

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, December 18, 2024 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

OVERCOMERS – PART 4

“The Enemy We Let In... TEMPTATION!”

1 John 5:4-5, Matthew 4:1-11, James 1:13-16, Genesis 3:1-13, Hebrews 4:14-16

“⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” – 1 John 5:4-5 (NKJV)

Are you overcoming the world or is the world overcoming you? What do I mean by that? Well, I think to really get the jest of that questions you have to do a lot of introspection (reflection), a lot of soul-searching, a lot of digging deep and taking an honest inventory of your life.

★ *What do you think are some of the signs in our life that the world may be overcoming or getting the best of you in your life?*

SOME SIGNS THE WORLD IS GETTING THE BEST OF YOU:

- (1) **Paralyzing Fear** – Paul said in Romans 8:15, “¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” Paul is telling us that “fear” is “bondage”... it paralyzes us. It paralyzes our faith. Paul reminds us in 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”
- (2) **Debilitating Doubt** – James, the half-brother of Jesus, said in James 1:6-8, “⁶ ...He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” I don’t believe that he is saying there that the Lord won’t do anything for him, but rather that he won’t receive what the Lord could do for him because of his doubts. His doubts make him double-minded in that he has a mind that has been consumed by what has gotten the best of him and filled him with those doubts and although he expresses faith his faith is divided by his doubt and made him unstable

- (3) **Despairing Worry/Anxiety** – Matthew 6:31-34, “³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”
- (4) **Weakening Discouragement** – Hebrews 12:3, “For consider Him (Jesus) who endured such hostility from sinner against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.” The writer of Hebrews is telling us that discouragement is wearing or weakening to our soul, therefore we must keep your eyes on Jesus. Discouragement affects our spiritual eyesight. God spoke the Old Testament hero of the faith, Joshua, in Joshua 1:9 and said, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage (*don’t be discouraged, be of good courage*); do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
- (5) **Giving in to sin and temptation** – James said in James 1:13-14, “¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” “Drawn away” carries with it the idea of being overcome by the pull and draw of the world into temptation and sin. Paul tell us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that we can overcome sin and temptation when he says, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN OVERCOMER

The song, “Victory in Jesus” written by Eugene Bartlett, a prolific hymn writer, having composed several hundred hymns. Bartlett was born in Christmas Eve in 1885. He dedicated his life to Jesus Christ at an early age. He is considered by many to be the founding father of Southern Gospel Music, and he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1979. Throughout his 56 years of life, he composed more than 800 hymns and gospel songs. He was the founder of the Hartford Music Company and Music Institute. The school attracted many talented artist and became known for publishing great Christian songs and hymnbooks, many of which he wrote himself. He gave many very famous hymn writers their first opportunities to publish their music. Among them was Alfred E. Brumley who wrote “I’ll Fly Away” and “Turn your Radio On.”

Bartlett had a massive stroke that ended his career and he became confined to one room in 1939, unable to communicate. Dying, he spent almost a month writing his very last song, when most of his hymns were written in just a few simple minutes. Although broken in health, and unable to speak, he wanted to demonstrate that his great faith in Jesus Christ had not cracked under suffering and his great victory over doubt and despair. That last hymn was "Victory in Jesus." Bartlett died in 1941,

VICTORY IN JESUS

By E.M. Bartlett (Hymn #426)

I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory
How He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning
Then I repented of my sins, and won the victory

I heard about His healing, of His cleansing pow'r revealing
How He made the lame to walk again, and caused the blind to see
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory
I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory
And I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea
About the angels singing, and the old redemption story
And some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory

(Chorus) O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood
He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood

Christians are overcomers and truly are to live victorious Christian lives every day, but let's be honest, there are many enemies along that way that daily steal our victory and sometimes defeat us. We know the saying we may win the war, yet lose the battle. We ultimately know that we win and will be victorious in the end, but it's the daily battles that defeat us and keep us from living the victorious and abundant life that Christ came to give us daily. This study is about finding victory in Jesus over those enemies that so often defeat us. They can be numerous and varied. They can make an insidious assault on our lives as believers, stealing our joy, dashing our hopes, creating disillusionment and despair in our lives, and keeping us from the abundant life that Jesus desires for us.

The Enemies That Can Defeat Us in the Christian Life: We have looked at three of them so far. Here they are again...

