

Practical Christianity
Understanding Temptation and Sin
James 1.2, 12-18; cf Prov 14.12

[There are two agents always at work in the trials and temptations we face in our daily lives,]

- [Our adversary the **devil** uses temptations as a solicitation to evil and is always trying to cause us to fall. He wants to destroy us.]
- [Our **Heavenly Father** uses trials (temptations) to mold us, strengthen us, and mature us; His desire is always that we should stand and experience victory from our trials.]

[Our text today seeks to bring us into a greater understanding of temptation and sin in a Christian's life.]

In Our Text We Discover,

A. The Definite Possibility of Testing (vs 13; Matt 4.1-11; James 4.4; Matt 6.24; Luke 16.13; 1 Cor 10.12) [- Let no man say **when he is tempted, . . . –** Temptations and trials are inevitable in our lives. Born Again Christians should never be surprised when trials and tribulation come into their lives. Yet, invariably, we often are. Perhaps it's not so much the fact of our temptations that surprise us as it is the severity or type of our trials. The fact remains that we must expect to be tempted. **We should expect temptations and trials because,]**

1. [Jesus was tempted and you will be too! (cf. Matt 4.1-11)]
2. [When you become a friend of God you become the enemy of Satan.]

[James 4:4⁴ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.]

[Matthew 6:24²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.]

[Luke 16:13¹³ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.]

3. [If the devil is after you it's a sign that you are going against him - it's a sign of life.]

[**Illustration** - "A new Christian went hunting with his boss. The man had been telling his boss, since he got saved, that he was being tempted by the devil. While they were hunting the man's boss said, "Sam, your a strange creature. You claim to be a Christian yet you are always struggling with temptation. I don't claim to be a Christian and the devil has yet to tempt me." Sam replied, "Boss, if we both shoot a duck and one falls dead, and the other is still flopping, which one are we going to go after first?" The boss said, "That's easy, the one that's flopping." Sam replied, "That's right, the devil knows you is a dead duck."]

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A. The Definite Possibility of Testing

4. [**The proud man tempts the devil to tempt him** (1 Cor 10.12).]

*[1 Corinthians 10:12¹² Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth **take heed lest he fall.**]*

**B. A Divine Impossibility In Testing (vs 13; Genesis 3.12-13; Num 32.23) [-
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:**]**

1. [**Man by nature wants to blame his Sin on someone else.**]

a. [Adam blamed his sin on the woman God gave him. He also blamed God]

*[Genesis 3:12¹² And the man said, **The woman whom thou gavest to be with me,** she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.]*

b. [Eve blamed the serpent (Gen 3.13).]

[Genesis 3:13¹³ And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.]

c. [The serpent didn't have a leg to stand on.]

[**Responsibility** – Responsibility is the deficiency of humanity. The lack of responsibility leads to the moral decline of any culture. It is the greatest problem in America today.]

- [**Abortion is not about choice it is about responsibility.** People do not want to take responsibility for their immoral choices or bad choices. You had a choice to be a part of conceiving a child before there was a child. Abortion is merely the result of a desire to not be responsible for one's choices.]

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- A. The Definite Possibility of Testing
- B. A Divine Impossibility in Testing

- [**Welfare is largely about Responsibility** – People who do not want to work do not want to be held responsible for their failure to work.]

[2 Thessalonians 3:10¹⁰ For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.]

[People need to take responsibility for their choices and actions and the truth is, **one day you will take responsibility for your sin.** God Says,]

*[Numbers 32:23 . . . behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: **and be sure your sin will find you out.**]*

[The good news is, that if you will take responsibility for your sin now, and repent for your sins you can be renewed through Christ. Forgiveness and restoration are available through Christ.]

[But you cannot blame God for your sin or even your temptation to sin. God tries you to build you, your adversary, the devil, tempts you to destroy you.]

2. [**It is absolutely impossible that God could be tempted with sin.** God is holy.]

- a. [Jesus was tempted, and Jesus was God, but Jesus was also man. In His humanity Jesus was tempted. In His divinity He was perfect.]

b. [God cannot tempt with evil. It is never your Heavenly Fathers intension that you should fall into sin.]

3. [We still want to blame God today. We say:]

(1) [The culture I was raised in did it to me.]

(2) [My mother, that wouldn't let me push the mush off my high chair, did it to me.]

(3) [Man is not evil, he's just ill. Man is not sinful he's just sick. It's not really his fault.]

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A. The Definite Possibility of Testing

B. A Divine Impossibility in Testing

["God will never accept an alibi for sin."]

C. A Direct Responsibility From Testing (vs 14) [- *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away **of his own lust**, and enticed. - **Sin is an inside job**.* It is something that happens primarily within.]

