

## THE BATTLE AGAINST TEMPTATION

I. There are two foundational principles that must be understood in order to overcome temptation.

**First.** Temptation does not equal sin. Sin comes about when temptation entices our lusts and we give in to our lusts. **James 1:13-16** states, <sup>13</sup>"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup>But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. <sup>15</sup>The when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. <sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

There are three areas of temptation. The source of temptation can be ourselves, the world or Satan. **1 John 2:15-16** states, <sup>15</sup>"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is not from the father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever." We have Biblical examples of Satan attacking both Eve (Genesis 3) and Christ Himself (Matthew 4) in all three of these areas. (See below)

### Lust of the Flesh

**EVE:** "the tree was good for food," - Gen. 3:6

**CHRIST:** Matt. 4:2-4. "And after He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the son of God, Command that these Stones become Bread."

### Lust of the Eyes

"it was a delight to the eyes," - Gen. 3:6

Matt. 4:8-10. "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their **glory**; and he said to Him, 'all these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.

### Boastful pride of life

"the tree was desirable to make one wise," - Gen. 3:6

Matt. 4:5-7. "Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If you are the son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning you'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"

**Second.** The second foundational principle in dealing with temptation is recognizing the fact that it can be overcome. The absolute promise is given to us in **1 Corinthians 10:13** which states, "*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.*" No one can ever say, "*the devil made me do it,*" because the devil cannot make you do anything. When sin occurs in your life, the only person that can be blamed for it is you. No matter how difficult (if not impossible) it may seem to you at the time to avoid the sin, God's absolute promise is that He will provide a way to either escape it or endure through it.

The following chart gives a few examples summarizing some areas of temptation, methods of enticement, weakness exploited & defense against temptations / demonic attacks

<b>Area Attacked</b>	<b>Method of Attack</b>	<b>Weakness Attacked</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Defense</b>
The Mind (truth)	Lies	Ignorance	Eve (Gen 3)	Bible (truth). 1 Tim. 3:16,17
The Body	Suffering	Impatience	Job (Job 1,2)	Grace 2 Cor. 12:9
	Pleasure	Hunger	Esau (Gen. 25)	Contentment: Phil 4:11-12
		Desire	Joseph (Gen. 39)	Flee: 2 Tim 2:22
The Will	Pride	Independence	David 1 Chron. 21	Holy Spirit John 16:7-14
The heart & Conscience (emotions)	Accusation	Imperfection	Jeshua the High Priest Zech. 3:1-7	Intercession 1 Cor. 6:11 Heb. 4:14-16;7:25
	Danger	Fear	The Spies Numbers 14	Trust God: Psalm 40:3; 115:11

The above list gives examples to help you deal with temptation. The actual testing you endure may be a mix of any of the above. The greater you understand God and trust Him using the defenses He provides, the greater your ability to withstand temptation.

#### Some Practical Self-examination Questions to Determine Godly Actions

1. Am I doing this for the glory of God, or to please my self?
2. Am I rushing ahead impetuously, or am I willing to wait?  
Am I willing to get godly counsel before I act?
3. Do I have enough information to make a reasonable and godly decision?  
Can I defend what I am doing from the Word of God?  
Does it agree with Scripture?
4. Does the Spirit of God within me agree?  
Can I do this with a clear conscience before God?
5. Am I reacting in fear, or am I trusting God?

## Counseling Situations Temptation

Read through all the situations below. Pick one and write out how you would respond to the situation and counsel those involved. Include in your answer what sin(s) may be involved; relevant Bible verses that would expose sin and encourage the one being tempted to righteousness; the questions you might ask to uncover what might be going on in their Emotional; Volitional; Rational and Personal circles; and advice you would give on how to handle the temptation being faced. Use the Simplified Model for Counseling Flow Chart to help you think through how you would proceed. (You may substitute a situation of temptation that you have faced or are dealing with now).

