

## Temptation – And The Successful Christian life

### Introduction

- A. Due to the effects of the Fall of Man the Christian is exposed to three sources of temptation, the old nature, the sinful world system, and Satan.
- B. It is vitally important that the believer understand the nature of temptation, its place in the Christian life and how to deal with temptation.

### I. The Pattern of Temptation.

- A. The strategy of the enemy in temptation. Genesis 3:1,4,5.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had 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.

1. The first step in the strategy of the enemy was to question the truthfulness of God's Word. He raised doubt in the mind of Eve and then later contradicted the truth. Satan subtly transferred Eve's authority from God and His Word to Eve herself (but with the interpretation coming from himself).
2. The second step was to get Eve to question the goodness of God. Satan carefully insinuated that God had withheld a good thing from Adam and Eve. Because of this God was not good and should not be blindly trusted.
3. The third step was to raise the question of Eve's wisdom in living according to God's dictates.
4. The fourth step was to suggest a course of action based on deception. Why shouldn't she eat of the tree? Why shouldn't she make up her own mind?

Observation: These steps are often found in the temptations we meet in our daily lives. It is vitally important that we affirm the truthfulness and clarity of God's Word and that God is absolute in goodness, righteousness and truth. Watch for this pattern of attack!

- B. The human vulnerability to temptation, I John 2:16.

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, but is of the world.

1. The first area of vulnerability mentioned has to do with the desires of the body. In the temptation of Eve she was shown that the tree was "Good for food" (Gen. 3:6). In the temptation of Jesus Christ the first appeal was to His hunger (Matt. 4:3). The Christian who obeys the dictates of his body is in trouble. We are to control our bodies (Rom. 6:12; I Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:23).
2. The second area is related to the desires of the eyes. This is the mental and vicarious delight in that which is sinful. Often the Christian will succumb to looking upon and delighting in that which he would never do himself. The world of literature and entertainment makes its appeal here. We are warned about the "desires of the mind" (Eph. 2:3). The tree was "pleasant" to the eyes of Eve.

3. The third area to which temptation appeals is that of pride\* This includes those more common factors, such as possessions,, relationships and abilities, but it also points far beyond these\* The emphasis here is on that most fundamental arrogance of the human heart when it presumes that it knows what is right and wrong, and is able, out of its own resources, direct the course of life without God\* This is the attitude described by Augustine as "The imitation of deity\*" Eve desired the fruit in that it would make her "wise".

Observation: In our creation we were given control of our mental, emotional and bodily functions. In the Fall we lost control and became vulnerable to outside and sinful control. We must now, by God's grace, resume control.

## II. Biblical Encouragement Related to Temptation.

- A. Temptation itself is not a sin, James 1:2,12.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptation. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation . . . .

- B. Temptation is under the control of God, I Cor. 10:13.

. . . 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 . . . .

- C. God promises to deliver the godly out of temptation, I Peter 2:9.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation . . . .

- D. Jesus Christ was tempted and did not fail - He offers His help, Hebrews 2:18.

For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

## III. The Biblical Basis for Refusing Temptation.

- A. We must have the correct attitude, I Cor. 10:13.

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.

Observation: God is not going to permit temptation to go beyond our ability to resist it - providing we practice the truth of living the Christian life and resisting sin and Satan.

- B. We must initiate the correct action, Hebrews 4:16.

For we have not an 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.

Observation: We must seek God - trust Him - and refuse the temptation.

- C. We must instigate the correct attack, I Thess. 3:5; I Peter 5:8,9.

... The Tempter . . . whom resist stedfast in the faith . . . .

Observation: Recognize the part the enemy has in the temptation. Take charge of your mind, emotion and body. Reject the temptation in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Maintain your stand of refusal!