1. **FEAR** - We started off in this study looking at the enemy of FEAR and its paralyzing effect on our lives as believers. We talked about what the Bible has to say about fear and more particularly about overcoming our fears in order that our faith can flourish and grow. Remember **Ralph Waldo Emerson** said, *"Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world."*
2. **DOUBT** – Then we turned our attention to another enemy... the enemy of DOUBT. Doubt defeats and disillusiones the lives of many professing believer and keep them from enjoying the full benefits of their faith and the victorious Christian life that Christ died to give them. So we've talked about how to defeat and overcome fear and doubt in our lives as believers in order that we might be able to live victorious Christian lives and not be held captive by these deadly enemies that can often plague our lives even as believers. Remember **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** said, *"Doubt discovers difficulties which it never solves; it creates hesitancy, despondency, despair. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace... doubt nails down his coffin."*
3. **WORRY** - Next, we talked about a deep seeded enemy that lurks within, but often shows on our face. The enemy of WORRY! Our minds are frequently weary with worry... our spirits are often weighted down. It defeats our faith like a deadly enemy waging war against us. Remember, **Vance Havner** said, *"Worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere."* It's really worse than that... it will keep you from living the life of faith that God desires for you to live. It will stifle your joy and the peace you can be experiencing in life and will enslave you to a life of misery, fretting, and anxiety!

These enemies (fear, doubt, worry) are so real, and their warfare against us so successful, that we often just resign ourselves to living in their grip, imprisoned as captives of their onslaught against us... "We'll that is just life... everyone worries! Everyone has fears! We are all a little selfish, and doubt plagues us all at some time!" We stop waging war against these deadly enemies and therefore our Christian faith become less than abundant, less than victorious, and less that what God desires for us to experience. And the truth is, those are just four of the enemies that war against our Christian faith and walk on a daily basis.

This evening we want to take a look at a fourth enemy that is all too apparent in our lives as believers, but it may be one that often we think we have under control. We often have a mistake notion that the older we get, the wiser we get, and therefore the less tempted we become. Oh how mistaken we are by the clever deception that this

enemy can throw our way. Temptation never goes away on this side of heaven, it just take on a new face. What may have tempted you as a young man may have less appeal to you now, but you can be sure that the enemy of temptation will find a new appeal to you. **Henry Ward Beecher** said about temptation,

“All men are tempted. There is no man that lives that can't be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.”

And I love **Oswald Chambers'** take on the subject. He said,

“Many of us suffer from temptations from which we have no business to suffer.”

You see the reality is that few enemies plague us more persistently than TEMPTATION. We are tempted to gossip, to steal, to become rich, and to desire popularity. We're tempted to take revenge, to be lazy, to overeat, to cheat, to fight, and to yield to sensual desire. We are also tempted to be selfish, to envy, and to hold grudges. Then there comes a time when we are tempted to give up, to quite, to fear, to doubt, to worry! Evil is all about us. We should want to live an insulated life, not an isolated one. We need God's Word to speak to us on this vital issue as we attempt to diagnose the problem and defeat this enemy that is certain to bombard us daily no matter what age we are. So let's take a look at the deadly enemy of temptation.

BACKGROUND AND DIAGNOSIS OF TEMPTATION... WHAT IT MEANS (Matthew 4:1-11, James 1:13-16)

There are several places in the Bible that deal specifically with the problem of temptation. But perhaps we are so often overcome by temptation in our life because we haven't taken the time to really delve into that the Bible has to say on the subject. The help we find in scripture for overcoming the problem of temptation, rather than being overcome by temptation is irreplaceable and without question essential... in other words we won't overcome temptation with out it. That why the Bible is so key to finding victory over temptation.

Perhaps the place to start in our understanding of temptation with Jesus, Himself, and what His encounters with this problem have to say to us. If you have your Bible with you let's look at Matthew 4:1-11 together...

READ: Matthew 4:1-11

“¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ ⁴But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ” ⁵Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ” ⁷Jesus said to him, ‘It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’ ” ⁸Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” ¹¹Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.” -Matthew 4:1-11

This passage of scripture plays a very important role in Jesus life and ministry, both for His ministry, but also for us as believers. It is important to note that the temptation of Jesus in Matthew, chapter 4, takes place immediately on the heels of Jesus’ baptism in chapter 3 of Matthew and at the inauguration or commencement of His (Jesus) earthly ministry. That in itself carries some valuable lessons for us concerning temptation. But let’s think about some encouraging and helpful truths we may learn from the temptations of Christ in Matthew 4...

5 Encouraging Truths to Remember for Overcoming Temptation in Your Life: *(these come from Matthew 4:1-11 and the temptation of Christ)*

- 1. We are not alone in our temptation** – Jesus, the very Son of God, God in the flesh, the perfect, spotless Lamb of God, who lived a perfect sinless life was tempted too. The writer of Hebrews said in Hebrews 4:15, *“¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”* Paul said to us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, *“¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”* We will look further at these two verses in a bit, but for now suffice it to say the Bible wants us to understand we are not the first to be tempted, we will not be the last to be tempted, and the last time you were tempted won’t be the last time you are tempted. And Jesus understands... He was tempted too!

