

Living The Christian Life Series
“Lesson 16 - Dealing With Temptation”

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Series Text: Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Applicational Text: Text: James 1:12-14 ¹² *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* ¹³ *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:* ¹⁴ *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

Introduction:

We have looked at the two types of production in the life of the “Born Again Christian.” We saw what happens when he is controlled by the Holy Spirit and we saw what happens when he is seduced by his Old Sin Nature. The believer controlled by the Holy Spirit produces “the fruit of the Spirit,” (*Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control*). The believer seduced by his own Sin Nature, produces the illegitimate children identified as *fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.*

Today, we are going to review what the Bible prescribes as the method for dealing with temptation properly so we can experience inner happiness in Living the Christian life. Although temptations come, God’s word reveals that we are never tempted above what we are able to resist.

I. There is Always an Escape Provided:

I Corinthians 10:13 says:

“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].”

That can be a very uncomfortable thought, because it means when we sin it's a direct result of our refusal to take the out God has provided for us. The phrase, *"make a way of escape"* is even stronger in the original Greek. It says make *"THE"* way of escape. God personally tailors for us the way of escape out of every temptation we face! In James 1:12-21 we are given some guidelines for dealing with temptation.

II. Happiness Comes Through Enduring Temptations:

James 1:12 says:

"Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

The word *"blessed"* is from the Greek word *"makarios"* (μακάριος). It is the plural word for inner happinesses – that's happiness in the plural. This phrase is more accurately translated, *"Inner happinesses belong to the man who endures temptation."*

Now, notice the next phrase, *"for when he is tried,"* the word translated *"tried"* (δοκιμος - dokimos) means *to be approved through testing*. So, the happinesses comes not through being tempted but rather, through becoming approved by not yielding to the temptation.

III. Identifying The Source of Temptations:

James 1:13 and 14 identify the source of temptation.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man:"

God is not the source of temptation. Now look at verse 14.

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

In our study of the Old Sin Nature we have identified the fact that the "Old Sin Nature" has a lust pattern. (I John 3:16) It might be related to sensuality (The lust of the flesh), or related to materialism (The lust of the eyes), or to ego (The pride of life). But, all of us have an established lust pattern.

Now follow this very carefully! There are two factors involved in our being tempted.

The first factor is the lust pattern in our Old Sin Nature.

The second factor is Satan and the host of fallen angels under him.

James 1: 14 says:

"...every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

Satan knows what your lust pattern is long before you even realize you have one. And, he baits traps for you right in the middle of your lust pattern. The word *“enticed”* is from the Greek word *“de-ladzo-menos”* (δელαζόμενος). It means to be lured into a trap through the use of bait.

Look at verse 15:

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Observe this carefully! Here are the mechanics which turn temptation into sin. *“When lust hath conceived,...”* Lust can’t conceive without your will getting involved! Your Old Sin Nature (Natural Disposition to Sin) and your volition (Free-Will) cohabit! When you consent with your will, your lust pattern snatches the bait and you are caught in the trap of sin. *“...and when sin is completely formed it bringeth forth death.”*

There are seven different kinds of death mentioned in the Bible: (1) **Physical Death** - separation of the soul from the body; (2) **Spiritual Death** - separation from God with no capacity for spiritual things; (3) **Positional Death** - identification with Christ in His death so that His death settles our sin account; (4) **Temporal Death** - a believer out of fellowship with God; (5) **Operational Death** - where there is no spiritual production; (6) **Reproductive Death** - inability to procreate; and (7) **Second Death** - the Lake of Fire and Brimstone in which spiritual death is perpetuated forever. The reference here in James 1:15 is to temporal and operational death, which identifies a believer out of fellowship. If you have unconfessed sin in you life, you are out of fellowship with God and are cohabiting with the old nature. Your production is the works of the flesh which are *fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like according* to Galatians 5:19-21. You are still a son of God (once a son always a son), but you are out of fellowship with Him, and confession of sin is the means of getting back in fellowship. As long as you are out of fellowship your production is wood, hay and stubble (I Corinthians 3:12).

Verses 16-18 of the first chapter of James, show us God’s grace provision for resisting temptation. It begins with a warning concerning values:

“Do not err, my beloved brethren.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

This is much stronger in the Greek, He is saying, **STOP BEING SEDUCED!** Every good act of giving and every perfect gift comes from God. God is the Father of lights, so there is no need to walk in darkness. Then, he tells us that God is consistent and

faithful to us and that He gave us new birth in order to make us the first-fruits of His creatures.

