

*The Natural, Neutral, and Naughty Desires  
That Tempt Us (James 1:14)*

**Definition of Temptation:** An enticement presented to lead one into sin against God. To understand the nature of temptation let us focus on the natural, neutral and naughty desires that tempt us.

“But each one is tempted (**lured into a trap; to seek to be enticed into sin**) when he is carried away (**lured away by attraction**) and enticed (**to be seduced**) by his own (**that which is distinctive to that person**) lust (**desire(s) that have become cravings that are unrestrained; coveting and craving something in the wrong way**).” (James 1:14)

**Lusts** of your heart are desires you believe you cannot do without being satisfied. You are willing to sin to obtain them and sin when you do not obtain them. In essence, these are evil desires that dominate the heart and lead us to make dangerous and deadly decisions with our life and the lives of others. These lusts are also known as inordinate desires of the heart.

I. We are tempted by **natural desires** that become inordinate desires, which in essence are lustful desires.

- A. Natural desires are the basic desires of the body for food, sleep, or sex.
- B. We tend to be tempted to satisfy *natural desires* outside of God’s will.
- C. For example, we are tempted to gluttony, oversleeping out of laziness, or sex outside of God’s will.

II. We are tempted by **neutral desires** that become inordinate desires, which in essence are lustful desires.

- A. Neutral desires are the interests in life that are not prohibited or commanded by God. All that I want to be, to have, to create, to do, or to experience where God has given man freedom of conscience to decide (i.e. to be an engineer, to have a nice home, to create a business or invention, to go fishing, to see a play, etc.).
- B. We tend to be tempted to satisfy *neutral desires* outside of God’s will.
- C. For example, we are tempted to being dishonest on an application to get the engineering job, spending more than we can afford to have a nice home, focusing so much on creating a

business or invention that we neglect being a disciple or making disciples, or going fishing or seeing plays so often that we neglect going to church and serving others.

**III. We are tempted by naughty desires that are inordinate desires, which in essence are lustful desires.**

- A. Naughty desires are all the things that I want to be, to have, to create, to do, or to experience that God would define as sin.
- B. We tend to be tempted to satisfy naughty desires which are already outside of God's will.
- C. For example, we are tempted to define and be what we want:
  - 1. To make our own rules and regulations apart from or outside of God's order or command
  - 2. To live a life refusing to answer to anyone including God
  - 3. To seek to control and possess any person that will satisfy all our agendas
  - 4. To try to create a way of life, business, or situation whereby we can be autonomous from God and people
  - 5. To do what we want and to satisfy what we want, apart from or outside of God's order or command
  - 6. To try to control our destiny

**Key Point:** The preexisting desires of our hearts become inordinate desires which in essence are lustful desires of the heart. **NOTE:** *Your thought life reveals what you worship, what controls your passions, thereby revealing what you love the most (Matt. 22:37-40). Your passion will consume your thinking, determine your plans, form your intentions, master your cravings, and focus your purpose.* When the heart sets unbiblical standards for personal achievement or desires and those standards rule a Christian life more than God, we see lustful desires taking over. This equates to false idols. (38)

**(Adapted from *Passions of the Heart* by John D. Street , pp. 33-38, 64-66)**