

=PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING=

Lesson 11

The Christian and Temptation

AIM: to teach my pupils how to resist temptation.

POINT OF CONTACT: Give each pupil a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask the pupils to write down as many people in the Bible as they can who resisted temptation and as many as they can who yielded to temptation. You might want to give some little prize or recognition to the one who writes the most. For example, those who resisted temptation would be Jesus, Joseph, Daniel, and others; those who yielded would be David, Samson, and others.

I. WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

1. Sometimes in the Bible it is testing. See I Peter 1:6. God often allows the Devil to tempt us so that God may test us and prepare us for something greater.
2. Sometimes temptation is strictly an attempt of the Devil to solicit us to evil.
3. Someone has defined temptation as being "the incitement of a normal desire beyond the boundaries set by God for man." In other words, this person says that the desires, which in themselves are not sinful, become sinful when they exceed the limitations imposed by God.

II. THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION.

1. Temptation does not come from God. James 1:13, 14, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."
2. Temptation comes from the Devil. I Chronicles 21:1, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." Matthew 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." John 13:2, "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." I Thessalonians 3:5, "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain."

You will notice then that Satan is the tempter. God oftentimes permits His children to be tempted as the trial of their faith, but temptation is done by Satan. These temptations are often used by God to help us. James 1:2, 3, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

III. WAYS TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION.

1. We are to trust God to deliver us. II Peter 2:9, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
2. We are to take the way of escape that God gives us. In I Corinthians 10:13, notice especially the words, "but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God promises us a way of escape. We are to take it. Every time we are tempted, God gives us a way out. When we see this way out, we are to follow it immediately.
3. We are to realize that God will not let us be tempted above our abilities. In other words, we do not have to yield. God will give us more grace than the temptation and more power than the temptation. I Corinthians 10:13, "...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able...." God knows our abilities. He knows how much we can take. The person who has said, "I just can't help but do this thing," is wrong. He can help it! God will not allow him to be tempted above what he is able to bear!
4. We are to resist the temptation. Read Ephesians 6:16; Hebrews 12:4; I Peter 5:8, 9. Remember, it is not a sin to be tempted; it is a sin to yield. All are tempted. Even our Saviour was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness. Sin is not temptation to do something wrong; it is doing something wrong. When we see the temptation and all of a sudden have a desire to do wrong, we are to resist this temptation immediately.

5. We are to guard against temptation. Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” This means that it is better for us to watch and stay away from temptation, if at all possible. We are to be on guard constantly, lest we place ourselves in tempting positions. It would be logical to say that the fewer temptations we have, the fewer sins we will commit. We should watch ourselves and not put ourselves in positions that will tempt us. For example, it is best not to go around the drinking crowd. It is best not to go around the cursing crowd. It is best not to put ourselves in a physical position that will tempt us to adultery. To be sure, there will be temptations. Most of them, however, can be avoided. When temptation is avoided, a sin is averted.
6. We are to pray for God not to lead us into temptation. Matthew 6:13a. We are to ask God definitely to keep us from temptation. No day should pass without our beseeching the Lord to keep us from the danger of temptation to do wrong.
7. We are to be careful not to be a source of temptation to other people. Not only are we not to yield to temptation, but we are not to place ourselves as a source of temptation. We must guard ourselves against becoming instruments of sin. Paul says in Romans 14:13, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”
8. It will be an encouragement to each of us if we will realize that all temptations are common to all people. Paul said in I Corinthians 10:13a, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” What an encouragement this must be to each of us! Even the best Christians are tempted. Just as they are tempted, so are we; but just as they were delivered, so may we be.
9. We should run immediately from the temptation. (Teacher, tell the story of Joseph when Potiphar’s wife tempted him to commit adultery. He ran immediately, even leaving his garment in her hands. See Genesis 39.)
10. Remember that if you have yielded to temptation, you can still be restored. I John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Verse 9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If one has fallen into sin, he may be forgiven and restored. He may be made useful again to God and His work.