IV. Biblical Guidelines for Dealing Effectively with Temptation:

First we need to have the right attitude according to James, verses 19 and 20:

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath:

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

So, the proper attitude is stressed first: **SWIFT TO HEAR! SLOW TO SPEAK! AND, SLOW TO WRATH!** We get this thing all backward. We are swift to anger, quick to spout off at the mouth and we can’t hear a thing. That is an expression of an attitude of self-centeredness. It gets us into sin. The proper attitude, the one that will protect us from temptation, is swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

Let’s review the proper actions for dealing with temptations and they are twofold, verse 21: *“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,...*

We have seen that *“Filthiness”* is from the Greek word “rhuparian” (ῥυπαρίαν). This refers to moral defilement. *“Superfluity of naughtiness”* (περισσειαν κακίας – perisseian kakias) is an abundance of evil and is an idiom that refers to an abundance of self-righteousness.

So, the first action is to lay apart all moral defilement. *“Lay apart”* is from the word *“apothemenoi”* (ἀποθέμενοι). The word means “to put away,” but is used in the middle voice where the person putting away moral defilement is both assisted and benefited by that action. It’s to your benefit for you to put away moral defilement and self-righteousness, and we have the assistance of the Holy Spirit. How do we “put away our sin? I John 1:9 addresses this: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” We confess our sins and the Holy Spirit cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Would you notice that the word *“filthiness”* relates to the Area of Weakness in the Old Sin Nature (from which we produce overt sin), and *“superfluity of naughtiness”* relates to the Area of Strength (from which we produce self-righteousness). The “Do-Gooder has a dominant Area of Strength with a trend toward Self-Righteousness, while the Lascivious Person has a dominant Area of Weakness with a trend toward overt sin. This trend is genetic; we are born with the one we have – both these trends separate us from God. But that separation is removed by our confession and the Holy Spirit’s cleansing.

The second action is found in the last part of verse 21: *“...and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.”*

The engrafted word is to be received with *meekness*. Would you notice that this is the *engrafted Word*? The human brain has two frontal lobes. It is in the left frontal lobe that comprehension occurs. But our frame of reference, with our conscience, norms, and standards is contained in the right frontal lobe. It is only that which has been implanted or engrafted, into our frame of reference in the right frontal lobe that determines our behavior pattern. We transfer information from our left frontal lobe to our right frontal lobe by a process called faith-transfer. It is only when we mix what we have heard with faith that it is transferred to our frame of reference in order to program our conscience with our personal norms and standards. Therefore, if we are to have victory over temptation, if our behavior is going to conform to God's Word, His Word must be mixed with faith. That is, we must put our trust and confidence in the teachings of the Bible in order for them to become our frame of reference.

We are to receive the engrafted word in *"meekness."* This word, *meekness*, has certainly been misunderstood and abused. It is from the Greek word "prauteti" (πραΰτητι). *It's that temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good, and, as a result don't dispute or resist it.* It is our understanding that what we are and have is a result of God's grace and not our own ability, and His way is the best way of accomplishing it.

The act of yielding to temptation is a result of our ignoring God's opinion in favor of our own. When we think we know what's best for us, what will make us happy, we ignore His instruction and do our own thing. So, we are instructed to mix His word with faith and accept His dealings with us as good, and not dispute or resist His will for us.

It's important to call attention to the last phrase in verse 21:

...receive with meekness the engrafted word, WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS.

The context of this passage has nothing to do with salvation. James is talking about the believer dealing with temptation, so, this phrase *"which is able to save your souls"* is speaking of the engrafted word being able to deliver our souls from temptation. The word *save* is translated from the word *"sohsai"* (σῶσαι) and means *deliverance*. The context shows us that it is speaking of deliverance out of temptation. In speaking of sin, the former comedian Flip Wilson's alter ego, "Geraldine" attempted to convince us, *"The devil made me do it!"* But, in all reality, the Bible tells us it is always our own choice.

Conclusion:

Let me quickly summarize for you:

- Inner happiness can be yours if you go through temptation and don't yield to it.
- God is not the source of temptation but your Old Sin Nature is the source.

- You are tempted when your lust pattern spots the baited trap Satan has set for you.
- Your freewill then chooses to take the bait and satisfy your lust or to ignore the bait and look for the way God designed for you to get out of the temptation.
- If you opt to go for the bait, instead of taking the way out, then you are in sin, in temporal death, and you have no spiritual production.
- You can “lay apart” all moral defilement and all self-righteousness by simply confessing that sin and by God’s grace you are restored to fellowship.
- But, you have set yourself up for “divine discipline.” God wrote the book on Child discipline and you will find His methods described in Hebrews 12:6.
- However, you will not change the behavior that resulted in sin and Live the Christian Life effectively until you graduate from I John 1:9 which deals with restoration, to James 1:16 “Stop being seduced!

This sets the stage for us to explore our transitional graduation from I John 1:9 to James 1:16-18 to Live The Christian Life effectively.

That will be the focus of our study next time.

But it begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,
acceptable unto God, which
is your reasonable service.*

(Romans 12:1)