1. [**Illustration** - This is illustrated by using the picture of an immoral woman seducing a man, or an immoral man seducing a woman. If one can seduce another it is a sign that they are both immoral.]

2. [There is a kind of seduction to all kinds of sin.]

D. Walking Off The Edge - Four steps to sin:

[Satan's unchanging method (David Jeremiah)]

[The anatomy of a sin - Look for the hook (Adrian Rodgers).]

[Without a doubt there are notable steps that lead to sin. Christians set themselves up for presumptuous repetitive sin when they fail to recognize the difference between the temptation to sin and the conception of sin. It is inevitable that you will fall into trials and the temptation. But **just because you are tempted to sin does not mean you have already fallen to sin.**]

[Some have taken the words of our Lord, when he said, . . . *whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Matt 5.28) to an extreme and they have people believing that if you just think a bad thought, that you have already sinned. This is not the case at all.

The initial thought is the temptation to sin, what you do with that thought will determine if it conceives and becomes a sin or not.]

[In verses 14-15 James gives us the steps that will lead us into sin. Understanding these steps will help you to recognize them when they begin and to gain the victory over them. As in anything in life, the sooner you recognize a temptation and resist it the easier it is to gain the victory over it.]

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- C. A Direct Responsibility From Testing
- D. Walking Off The Edge – Four steps to sin:

1. **The Courtship to sin (vs 14)** [- *But every man is tempted, **when he is drawn away** of his own lust, and enticed.*]

a. [To be **drawn away** is a fisherman's term that refers to a man that catches a fish by using a lure.]

(1) [The fisherman is trying to out think the bass when he chooses his lure. Then he casts it out and twitches it a couple of times. Until the bass can't stand it any longer and gobbles it up. Hook and all.]

(2) [Sin is like a courtship. A woman goes out to catch a man, like a fisherman goes after the bass. That's why they call them hookers.]

b. [**Adrian Rogers used to say, **Forget the bait, look for the hook.****]

(1) [The devil knows which bait to use with you. **He tried three different kinds of bait with Jesus** (bread, pride, materialism), but Jesus refused to take the bait. Hence, if one bait doesn't work, our adversary will use another one. Temptations come in many different forms and lures.]

c. [**Own Lusts.**]

Psalm 37.4

(1) [**Lust** - epithumia (gk) - **A desire for that which is forbidden.** Root, epithumew (clgk) **upon the heart.** Therefore, a lust is an inordinate desire, a desire out of control.]

2. **The Consent to sin (vs 14)** [- *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, **and enticed.***]

- a. [Enticed means trapped.]
- b. [**When the bait is dangled there is no sin.** It is not a sin for you for Satan to cast a lure out in front of you.]

*["While you can't keep the birds from flying over your head,
you can keep them from making a nest in your hair."]
[Author Unknown]*

- c. [There comes a time when you consent to that temptation, and when you do the hook is set.]
- d. [When you say "I will" the temptation conceives and sin is the result. When the will says "I do" to the lust, an unholy marriage takes place.]

*"First there is courtship to sin, then there is the consent to sin,
then the hook is set and the fight is on."*

3. The Conception of Sin (vs 15; Heb 11.25; Job 20.5) [- **Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.]**

- a. [The child of the unholy marriage of the will and the lust is sin.]
- b. [At first it doesn't seem bad at all. When a baby is born that's a pretty happy time for most of us. Most people are pretty proud of their sin.]
- c. [Sin is pleasant for a season. Sin doesn't seem bad at first. The Bible speaks of the pleasures of sin,]

*[Hebrews 11:25 ²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the **pleasures of sin for a season**;]*

*[Job 20:5 ⁵ That the **triumphing of the wicked is short**, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?]*

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d. [The pleasures of sin are only for a season.]

["A man was walking along and dropping beans as he went.

Behind him were a number of swine, eating beans and following as they went.

A man said, 'Sir, that's a strange way to feed your swine.'

The man replied, 'I'm not feeding them, this is how I take them to the slaughter house.']

4. The Completion of Sin (vs 15) [- Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.]

a. [Christians go easy on themselves when they stumble and say, "Don't go too hard on me, the Lord's not done with me yet." Well, to the lost we say, "Don't go too easy on yourselves, the devil's not done with you yet."]

b. [People often don't look far enough ahead to see the devil's finished product. The child of lust is sin, and the child of sin is death. The devil's **LSD - Lust, Sin, Death.**]

*["You can eat the devil's corn if you want to, but he'll choke you on the cob."]
[R.G. Lee]*

["Don't look at a thing for what it is, look at it for where it is headed."]

[The answer to it all is Jesus Christ. A person that is hooked by temptation is looking for something to satisfy, and the only thing that can satisfy us in this life is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Because that is the way God made us!]

[Come back next week and we will discover what to do when temptations and trials come your way.]

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