

The Practicality of Redemption (5)

Temptation

Introduction

- A. Due to the Fall, the deceptive nature of sin, and the subtle working of the Deceiver Satan, the believer is highly vulnerable to temptation. We recognize at least three sources of such pressure: our sinful nature, the world culture, and Satan. In fact, temptation can come from any angle of life.
- B. It is important for us to understand the nature of temptation and to know how to respond to it.

I. The Pattern Often Found in Temptation.

A. The plan and strategy of Satan our Enemy.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ... And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:1,4,5

1. The first step was to question the truthfulness of God's Word. Satan subtly transferred Eve's authority from God to Eve herself (but with the explanation coming from himself).
2. The second step was to get Eve to question the goodness of God. Satan carefully insinuated that God had withheld some good thing from her. Therefore God was not good and should not be blindly trusted.
3. The third step was to question Eve's wisdom in living according to the dictates God had given to her.
4. The fourth step was to suggest a course of action based upon deception. Why shouldn't she eat -- and get what she wanted?

Comment: These steps are often found in our temptations. We must watch for such a pattern of attack and choose to live according to God's Word.

B. Our vulnerability to temptation.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father I John 2:15

1. One area of vulnerability has to do with our bodily desires and what they represent. The emphasis is on self-centeredness -- personal gratification. Eve was shown the tree was good for food (Genesis 3:6) and the Savior was tempted to make stones bread (Matthew 4:3). We must learn to control our body and die to our self-centeredness (Romans 6:12; I Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 5:23).
2. Another area of vulnerability is the desire of the eyes. This is the mental delight in what which is sinful. We often enjoy looking at what we would not do. We are warned about the desires of the mind (Ephesians 2:3).

3. The third area is that of price. While the thought refers to those more common items: money, possessions, abilities, and relationships -- it points beyond that to the arrogance that presumes to know right and wrong and how to direct life without God. This is the attitude described by Augustine as "The Imitation of deity." Eve desired the fruit of the tree because it would make her "wise."

II. The Biblical Encouragement Regarding Temptation.

A. Temptation itself is not a sin.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptation. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation James 1:2,12

B. Temptation is under God's control.

... God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be emptied above that ye are able, but will ... make a way to escape I Corinthians 10:13

C. God promises to deliver the godly out of temptation.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. II Peter 2:9

D. Jesus Christ was tempted and did not fail ... He offer His help.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour (give help) them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:18

III. The Biblical Basis for Refusing Temptation.

A. We must have the correct attitude.

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. I Corinthians 10:13

B. We must initiate the correct action.

For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

C. We must instigate the correct attack.

... The Tempter ... whom resist stedfast in the faith. I Thessalonians 3:5 and I Peter 5:9

Conclusion: We can choose our response! (We always do.)

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