

**Definition of Temptation:** An enticement presented to lead one into sin against God. To understand the nature of temptation let us focus on the desires we turn into lust that tempt us.

**As we evaluate the temptations encountered by Adam, Eve and Jesus Christ, we discover that:**

- A. There was the temptation to be like God, believing one can know what God knows and be Self-Sustaining and Self-Sufficient as God, leading one to act independent of God's command. (Adam and Eve)
- B. There was the temptation to live for one's appetites alone and not be guided by God's Word at all by suggesting that one pursue satisfying a legitimate appetite in an illegitimate manner. (Jesus Christ)
- C. There was the temptation to test God's care by seeking to influence one to intentionally do something inappropriate and expect God's provision or protection in spite of that. (Jesus Christ)
- D. There was the temptation to worship the Devil and not God through accepting the Devil's gift of the world, power and position without having to suffer for God or submit to the will of God. (Jesus Christ)

**Key Point:** The various temptations encountered by Adam and Eve and Jesus Christ are a picture of the kinds of temptations we will encounter in our lives. There are five central issues at the core of every temptation: the character of God, the identity of mankind, the desire(s) in view, God's Word on the desire(s) in view, and the matter of worship.

Before, during, after we encounter the various kinds of temptations presented to Adam, Eve and Jesus Christ our Lord, there are five key questions we must face and answer. We will begin with the first two:

**Question #1 – Who is God? Every temptation leads us to question the reality of God and His Will. Will we embrace or reject the reality of God and His Order?**

- A. Is God the Sovereign Creator of all that exist?
- B. Is God the Controller of all that exist?
- C. Is God Supreme and above all?
- D. Is God a loving God who provides all I need to function according to His will and good pleasure?
- E. Has God set guidelines and guardrails by which I am to operate?
- F. Are God's guidelines and guardrails for my protection and productivity or are they to keep me from ascending to equality with Him?
- G. Is God sufficient for me or do I need something more?
- H. Is God threatened by me?
- I. Does God have the final say on all matters?
- J. Can I challenge God and win?
- K. Will God truly allow me to suffer the consequences of my sin?

**Key Point:** Where there is a question of the Position or Authority of God in your life, there will be a question of submission to God's order or the evil within you and outside of you.

**Question #2 – Who are You? Every temptation leads us to question our identity. Do we hold to an identity given to us by others? Do we have an Identity created from our own understanding of ourselves or do we embrace the identity predetermined by God?**

- A. Am I created for God, by God, through God?
- B. Do I exist for myself or do I exist for God?
- C. Do I have the right to define and redefine who I am or is that predetermined by God?
- D. Do others have the right to define and redefine who I am or is that predetermined by God?
- E. Am I under God's authority or am I equal to God's authority?
- F. Do I have the authority or ability to take matters into my own hands?
- G. Do I have the authority or ability to pursue, possess, control and enjoy anything or anyone as I see fit?
- H. Can I ever be self-sustaining and self-sufficient like God?
- I. Do I have the authority or ability to determine my destiny or does God determine that?
- J. Am I like an animal that acts only by instinct and therefore cannot help myself in times of decision?
- K. Am I like God, having the power to define or redefine things as I choose thereby redefining sin as I see fit?

**Key point:** Pride assumes that I exist for myself and everything is for myself and my pleasure as well as for my own kingdom, my own purpose and for my own glory. (*Tempted and Tried* by Russell Moore, pp.142)

**Closing Thought:** You will be tempted exactly as Jesus was, because Jesus was being tempted exactly as we are. At the core of these temptations is the common impulse to cast off the fatherhood of God. Identity confusion is the reason people are able to affirm one thing and do another. And it's the reason more worldview training on how to think like a Christian doesn't stop people from wrecking their lives. You do what you want to do, even though you "know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die," and only then do you "give approval to those who practice them" (Rom. 1:32). You start to see yourself as either special or as hopeless, and thus the normal boundaries don't seem to apply. It might be that you are involved in certain patterns right now and that you would, if asked, would be able to tell me exactly why they are morally and ethically wrong. It's not that you are deficient in the cognitive ability to diagnose the situation. It's instead that you slowly grow to believe that your situation is exceptional ("I am a god"), and then you find all kinds of reasons why this technically isn't theft or envy or hatred or fornication or abuse of power or whatever ("I am able to discern good and evil"). Or you believe you are powerless before what you want ("I am an animal") and can therefore escape accountability ("I will not surely die"). You've forgotten who you are. You are a creature. You are also a king or a queen. You are not a beast, and you are not a god. (Tempted and Tried by Russell Moore pp.20-21, 36-37) When you embrace God as He is, you will embrace the reality of who you are and surrender to the will of God instead of the temptation of the moment. Do you know and accept who God is? Have you accepted who you are under Him? The answer to these two questions are revealed in your responses to temptation.