon the earth.

The people of God live this constant battle between what they have been and what they now are. In this battle, it is temptation that becomes the evil ninja assassin who sneaks upon us unsuspected many times. We seem to be outwitted by his vast array of weapons and tactics, although we are acquainted with most of the devices used in such evil assaults.

Because avoiding falling into temptation is such an important thing, believers need to know as much as they can about this awful force that works insidiously in every life. The more we understand temptation, the better we will be equipped to avoid its terrible snare. So, this morning, I want us to consider three things about temptation:

First: The profile of temptation

Second: The mechanics of temptation

and Third: The believer handling temptation

I. The Profile of Temptation

- Temptations Are Not Unique to the Individual
 - > They are common to mankind
 - 1Co 10:13 - "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man..."
 - > This is true because the nature of humans has sprung from one source with a common resistance to spiritual things and a genetic passion for the fleshly
 - Gal 5:17 - "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit..."
- But, Temptation Is Personalized
 - > It is situational
 - > It appeals to the human that YOU are

- We have our own carnal dispositions that accommodate this
- The self in us has LEARNED that certain things of the flesh gratify
 - So, personalized temptations are about preferences; what does our carnal man prefer the most. They are also not about things that don't attract you
 - ^ On a nature show, I watched some scientists set up an experiment to try to detail why and when lions attacked humans. In one of the trials they set up 3 decoys; a small deer decoy, a feral hog decoy, and a human effigy sitting in a chair. They then let the lions respond as they would and they observed them. The lions first attacked the small deer decoy, then the hog decoy, and last of all the human decoy. This is a good representation of how temptations presents themselves to us. If we were the lions, then whatever temptation was the most attractive would be the one that would draw us the most powerfully and so on. If those researchers had put, say a small log there in that group of decoys, it is almost certain that no lion would attack it with feeding on its mind. In this same way, there are just some things (that may actually be things that inspire the lusts of other people) that we are not attracted to, so they do not represent a temptation to us.
 - In their presentation, the most powerful of them appeals also to your area of greatest weakness
 - ^ In my lion example, it was hunger that caused the decoys to appeal to them.
 - We can set ourselves up for temptation
 - ^ Described by Paul in 1 Cor. 7 as he writes concerning duties of a husband and a wife: V. 5 "Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that **Satan tempt you not for your incontincy.**"
 - * The concept here is about how practices in our lives may put us directly in the way of temptation.

II. The Mechanics of Temptation

- It originates in the entertainment of lust within us
 - > Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
- Which results in sin
 - > Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:
- It solicits the help of the carnal creature
 - > And through that sets aside the will of the spiritual creature
- The end product of its effect on our lives is deplorable
 - > One of its end products is a break in fellowship between the spiritual you and your spiritual Father
 - > Another of its end products is loss of joy for you
 - > Another of its end products is death to a part of you
 - James 1:15: "...and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

III. The Believer Handling Temptation

- Recognize the attitude of your carnal creature toward it
 - > the carnal creature welcomes it (this is the only channel through which the carnal creature in a believer can be gratified)
 - > the carnal creature helps it along (it is the lusts of the carnal creature that instigate temptation)

- Recognize the attitude of your spiritual creature toward it
Romans 8:6 tells us that they who follow the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.

- Resist temptation by resisting the one who brings it
James, in his great writing about temptation and lust said this about the way to resist temptation: (James 4:7) “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

- Deny yourself the carnal gratification offered by temptation
 - > Tit 2:11-12 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, **denying** ungodliness and **worldly lusts**, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

- Pray for delivery from temptation: (Mat. 26:41) - “**Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**”

- Last, remember these three things:
 - > Christ has experienced the force and persuasiveness of every temptation you will ever know and overcame them for you. He is not only your example about how to confront temptation, but He is your sacrifice for your failures to completely overcome temptation.

 - > Christ, in giving His life for you has freed you from the “law of sin and death (Romans 8:2) which means He has opened a portal for you to be free from the power that temptation has the potential to have over you.

 - > God always gives us a way out: (1Cor 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*.”