

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES

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WHY DOES GOD ALLOW TEMPTATION IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

Luke 4 and James 1

There is no sin in being tempted, because everyone experiences it. Rather, it is when we give in that it becomes sin.

The good news is that temptation can be endured. Not only that, but the believer who resists temptation is happy and will receive a reward. So what does Scripture tell us about temptation and how to resist it?

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. Where does temptation come from?** Generally, temptation comes from Satan, but it takes two to tango. Temptation does nothing unless we give it permission. James 1:14–15 describes the process of temptation: the temptation itself, our attention is stirred, we give it power, we act on it, and eventually the repercussions kick in.
- 2. When does temptation come?** The simple answer is that temptation comes all the time, but there are times when it is sure to come. Jesus' temptation came right after His baptism. Likewise, temptation will come after times of great blessing in our lives. Temptation also comes when we believe we are strongest. It was after Simon Peter boasted of his devotion to the Lord that he was told he would deny the Lord.
- 3. How does temptation come?** In many cases, temptation enters through the doorway of our minds (2 Corinthians 11:3). The mind is where we imagine and fantasize, opening the door for Satan's enticements. Scripture tells us that we need to have our guard up against attack (2 Corinthians 10:5–6), and that we need to fill our mind with the Word of God and godly thoughts (Philippians 4:8–9).
- 4. Who does temptation come to?** Just as children are especially vulnerable to dangers and threats, young believers are easy targets for the devil because they may not be grounded enough in their faith to withstand an attack or temptation. But Satan will also go after the Christian who is making a difference for God's kingdom. He will attack the active believer in order to distract him or her from working for God.
- 5. Where is the best place to be when temptation comes?** Answer: In the will of God (Psalm 1). When we are in the Word daily, seeking His will, and following Scripture, we are less likely to give in to temptation. When we let ourselves wander and stray, that's when we find ourselves where we're not supposed to be, doing something we're not supposed to be doing.

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6. **What is the primary weapon we should use to resist it?** Paul's description of our spiritual armor only lists one offensive weapon: the Word of God. And that is how we build up our defenses against temptation and repel Satan's attacks—by reading Scripture and memorizing it. If we can remember obscure movie quotes and song lyrics, we can memorize Scripture.

RELEVANT REMINDERS

When we memorize Scripture, it helps us respond when Satan comes in with his temptations. Here are some of Satan's accusations and verses that you can use to respond.

- “You have sinned and God won't forgive you”: 1 John 1:9 says God is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us, if we will confess our sins.
- “God has condemned us for our sins”: Romans 8:1 says there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- “You will never get up again. You are never going to recover from this. This is the end”: Philippians 1:6 says God will complete the work He started in you.
- “God has abandoned you”: Romans 8:28 says all things work together for good for those who love God.
- “Your loved one is gone, and you'll never see them again”: Jesus said that he who believes in Christ will live, even if he dies (John 11:25). 2 Corinthians 5:8 says that the believer who has died immediately goes into God's presence.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

Temptation can be effectively resisted. The formula is simple: memorize Scripture, stay close to God and His people, and stay away from ungodly influences. If you are a Christian and do those things, you can defeat temptation because you will have Christ on your side.

But if you aren't a Christian, you can do all of those things and even resist some temptation, but you will be fighting alone and you will fall. Why not find forgiveness for your sins in a relationship with God? Then you can start to win the battle against temptation.