

Session 8

Temptation and Spiritual Warfare

Temptation

The lifestyle of a Christ Follower is very exciting! But after salvation, we may have some unrealistic expectations about what that life should and/or will look like.

One of the places this may happen is in the area of temptation. In other words, we may assume (or hope) that since we are now saved and growing spiritually, that temptation will be fairly easy to overcome, or maybe even disappear.

But the deceiver, Satan has other ideas. Temptation may actually increase because Satan is not happy that we have 'changed teams' and are now children of God.

He will use ANY means at his disposal to woo us back or cause us to stumble, and temptation is one of his MAIN tools!

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8

This verse tells us that Satan is actively seeking us, trying to wreak havoc in our lives, and is willing and able to devour us, if we fall for his tricks. So if Satan is looking to devour us, what is his main goal when he tempts us?

- ▶ Satan's main goal is to tempt us to disobey.
- ▶ How does Satan tempt believers to disobey? Answer: He Lies!

Lies like:

- ▶ “No one will know if I sin in private, behind closed doors.”
- ▶ “It can't hurt anyone else if I'm the only one involved.”
- ▶ “It won't be too bad if I just do it (sin) once.”

Read 1 Peter 5:8 again, and look for an important warning, and a key way to resist Satan's attacks! It is found in the first two words: “ ”

But sometimes WE are the problem. We fail to resist temptation, then make bad decisions, and even exhibit bad behaviors (sin), usually after we let our guard down.

One way Satan likes to work is by telling us we are all alone. He tries to convince us no one understands, and that others really have no idea what we are going through.

1 Peter 5:9 gives us a great reminder that we are not all alone, and other Christ Followers are experiencing similar things (spiritual attacks, temptations, trials, etc.).

“Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” 1 Peter 5:9

This same thought is echoed in our next verse.

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

What does this verse promise God will provide?

So, that leads us to this important question:

When facing temptation, HOW do we overcome it?

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16

What will we find when we approach God’s throne? and
to us!

So when we are tempted, how do we ask, and what do we even ask for?

A simple prayer would look something like this:

“God, I recognize I’m being tempted by... (describe it). Please help me resist it! Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me change to be more like You.”

Paul has some great advice for us in Galatians 5:16: *“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”*

Spiritual Warfare

You are at war! When you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, chances are you did not think that decision would require your enlistment as a soldier who is at war, but it does. Today we are engaged in a different sort of battle, not a physical battle, but a spiritual one.

The Bible teaches us in Ephesians 6:12(NLT), *“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”* You, and countless other believers like you, are at war with the devil today.

The advantage that we have as believers in this war against the devil is that we can know what weapons he uses, how he uses them, and what he is trying to accomplish.

The Bible teaches us in 2 Corinthians 2:11(NLT) *“... for we are familiar with his evil schemes.”* Read the following verses to learn what God’s Word says about Satan’s evil schemes.

2 Corinthians 11:3

“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

John 8:44

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Ephesians 5:17

“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

1 John 2:17

“The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”

2 Corinthians 11:3. What is Satan after?

John 8:44. What is Satan’s native weapon?

Ephesians 5:17. What does God want us to understand?

Take what you have learned from the above Scriptures and write a clear statement about what Satan is after, why he is after it, and why he uses the weapon he uses.

What does 1 John 2:17 say about the person who does the will of God?

From your study of these Scriptures, you may have concluded that Satan is after your mind. Lies are his weapon of choice. Satan knows that if he can influence our minds enough to believe his lies, then we will no longer understand God’s will for our lives. Stated simply, we are in a spiritual battle, a war with eternal consequences.

The Bible says in Proverbs 23:7a NKJV, “*For as he thinks in his heart, so he is...*” What does this verse reveal about the power of your thoughts?

As you look back over the course of your life, describe how you have experienced the power of your thoughts, both positively and negatively, affecting your life?

Keeping in mind Proverbs 23:7a, it is important to understand that our thoughts influence us and persuade us to action.

Read Matthew 5:16.

Our mind is the control center of our will. If Satan can influence the thoughts of our mind enough to personally disengage us from the will of God, our 'light' (Christ in us) will no longer shine. The result? We will become a casualty. The fallout? Not our own salvation, but the salvation of others. They may not come to know the Lord Jesus Christ through us, and God will not be glorified.

The good news is that with God there is always hope, and our hope is in Christ Jesus! God has given us a sure and certain defense against Satan and his evil schemes. Commit these defenses to memory; you will need them.

- ▶ His Word (Psalm 119:105)
- ▶ His Grace (1 Peter 5:10)
- ▶ His Spirit (John 14:6)
- ▶ His Son (1 John 3:8)

Read Ephesians 6:10-18. List the seven pieces of spiritual armor (be sure to include prayer) and include a brief description of their purpose.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Summary Points:

- ▶ We should always BE ALERT and be 'on guard' so we can RESIST temptation.
- ▶ When tempted, we should ASK God to help us resist it.
- ▶ Spiritual warfare is very real and affects every believer.
- ▶ The battle is in our mind.

Next Steps:

- ▶ Rely on God more - trust Him to help you in your times of trouble.
- ▶ Listen to the Holy Spirit more - rely less on 'self,' and ASK God for advice!
- ▶ Pray the armor over yourself every day this week and make it your daily habit.

“Because he himself suffered when he was
tempted, he is able to help those who
are being tempted.”
Hebrews 2:18

