



Victory over Temptation

There is probably no greater challenge any human being has to face than the challenge of temptation. Whilst we as a human race have faced many challenges head on and won - sporting, engineering, medicinal - the challenge of temptation seems to be one which eludes us. Whether it is resisting having that extra piece of chocolate cake, through to the most sinister of all involving either sex, money, or power, there seems to be something innate to what makes us human which makes us susceptible to temptation.

Temptation defined

Temptation ultimately involves a choice between what we know to be right or wrong. It involves our conscience. When we are faced with a temptation to do what is wrong, something deep inside of us begins to speak to our mind saying "don't do it", and then virtually immediately after that our mind tries to come up with ways to justify doing the wrong thing! Isn't it amazing!! Personally, I think this is great evidence to show that there must be a God, and that as humans we are somehow "made in the image of God", because where else would this struggle come from? If the universe is just a random-chance

universe evolving from a Big Bang, there should be no such thing as conscience. But the Bible teaches us: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"¹, and after Adam & Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, God said: "the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil."²

Temptation described

Temptation actually involves all three aspects of our being: our spirit is involved, our soul is involved, and our body is involved.

Sometimes temptation begins with the body. We see something, or smell something, or hear something that arouses our desires, and our body begins to "want it". Sometimes it begins in our minds and emotions. A thought comes to our head from somewhere, or a state of sadness or



(1) Genesis 1:1. (2) Genesis 3:22.

longing comes into our emotions, and one thought leads to another. Sometimes temptation begins in our heart or spirit. It can seem like our wills are often bent on a certain pathway of evil. As Jesus said: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart."³

The Bible actually gives a very precise chain of events that temptation takes. Listen to what it says:

'When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me". For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one of us is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.'⁴

What this teaches us is that temptation is like a seed. Only if the seed finds "fertile ground" in the hearts of our lives can it lodge and begin to take root, growing until it bears the fruit of sin, and then ultimately killing us. Isn't that shocking! But it is so true, isn't it!? Didn't you feel so bad in your spirit the last time you gave in to temptation? No wonder the cry of a God-fearing person is "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"⁵

Temptation defeated

How can we be rescued? Is there a way out? The Bible says: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when

you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."⁶ So, what is this 'way out'?

Since temptation involves all three aspects of our being - heart, soul, & body - the 'way out' from temptation also involves addressing all these aspects of our life.

1. A new heart.

Temptation finds fertile soil in a heart bent on evil. That's why the Bible is always so insistent that every human being needs to be "born again", to get a "new heart"! God states very clearly: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."⁷ What do we have to do to get this new heart from God and keep it soft? We must repent and believe in Jesus. That is, we must confess our sins, turn from them, and call out to Jesus saying: "Jesus, I need you in my life. Help me, please. Forgive me. I repent. I need a new heart. Change me!" The Bible says: "Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."⁸

2. A renewed mind.

Temptation is also a battle of the mind, and the only way we can defeat the lying and deceptive thoughts which come into our minds is through God's truth. The Bible is the word of God. Jesus prayed to God: "Make them holy by the truth; Your word is truth."⁹ When Jesus was tempted by the devil,

(3) Luke 6:45. (4) James 1:13-15. (5) Romans 7:24. (6) 1Corinthians 10:13. (7) Ezekiel 36:26,27.

(8) James 4:9,10. (9) John 17:17.

He always responded to the devil's temptations by quoting the Bible.¹⁰ The Bible says: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word ... I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."¹¹ The Bible describes the word of God as a sword with which we can defeat the devil's lies.¹² We need to memorize the Word, believe it, and then quote it out loud when faced with temptation.

If you are tempted to eat or drink too much, say: "It is written, 'Drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.'¹³

If you are tempted with pornography or sexual immorality, say: "It is written, 'Flee sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.'¹⁴

If you are tempted with money and greed, say: "It is written, 'No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Money. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'¹⁵

If you are tempted to seek power, say: "It is written, 'You know that the rulers of the pagans lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.'¹⁶

3. A crucified body.

Since temptation often appeals to the desires of our flesh, the only sure way to conquer our bodily desires is to kill them. We need to be dead. There is

no other way. This is what Jesus means when He said to His followers: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."¹⁷ We don't kill ourselves literally, but in a miraculous way, when we look to Jesus who was crucified for our sins, and identify with His death for us, we can experience "death to self" right now in a very real way. Say out loud: "I take up my cross and follow Jesus. I am dead to self." It is written: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."¹⁸ Taking up your cross and following Jesus is very, very powerful.

My prayer for each one of us is that we would live the victorious life over sin and temptation that we were each created for. Then we will experience a joy and happiness in life that is truly sublime, kindled by the character of God Himself.

God bless you - victory is yours for the taking!

Let us pray:

Father in heaven.

Thank you for showing me the way out from temptation.

Help me to choose that way right now. Forgive me for my sins. I really don't want to sin any more.

I do believe you, Jesus, and I thank you for Your holy Word.

And right now, I am going to take up my cross and follow You.

Hallelujah!

Thank you, Father,

Amen!

(10) Matthew 4:4,7,10. (11) Psalm 119:9,11. (12) Ephesians 6:17. (13) Proverbs 23:21. (14) 1Corinthians 6:18. (15) Matthew 6:14; Luke 12:15. (16) Matthew 20:25,26. (17) Luke 9:23. (18) Galatians 5:24.

Discovering Your Purpose in Life

(A summary from last month's Community Church Service)

"Life was meant for living" – that is our purpose! We experience abundant life when we:

1. **Glorify God** and give thanks to Him in all that we say and do.
2. **Meet the needs of all people** we come in contact with, as best we can.
3. Become a **mature follower of Jesus Christ**, and help all others to become the same as well! Only through knowing Jesus can we really do steps 1, 2, and 4 properly.
4. Where possible, fulfil God's original mandate to us: **get married, have children, and work** to subdue the earth.

How many men were born in 1917?

None. Only babies were.

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News & Events

You're invited to our next

CELEBRATION SUNDAY

a Community Church Service for everyone!!

Topic:



- **Sunday July 18th**
(the 3rd Sunday of the month)

- **5pm - 6.15pm**
(followed by supper!) 

- **Preston Nth East Primary School Hall**

Bring your whole family!