### EXAMPLE:

#1. Your friend calls you after a visit to the doctor. He has told him/her that their weight has become a serious health factor. They are no longer just “overweight” but are now into the morbidly obese range and must go on a diet and lose 100 lbs in the next year. Your friend confides that they know the doctor is correct and that they would like to get rid of the weight for a variety of reasons including: to look better and be able to wear the clothes they used to wear but are now in storage; be able to take a walk or go up the stairs without losing their breath; not have their legs and ankles hurt so much and being able to participate in former activities they stopped because of their weight. However, your friend is afraid they will not be able to do it. Your own observations of your friend include the following: They have more than an ample amount of food at any meal, they usually have a snack of some sort with them, they like rich foods, they often bribe their children with food, most of their extended family is also overweight.

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem: *They are morbidly obese and must lose weight for health reasons.*

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E): *Fear of failing*  
Questions to ask: *Why the fear of failure? Have they tried in the past? What happened? Have they failed at other things?*

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V). *The friend eats a lot, snacks, likes rich foods.*  
Questions to ask: *What benefits do they get from eating - so much, so often and so rich? Emotional? Relational? Physical?*

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R): *The extended family is also overweight - possible family issues; wrong strategies of coping (uses food to bribe own children); wrong beliefs about food.*

Questions to ask: *How do they view their eating habits - poor choices? Bad habit? Someone else's fault? Just the way they are? Sin? Have they asked others to help hold them accountable / encourage them? Have they developed a realistic diet plan?*

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Questions to ask: *What Bible verses / Biblical principles do they know of that would apply to their eating habits?*

Possible helpful verses:

*Life is not about food - Matthew 4:4; Luke 12:29. Many Proverbs  
Importance of Contentment - Phil. 4:10f, 1 Tim. 6:8  
How to deal with Temptation - 1 Cor. 10:13, Heb. 12:14*

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R):

*Pick a couple of the most important points to emphasize to enable the friend to develop a realistic diet plan and stick to it.*

*Questions to ask: What do they believe God thinks about their obesity? What do they believe He would want done about it? Can they identify their own sin in their attitude / approach to eating? In what specific areas must they learn to trust God in order to be successful?*

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

Help them identify what choices they can make now and which can / will have to be made later. What information do they will need to gain to make good choices. Gain agreement about what the friend can do in the present - what behavior changes need to be made and why.

*Questions to ask: Do they fully recognize they choose what they eat / don't eat, how much they eat and how often they eat? Do they believe they can stick to the diet for a month? A week? Several days? One day? Half day? One meal? What choices can they make that will help them stick to a realistic diet plan.*

*They recognize some of the benefits of losing weight so explore their emotional response if they did lose the weight and if they did not. How strong are their negative emotions about being obese? How do they feel when they hear someone say they are morbidly obese?*

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Lay out the specific steps to take for the present. What and when specific steps in future must be taken. Identify key Bible verses to focus on. Develop accountability plan.

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

Seek to encourage. Identify of steps of success. Prompt confession of failures. Motivate to give thanks for God's care and direction.

#2. You find out your friend is addicted to pornography. He denies it when you first confront him, but finally confesses when you cite the evidence. He admits that he has been looking at pornography since his early teen years. His wife does not know about it.

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E)

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V)

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R)

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R)

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

#3. You have been observing a change in the demeanor of a friend you have known for many years. They were very pleasant to be around when they were in their teens, but as your friend has earned various degrees culminating in a Masters and have climbed the corporate ladder into management, they have become more arrogant and demanding and less civil to those around them. Your observation has been this has been particularly true of those who work under them and to their children and now you are noticing the same attitude being expressed in their church involvements since they were asked to teach an adult Sunday School class. You have been asked to talk to him/her about their attitude.

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E)

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V)

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R)

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R)

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)

#4. Your friend is considering taking a job in another State. They are very interested but they are humble enough to also wonder if it would be the right thing to do. They have come to you for advice. What questions would you ask to help them determine if this is a move being directed by God or if it is a temptation being laid across their path?

Stage 1: Identify presenting problem (The test)

Stage 2: Identify problem emotion (E)

Stage 3: Identify problem behavior (V)

Stage 4: Identify problem thinking (R)

Teach Biblical commands concerning problem areas (Correction of V, R & P)

Stage 5: Clarify Biblical thinking (R)

Stage 6: Secure volitional commitment (V)

Stage 7: Plan and carry out Biblical behavior (V)

Stage 8: Identify Spirit controlled emotions (E)