

## OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

*"I may not be able to keep the birds from flying over my head, but I can keep them from making a nest in my hair."* This old saying has been around for a long time and makes a wonderful application concerning the matter of temptation. Every person who has ever lived has faced temptation. You see temptation is inevitable. It is going to come and you cannot stop it. But, while it is true that you cannot prevent temptation from coming your way, it is also true that you can be victorious over it. You can be successful in ***"Overcoming Temptation."***

It has been said that temptation divides the world into two separate classes. First, there are those who give in and are defeated by temptation. Then, there are those who meet temptation successfully and as a result gain strength of character through overcoming it. To some it is a stumbling block; to others it is a stepping-stone. To some it is a hindrance; to others it is help. Those individuals who face temptation and succumb to it experience sorrow, but those who face temptation and resist it experience joy. You see it is not the fact of temptation that counts. It is the way in which a person responds to temptation that really matters.

Every believer can and will be tempted, but they can also know the joy of ***"Overcoming Temptation."*** This lesson is designed to help you deal with temptation when it comes. In order to do this you must understand what the Bible has to say concerning what temptation is, where temptation comes from, and how you, as a believer, can be successful in ***"Overcoming Temptation."***

# I. THE REALITY OF TEMPTATION

## A. Everyone Faces Temptation.

### 1. What is temptation?

a. Webster's dictionary defines temptation as the enticement to do wrong by promise of pleasure or gain.

b. In the Bible, the word temptation is used as an inducement to do evil or a solicitation to sin.

**Note:** *The word "temptation" is also used in a positive way in Scripture to indicate a trial or test.*

### 2. Temptation comes in many shapes and forms.

a. We may be tempted to cheat on a test, tell a lie, take something that does not belong to us, buy something we know we cannot afford, or even sleep in on Sunday morning and miss church.

b. Though temptation comes in many different forms, it always follows the same process: *the temptation is presented to us as bait, and then, our inner desire is attracted to that bait.*

## B. Temptation Is Not Sin.

### 1. Some view temptation and sin, as being equal, but temptation itself is not sin. Sin occurs with the yielding.

a. *"But every man is \_\_\_\_\_, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath \_\_\_\_\_, it bringeth forth \_\_\_\_\_."* (James 1:14-15)

b. Someone has compared sin and temptation this way: *"Temptation is the tempter looking through the keyhole into the room where you are living; sin is drawing back the bolt thus making it possible for him to enter in."*

### 2. Jesus Christ was tempted, yet He did not sin.

a. *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be \_\_\_\_\_ of the devil."* (Matthew 4:1)

b. *"For we have not an \_\_\_\_\_ which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points \_\_\_\_\_ like as we are, yet without \_\_\_\_\_."* (Hebrews 4:15)

## II. THE ROOT OF TEMPTATION

### A. All Temptation Comes In One Of Three Areas.

#### 1. The three areas of temptation are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (I John 2:15-16)

- a. The lust of the flesh is that strong consuming desire to do, feel, or experience something.
- b. The lust of the eyes is that strong consuming desire to have, obtain, or possess something.
- c. The pride of life is that strong consuming desire to be something, or to be thought of as being something.

#### 2. The serpent tempted Eve in all three of these areas.

a. "And when the woman saw that the tree was \_\_\_\_\_ (lust of the flesh), and that it was \_\_\_\_\_ (lust of the eyes), and a tree to be \_\_\_\_\_ (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6)

b. Jesus was also tempted in all three of these areas by the devil in the wilderness, yet Jesus did not succumb to these temptations. He was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

### B. All Temptation Comes From One Of Three Sources.

#### 1. These three sources, according to the Bible, are the world, the flesh, and the devil.

a. "Love not \_\_\_\_\_ , neither the things that are in \_\_\_\_\_ . If any man love \_\_\_\_\_ , the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in \_\_\_\_\_ , the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of \_\_\_\_\_ ." (I John 2:15-16)

b. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for \_\_\_\_\_ , to fulfil the \_\_\_\_\_ thereof." (Romans 13:14)

c. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the \_\_\_\_\_ , as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may \_\_\_\_\_ ." (I Peter 5:8)

#### 2. God has promised us victory over all three of these.

a. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh \_\_\_\_\_ : and this is the victory that overcometh \_\_\_\_\_ , even our faith." (I John 5:4)

b. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of \_\_\_\_\_ ." (Galatians 5:16)

c. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist \_\_\_\_\_ , and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

### C. Temptation To Sin Is Never Directed By God.

#### 1. God does not tempt us to do sinful things.

a. *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted \_\_\_\_\_, neither tempteth he \_\_\_\_\_."* (James 1:13)

b. God allows man to be tempted with evil, but He is never the source of that temptation.

