

Temptation

Our "Big Question:"

How do you handle temptation, and get victory over it? What do you do when you don't?

Luke 4:1-13 The Message

1 Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. 2 For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.

LUST OF THE FLESH

3 The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: "Since you're God's Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread."

4 Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."

LUST OF THE EYES

5 For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. 6 Then the Devil said, "They're yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I'm in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. 7 Worship me and they're yours, the whole works."

8 Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

PRIDE OF LIFE

9 For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, "If you are God's Son, jump. 10 It's written, isn't it, that 'he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; 11 they will catch you; you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone'?"

12 "Yes," said Jesus, "and it's also written, 'Don't you dare tempt the Lord your God.'"

13 That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

• The Toehold of Temptation

James 1:13-15 The Message

13 Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, "God is trying to trip me up." God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. 14 The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. 15 Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

• The Turf of Temptation

1 John 2:15-17 The Message

15 Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. 16 Practically everything that goes on in the world--wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important--has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. 17 The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out--but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.

• Turning from Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 The Message

13 No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.

2 Timothy 2:22 New International Version

22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

•Transforming the Temptation

"Every temptation is an opportunity to do good. ...it is just as much an occasion to do the right thing as it is to do the wrong thing. Temptation simply provides the choice. ... Every time you choose to do good instead of sin, you are growing in the character of Christ. ... One of the most concise descriptions of His character is the fruit of the Spirit:" (Rick Warren, *THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFE: WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR*)

Galatians 5:22-23 The Message

22 But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard--things like affection for others (LOVE), exuberance about life (JOY), serenity (PEACE). We develop a willingness to stick with things (PATIENCE), a sense of compassion in the heart (KINDNESS), and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people (GOODNESS). We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments (FAITHFULNESS), 23 not needing to force our way in life (GENTLENESS), able to marshal and direct our energies wisely (SELF-CONTROL). Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way.

•Triumph over Temptation

Hebrews 4:14-16 The Message

14 Now that we know what we have--Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God--let's not let it slip through our fingers. 15 We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through

weakness and testing, experienced it all--all but the sin. 16 So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.

Romans 7:24-8:4 The Message

24 I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? 25 The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

1 With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. ('There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.') 2 A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death. 3 God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all. The law code, weakened as it always was by fractured human nature, could never have done that. The law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it. 4 And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us.

1 John 2:1-2 The Message

1 I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin.
But if anyone does sin, we have a Priest-Friend in the
presence of the Father: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. 2
When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved
the sin problem for good--not only ours, but the whole
world's.

Psalm 19:14 New Living Translation

14 May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my
heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my
redeemer.

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