

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 answered two of those questions last week. There are 3 more key questions we must face and answer:

Question #3 – What do you treasure? Every temptation leads us to question the origin and agenda of our desires. The temptation begs the questions: Do we live to feed our appetites or to be fathered by God? Is God our treasure or is it His creation that we treasure above God?

- A. What do I want?
- B. Why do I want it?
- C. Is it ok to have it?
- D. Is it outside of God's design for me to have it?
- E. Do I have to question God's care for me as to why I do not have it?
- F. Is it within God's timing for me to have it?
- G. Is God holding back something from me for my good or is He insecure of what I might find?
- H. In order to have it, do I have to go outside of God's ordained order or will to get it?
- I. Do I put myself in a place of presuming on God in my decisions to obtain it?
- J. Does it lead me to pursue an alternative belief system than the one set by God in order for me to have it?
- K. Does it lead me to be magnified or does it lead me to be crucified?
- L. Does it lead me to feel guilty, to justify myself or to defend myself once I have it?
- M. Does it lead me to fear the judgement of God once I have it or does it lead me to believe I am God once I have it?

Key point: When God's creation is the center of your world, you will be driven to satisfy your desires with or without God, resulting in choosing the creation over God thinking you can be like God.

Question #4 – Do You know and accept God's Word on the matter? Every temptation leads us to question our knowledge of, our understanding of and our accepting of God's Word within the context of the temptation at hand.

- A. Does God have commands, prohibitions, guidelines and guardrails on this matter?
- B. Do I know what God has commanded in light of this situation?
- C. Does God mean what He says and say what He means?
- D. In others words, does "no mean no" and "yes mean yes" to God or is God just trying to keep me from being like Him?
- E. Are God's order and ordinances an option or an obligation to me?
- F. Will God enforce and judge in relation to what He has established and commanded?
- G. Do I live by every word that comes from God or by every appetite that comes from my body and heart?
- H. Am I trying to understand what God has commanded, reinterpret what God has commanded, or work around what God has commanded in light of this situation?

Key Point: The Word of God will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Word of God.

Question #5 – Who or What Do You Worship? Every temptation lead us to question who or what we reverence. Is God the source of our satisfaction and the solution to our problems or is there someone or something else that is the source of our satisfaction and the solution to our problems?

- A. What or who do I reverence?
- B. Why do I reverence it or him/her?
- C. What do I fear losing?
- D. Who do I fear losing?
- E. What or who makes me angry?
- F. What do I talk about without being coerced?
- G. What compels me to be sad or excited?
- H. What or who do I feel is the ultimate to be with, to have, or to experience?

Key point: Every act, every inclination, every affection flows from whatever we see and feel is ultimate. (Tempted and Tried by Russell Moore, p. 136)

Closing Thoughts: All temptations lead us to ask and answer: Who is God? Who am I? What Do I treasure? Do I know and accept God's Word on this matter? And who or what do I worship? How you answer these questions determines how you respond to temptation. How you answer these questions determines and exposes if you are living for the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of the Devil. May we consider the central issues and questions to consider about temptation in order to understand the genuine nature of temptation.