**Note:** *"If God tempted us with evil we would have an excuse to sin. After all, who can resist God?"*

#### 2. When the Bible speaks of God tempting a person, it simply means that God tested that person.

a. *"And it came to pass after these things, that God did \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham ..."* (Genesis 22:1)

b. God may choose to test a man by way of problems and trials, but never will He tempt a man to do evil.

## III. THE REMEDY FOR TEMPTATION

### A. Every Christian Can Triumph Over Temptation.

#### 1. Why does God allow us to be tempted?

a. God allows temptation to come our way, not to cause us to stumble, but rather to teach us to stand.

b. *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers \_\_\_\_\_; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh \_\_\_\_\_ (endurance). But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be \_\_\_\_\_ and entire, wanting nothing."* (James 1:2-4)

c. Perfect, here, does not mean sinless. It means mature.

#### 2. We must learn to endure temptation in order to grow in our Christian life.

a. There can be no maturity without endurance, and there can be no endurance without temptation.

b. According to the Bible, we should count the temptations that we face in life as what? \_\_\_\_\_ (James 1:2)

c. *The story is told of an elderly man who asked a young boy to go with him into the woods to cut down some hickory trees to make axe handles. They had not travelled far into the woods when they came upon several young hickory trees. The young boy said, "These trees would make good handles. Let's cut them down."*

*The old man responded, "These trees in the lowlands have been protected from the storms which rage higher up. Let's go to the heights where the trees have been rocked back and forth by fierce winds. Those trees have been hardened by the tempest and they will make much stronger axe handles!"*

*So it is with temptation. Those who have been exposed to temptation---rocked to and fro by the tempter, Satan, but who have not yielded---are made stronger.*

### **3. As Christians, we do not have to yield to temptation.**

a. While it is true that none of us can escape temptation entirely, at least not while here upon this earth, we can learn to endure it.

b. This is true regardless of when temptation comes, where temptation comes, or how temptation comes.

c. *"There hath no \_\_\_\_\_ taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be \_\_\_\_\_ above that ye are able; but will with the \_\_\_\_\_ also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13)*

## **B. How Can We Triumph Over Temptation?**

### **1. We must remove the prospective of sin.**

a. This simply means that we should avoid those things, places, and people that might cause us to sin.

b. We must be very careful that we do not put ourselves in a place, position, or situation to be tempted.

c. *"Enter not into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the wicked, and go not in the \_\_\_\_\_ of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." (Proverbs 4:14-15)*

### **2. We must recognize the presence of the Spirit.**

a. When Christ was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, He was led by the Spirit. *(Luke 4:1)*

b. During times of temptation in our life, we must remember that the Holy Spirit within us is ever present to help us overcome those temptations that we face.

c. *"Walk in the \_\_\_\_\_, and ye shall not fulfil the \_\_\_\_\_ of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)*

### 3. We must rely on the power of the Scriptures.

- a. Whenever Jesus was tempted of the devil He always responded with the words, "*It is written,*" and then He quoted from the Bible.
- b. Jesus not only knew the Word of God, He memorized it, meditated upon it, and made use of it in His daily life.
- c. "*Thy \_\_\_\_\_ have I hid in mine heart, that I might not \_\_\_\_\_ against thee.*" (Psalms 119:11)

### 4. We must remember the provision of the Savior.

- a. If we sin by yielding to temptation we need to confess our sin to God and seek His forgiveness.
- b. "*If we \_\_\_\_\_ our sins, he is faithful and just to \_\_\_\_\_ us our sins, and to \_\_\_\_\_ us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 1:9)

**Conclusion:** As Christians we can live in victory, and we can overcome sin and temptation.  
(Memorize: 1 Corinthians 10:13)