



Sermon Series: Dealing with Temptation

To be used with Session 4: The Temptation to Place Something Else Before God

Sermon Title Possibilities: The Prioritization to Deal with Temptation

Scripture: Matthew 4:8-11

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Dealing with Temptation” this sermon teaches us that the greatest joy comes from exalting God. We must be careful not to live life like it is all about us. Seeking fame and fortune is a sure way to give in to temptation. Seeking to worship, serve, and glorify God is a sure way to deal with temptation. We are most satisfied when we are most satisfied in God. Our greatest pleasure should be when we bring pleasure to God.

Introduction: They say that if you want to trap a monkey, you can put a banana inside of a coconut. The monkey will squeeze his hand into the coconut but will not be able to get his big hand out of it. I don’t know how true this is, but it illustrates temptation for us. The end goal of temptation is sin, and sin will cost you more than you intended to pay, it will keep you longer than you intended to stay, and it will take you farther than you intended to go. This text teaches us that if we see right, we can be right.

1. We Must Have the Right View of the World (v. 8)

The devil showed Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.” The problem with this is that Jesus knew that the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof (Ps. 24:1-2). Jesus knew that all the gold and silver belongs to the Father (Hag. 2:8). Jesus knew that all things were made by God and actually belongs to God (Gen. 1:1). He had the right view of the world, so He was not fascinated by the possibility of owning anything that actually belongs to the Father. We should be like that. At the end of the day, we are only stewards and managers of God’s stuff, therefore we shouldn’t do that which dishonors God in order to acquire things. Jesus said that we shouldn’t seek earthly treasures; we should seek heavenly treasures (Matt. 6:19-21).

2. We Must Have the Right View of Wealth (v. 9)

The devil seeks to get Jesus to get a good thing in a bad way. He promised Him possessions and power if only He would commit idolatry. This is what we have to watch for. Many of us will beg, borrow, steal, and overwork to acquire earthly possessions and prominence. This is a form of idolatry. Whenever our cars,

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cash, commodities, and connections consume us more than Christ, we are committing idolatry. When we neglect God to pursue possessions, positions, and prestige, we are committing idolatry. If we are rich in resources but poor in our relationship with God, we are not wealthy at all. Fact about it, we are most poor.

3. We Must Have the Right View of Worship (vv. 8-10)

In verse 8, Jesus speaks of the revelation for our worship (it is written), the prioritization of our worship (worship the Lord your God), and the reservation of our worship (and serve only Him). Our worship must be based on His Word. We reverence Him based on His revelation about Himself. Our worship must take priority over our wants. We must love, respect, adore, and desire Him more than we love, respect, adore, and desire anything or anyone else. Then, our worship is reserved for Him--and Him alone. God alone is worthy of worship. The text also teaches us that we worship Him by serving Him and we serve Him by worshipping Him.

4. We Must Have the Right View of Warfare (v. 11)

The devil left Jesus, and the angels served Him. This tells us that if we want to defeat demonic powers and invoke angelic assistance, we must recite the Word during spiritual warfare and worship our God exclusively. Paul told us that we need to maintain our connection with God, put on our covering from God, and stay in constant communion with God (Eph. 6:10-18)

Conclusion: It is interesting to note that the very first temptation in the garden of Eden and Christ's temptation in the desert reveal to us the nature of the temptations we deal with every day. The apostle John said that all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Eve yielded to the lust of the flesh, the text says, "the woman saw that the tree was good." She yielded to the lust of the eyes, it says, "and delightful to look at." And she yielded to the pride of life because she saw the tree as being "desirable to obtain wisdom." In the wilderness, the devil appealed to Jesus based on the lust of the flesh (vv.1-4), the pride of life (vv.5-7), and the lust of the eyes (vv. 8-10). Unlike Eve, Jesus dealt with temptation by prioritizing the Word and worship of God. We can do the same.

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