



Sermon Series: Dealing with Temptation

To be used with Session 3: The Temptation to Test God

Sermon Title Possibilities: The Degradation of Temptation

Scripture: Matthew 4:5-7

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Dealing with Temptation” this sermon teaches us how not to take Scripture out of context in order to appease ourselves. It teaches us to do things God’s way according to God’s Word. This message reminds us to avoid seeking to justify our means by our ends. In other words, we must be careful not to seek to do the wrong things for the right reasons. This is tempting God. Also, seeking to get God to do something on our terms is tempting God. We must remember that God is not made for us, we are made for Him and His glory.

Introduction: The backdrop for this lesson is in Deuteronomy 6. Therein, Moses is preaching to the children of the children of Israel. Everyone twenty-years old and older has died in the wilderness. Moses’s audience is the Joshua-generation who would ultimately go in and possess the land of Canaan. Moses warns them about tempting the Lord, and he instructs them to *Respect the Lord* (Deut. 6:16), *Respond Obediently to the Lord* (Deut. 6:17-19), and *Relay to the Next Generation the Goodness of the Lord* (Deut. 6:20-25). Even today, we should reverence the Lord, obey the Lord, and communicate His salvation to those who do not know Him or His works. Three warnings arise from this text.

1. Beware of the Misrepresentation of Ourselves (v. 5)

The devil was seeking to get Jesus to operate in pride by proving that He was the Son of God. Whenever we seek to prove ourselves, we are operating from a place of pride. Pride destroys you (Prov. 16:18). Pride disgraces you (Prov. 11:2). Pride demeans you (Prov. 18:12). Pride distances you from God (James 4:6). When we operate in pride, we are misrepresenting ourselves. We are not better, bigger, or brighter than others. In ourselves we are fallen, wretched, and poor. It is only in Christ that we have spiritual bounty and spiritual blessings, as well as the unlimited potential to become change-agents in the earth.

2. Beware of the Misinterpretation of Scripture (v. 6)

The devil is shrewd. In verse 6, he misquotes Psalm 91:11-12. Psalm 91 is about the protection of the Most High God. The Psalmist is testifying and teaching about how God will protect his children as they navigate through the valleys of

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life. The Devil takes this passage out of context and seeks to get Jesus to place His faith in his rendition of the verses. Unfortunately, we are prone to take portions of Scripture out of context and make certain claims and/or perform certain actions trusting that the Lord will bless and keep us based on our faith in a misunderstanding of a passage. This is tempting God, and this can/will end badly. God is not obligated to do what we say He would or should do. God is committed to operating according to His Word and His character. This means it is imperative that we interpret Scripture correctly and apply Scripture responsibly.

3. Beware of the Misapplication of Faith (v. 7)

For years saints have taken Scripture out of context and made preposterous claims and foolish decisions. Some claim physical healing from Isaiah 53:5, which says “by his stripes we are healed.” The problem with that is that the context is about sin and not about sickness. Many have taken 1 Corinthians 10:13 out of context and claimed that “God will not put more on you than you can bear.” The problem with that is the context is dealing with temptation and not trials. Many are disappointed with God because their college-age children have left the faith. They assumed that Proverbs 22:6 was promising that if you raise your children in church, they will not leave the faith or the fellowship of believers. The problem with that is Solomon is talking about the way children are wired and taught, not about church membership or fellowship. The point is, we must be careful to put our faith in the Word of God on the basis of what God means when He said what He said. If we misapply Scripture, it could lead to our own disappointment or destruction.

Conclusion: In Acts 12, we read of Herod—the king—being arrayed in his royal apparel. When he began to speak to the crowd, the people start shouting that he had the voice of a god and not a man. The Bible says, “At once an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God,” (Acts 12:20-24). Herod died because of his pride. What happened to Herod physically, is what happens to us spiritually when we operate in pride. Let’s be careful not to misrepresent ourselves, misinterpret Scripture, and misapply our faith.

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