

# Lesson 4 - Dealing with Temptation

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1. If you have not already learned, being a Christian does not mean an end to temptation.
  - Satan will do everything he can to tempt you to sin.
  - It is very common for us to shift the blame for our giving in to temptation.
2. Much of our temptation to sin is from Satan, but as humans with an active sin nature, we frequently put ourselves into a position to give in to temptation without any extra help.
3. In order to lead a victorious Christian life, we must know the sources of our temptations as well as how to avoid and overcome temptation.

## I. Distinguishing Trials from Temptations

### A. Trials are **TESTS** sent or allowed by God to help refine our character and spiritual growth. James 1:2-4

This passage tells us two key things about trials.

- We are supposed to be **JOYFUL** while going through the trials we will face in life.
  - This doesn't make much sense to us until we remember that true joy is not based on the circumstances we face, but on the fact that God loves us and died for us.
- The **PURPOSE** of these trials is to perfect us and to make us more like Christ.
  - God allowed the Apostle Paul to be tested by Satan with some sort of physical ailment. By going through this trial, Paul learned to rely on God for his strength. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
  - Trials play a very important role in the spiritual life and growth of a believer. Trials allow us to trust more completely in God and to rely on His strength instead of ours.

### B. Temptations are allurements to do evil that come three sources.

1. **SATAN** tempts us, just as he tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God (Gen. 3).
2. The **WORLD** offers a wide range of temptations for us. The Bible clearly teaches that we need to beware of the world and the things that are of the world. 1 John 2:15-17
3. Our **SELFISH DESIRES** for the things of the world can cause us to give in to temptations as well. James 4:1-3

## II. Handling Temptations Properly

### A. Be alert to your areas of **WEAKNESSES** in temptations. Mark 14:38

- We should be very aware of what areas in our life we struggle with the most and take the necessary preparations to help us overcome temptation.
- Too many Christians believe that they are able to withstand temptation and make no proactive plans to deal with it beforehand – and too many times they give in to temptation and sin.

### B. Remember that God limits the **STRENGTH** of the temptations you face. 1 Cor. 10:13

- While you are going through a temptation, it may seem impossible to withstand. This may be a result of relying on our own strength instead of the God's strength.
- Always remember the great promise of God that was made in 2 Corinthians 12:9 – “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

### C. Don't make it **EASY** to fall into temptation. Romans 13:4

- We need to be proactively working towards avoiding temptations in our life. We should not be involved with people or activities that may lead us toward sin.
- We need to build the necessary precautions and “fences” in our life to keep us away from those things that will lead us to sin.

#### D. Be prepared to “**RUN**” from temptation.

- It does not matter what type of temptation we face, we should be ready to flee:  
1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee sexual immorality.  
1 Corinthians 10:14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.  
1 Timothy 6:11a But you, O man of God, flee these things.
- In Genesis 39:1-12 we find the story of Joseph’s temptation to sin with Potiphar’s wife. Joseph did the correct thing and ran away in order to avoid giving in to temptation.

#### E. **MEMORIZE** scriptures to help you recognize temptation & desire to flee from them.

Psalms 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

- In Matthew 4, we read of Jesus’ encounter with Satan and the temptations that were placed before Him. Note that each time Satan offered something to Jesus, He used scripture to turn back the temptation.
- Ephesians 6:17 calls the Bible our “sword of the Spirit” and memorizing Scripture can be an essential weapon against temptation.

#### F. We need to **RELY** on God’s strength to overcome temptations.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- Satan is powerful and dangerous. We cannot withstand his temptations on our own.

### III. General Facts about Temptations

A. It is important to remember that it is not a sin to be **TEMPTED** Hebrews 4:15

B. We must also be alert to the progressive **STEPS** of temptation. James 1:14-15

- Temptation begins with a seed of lust. The Greek word for entice in James 1:14 literally means to bait or entrap – think of the worm on a fishing hook and how it is used to bait the fish. If the fish goes for the worm he will end up in the frying pan!
- After the seed of lust has been planted, we begin to desire. Our desire can become so strong that we will eventually give in and commit the sin.
- James is very clear that when temptation is followed, it leads to sin. Sin ultimately leads to death and a broken relationship with God the Father.

#### Conclusion

1. Trials are **TESTS** sent or allowed by God to help refine our character and spiritual growth.
  - Are you **CHOOSING** to be “joyful” because of the lessons and growth you will experience as a result of properly handling your challenging experience?
2. Temptations to do evil can come from Satan, the world or our selfish desires.
  - Can you easily recognize the **SOURCE** of your temptations?
  - What **STEPS** of action are you willing to take to avoid falling prey to sin again?
3. Ultimately, we sin because we choose to sin.
  - We have the Word of God to **WARN** us of its dangers and we have the Holy Spirit to **STRENGTHEN** us.
  - We sin because we rely on our own strengths and **ABILITIES** instead of on God.
4. Christians are to **ACTIVELY** resist Satan’s alluring temptations and **SUBMIT** themselves to God through obedience to Him. James 4:7