

## No One Is Temptation Free

1 Corinthians 10: 13

<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you except *something common to mankind*; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Hebrews 2: 18

<sup>18</sup>For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

### Introduction

As long as we live in our body, temptation will be part of our journey to Heaven. Therefore, we'd better recognize it and learn how to deal with it. I am going to share with you this morning what the Bible says about temptation.

### Content

1. **Everyone is tempted.** No one is temptation free. Saints and sinners are all tempted. Only God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13). The rest of us are prone to temptation. Looking back on my own life, I was tempted numerous times and often succumbed to temptations. Even after I became a pastor, some temptations kept coming at me. Temptation doesn't discriminate. It assails us from all directions in all different shapes and sizes. Through eyes, ears, and hearts. For my curiosity, I counted some kinds of temptation: fried food, chocolate, not to exercise, to sleep in, drugs, drinking, smoking, pornography, gambling, lust, steal, cheat, lie, covet, envy, revenge, anger, slander, malice, worry, gossip, boast, hypocrisy, compromise, complain, doubt, idolatry, love of money, not to read God's Word, not to pray, not to forgive... The list goes on.
2. **Where does temptation come from?** From the devil. Not from God. Don't say that you are tempted by God. He tempts no one (James 1:13). The Bible clearly identifies the devil as the tempter, the one from whom every temptation comes. He is the one who tempts. He has been the tempter from the beginning of human history. Look at Genesis 3. The serpent tempted Eve. In the Garden of Eden. Did you know that he even tempted Jesus, God in human flesh, during His 40 days of fasting in the

wilderness to thwart His ministry (Matthew 4)? The devil tempted our Lord again to thwart God's redemption plan through His blood. When Jesus was on the cross, through the mouths of the crowd, the devil tempted Him to come down from the cross (Matthew 27:40, 42). He tempts every human being. He tempts you and me. Throughout our lives.

3. **Why does the devil tempt us?** In order to steal, kill and destroy us (John 10:10). His intention is always to hurt us. He packages temptation with a glossy look outside, but when we open it, it always results in our loss, hurt, and destruction. Every single day, with evil motive to derail us from heaven bound train, the devil tempts us.
4. **Only we can bear:** Good news. God never allows the devil to tempt us beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). No temptation is beyond our ability to bear. Sometimes I compare myself to other believers in Christ. I especially admire those giants of faith such as Paul and Peter. I even envy their faith and ministry at times. Yet, in the end, I am thankful that I am not they, because I don't think I can persevere or endure the same temptations and trials they went through. I thank God for who I am. I also thank Him because He doesn't allow me to be tempted beyond what I can bear.
5. **Two choices:** In dealing with temptation, we have two choices; either to succumb or to fight. Either to lose the battle or to win. If we yield to the temptation, we will suffer and pay the price. Sometimes with our own lives. E.g. Drug overdose. So, the obvious choice is to fight, ward off, and win over temptation.

I checked out in the Bible how God's people dealt with temptation, how they either fell or resisted. For instance, Joseph in the Old Testament was tempted (to lie down with his master's wife). So was David (to sleep with someone's wife). So was Job (to curse God). So was Jesus (to avoid the cross). So was Peter (to deny the Lord). How did they do? Jesus won. So did Joseph. So did Job. However, David fell into temptation. So did Peter. Although no one wins every single time against temptation, we don't have to succumb to temptation every time. We can fight and overcome temptation. With God's help, of course. Choose fight.

6. **Help is available:** Our Heavenly Father deeply cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). During the time of temptation, He never leaves us alone. He roots for us to win. He believes in us that we can win. In His love, He also provides us with the way of escape. We tend to think that we can overcome temptation with our own might. Have you tried it

before? I have. Against my own wish, I failed many a time. I often found myself powerlessly crumbling before the mighty force of temptation. Worse, I found my heart (Bible calls, *flesh*) desire the sinful temptation that I loathe! Listen to Paul the apostle. *I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate... For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want* (Romans 7:15, 19). This is our common experience with temptation. We need someone greater than we who can and will help us. That is God to whom we turn for help.

7. **Two Ways to Fight Temptation:** God provides us with the most powerful ways to be out of temptation and to be delivered from its grip. They are the Word of God and prayer. A good example is Jesus. In times of temptation, He used them both and won. Do you remember how He won when He was first tempted by the devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4)? Three times in a row, He was tempted by the devil, but every time He counterattacked the tempter with God's Word. The Word of God works, because it is the sword to attack our enemy. It is the only offensive weapon against our enemy in spiritual warfare. This is what the devil is most afraid of.

Jesus was tempted on the night before He was crucified to give up on His mission and avoid His death on the cross. So much that He prayed to His Father: *Please remove this cup from Me* (Mark 14:36). Three times He prayed and won the battle over the temptation (Matthew 26). When we devote ourselves to prayer, it surrounds us with God's presence to keep the tempter off. Here's one quote for us: *Obedience brings peace in decision making. If we have firmly made up our minds to follow the commandments, we will not have to redecide which path to take when temptation comes our way*---James E. Faust---clergy (brainyquote.com).

We need to beware of another temptation: that is, to neglect the divine means to fight temptation. Listen to George Muller: *It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer* (brainyquote.com). May we never fall into this temptation.

## Conclusion

Let's face it. God has no plan to permanently remove temptation from our lives nor forbid the tempter from tempting us. That's God's mystery. It is up to us what to do with temptation. We have two choices. Either to fight and overcome or to give up and yield.

Those who give up will pay the price and will never get out of the snare of temptation. Those who choose to fight will be blessed. Let's obey God's Word and devote ourselves to prayer, then we will overcome temptation. Amen.