2. **We are often most vulnerable to temptation at our high points in life** – For Jesus, it was right after the high point of His baptism. Perhaps He was soaring to one His highest moments, a remarkable baptism, a dove descending and lighting on His shoulder for all to see and hearing praises on Him, God’s thundering voice giving Jesus an “atta boy” and Jesus filled with the glory of God... Remember Proverbs 16:18 says, *“¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”* I’m not suggesting that Jesus was about to fall or even that He was in danger of falling into sin. I am just reminding us that we are the most vulnerable to falling, getting tripped up, at those high marks, glory filled, spiritual high moments, when we think we couldn’t possibly fall. Oh, that is exactly when you are most likely to fall... and perhaps the temptations of Christ are a reminder of that. He navigated those temptations beautifully and so can we by following His example, but don’t miss the lesson that falling to temptation and temptation it’s self is most certain to come at those high points in our life. One verse before the great temptation verse we read a minute ago in 1 Corinthians 10:13 is a sturdy warning to us in 1 Corinthians 10:12, *“¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”* Then come verse 13, *“¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*
3. **We are also vulnerable to temptation at the low points of life and all those in between** – It seems it is best if we understand that there will never be a time in your life when temptation can’t touch you. Note that Jesus was tempted in Matthew 4 not only following the high point of His baptism, but also at the low point of exhaustion, hunger and perhaps discouragement... The writer of Hebrews warns us in Hebrews 12:3-4, *“³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”* At least a part of what the writer of Hebrews is telling us is that we need to watch (consider) how Jesus handled temptation so that we don’t fall to it. And he tells us that we when we get weary and discouraged we are vulnerable to it.
4. **God has given us all the tools we need to overcome temptation in our life** – In Matthew 4 Jesus shows us some of the most powerful tools at our disposal for handling and overcoming temptation. We can and should use the same tools Jesus used... the Word of God (Jesus quoted Scripture to answer each temptation), solid grounding on Scripture (not only did Jesus quote Scripture, He knew Scripture, He even corrected the enemies error), and dependence and worship of God (Jesus declared His dependence on God and God alone and His were words of worship and adoration to the Father). It is interesting that the angels were near and ministered to Him.

5. Temptation comes from the enemy – It is no surprise that the enemy, the devil, wants nothing more than to “steal, kill and destroy” (John 10:10). He will stop at nothing to destroy God’s most prized possession... you. The enemy knows your weak points, your breaking point, where you are most vulnerable, exactly what bait to dangle in front of you. The Bible clear tells us (warns us) in **James 4:7**, “...Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Again, the Bible full of help on finding victory over temptation and the temptations of Christ recorded in Matthew 4 carries some valuable lessons for us concerning temptation. But that is not the only help we find in God’s Word for diagnosing and discerning temptation. James, the half-brother of Jesus, also give us some needed clarification on what temptation is...

READ: James 1:13-16

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” -James 1:13-16

Under the inspiration of God’s Spirit, James wrote to a group of people undergoing a number of difficulties. They had been severely persecuted for their faith and scattered and were no longer together in a secure group... that in itself brings loneliness and trials. In James 1:1-12, he addresses **the problem of trials**; in verses 13-16, he addresses **the problem of temptation**. There is a difference, but its somewhat complex in scripture. In the original Greek text, the term **“peirasmos”** is used for both words. However, the context determines the proper thought... trials or temptations. They are often used interchangeably.

- After all, temptation is a trial (of faith)
- And every trial is a temptation (to grumble)

Again, when the word appears in the New Testament the context helps us to see which interpretation is meant. There are therefore differences and similarities between trials and temptations. Many people are not sure of the difference between trials and temptations. While admitting that in some circumstances, the difference may be difficult to delineate, the following can, at least, help tell the difference. Although we must not push the distinctions too far, here are examples of the differences:

Differences Between Trials and Temptations

1. **In their ultimate origin... temptations carry the fingerprint of the flesh (your flesh); trials, in some way, carry the fingerprint of God** - Now the temptation part we all understand. The enticement to sin is all around us. It comes from within us. That's James idea in v.14 and following. But the thing you need to realize, however is that this aspect never comes from God. In **James 1:13** it says *"When tempted, not one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone."* Temptations do not come from God. Trials, on the other hand, are different. Trials are circumstances of life that are difficult and which cause us to have to depend upon God. God brings or allows trials into our lives not to hurt us but to help us. Listen to **Proverbs 17:3**, *"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the Lord tests hearts."* That's what He's doing – He's testing your heart. Will you trust Him? Will you realize that He is helping you to become more mature? So – "consider it all joy when you encounter various trials." And remember God doesn't tempt you – He tests or trials you. He allowed Satan to test Job (Job 1:6-12). Therefore when we speak of "trial" we see God's fingerprints; when we see temptation, we see our own—or the devil's. Any trial that God sends—death of a loved one or friend, financial reverse, loss, illness, misunderstanding, losing your keys, failure, disappointment, betrayal, abuse, unemployment, depression, accident, loneliness, missing the plane, rejection, not getting that important invitation, or any physical pain—should be seen as something God can use in our life to grow us and mature us in the faith... His fingerprint is on it!

3 Things We Are Not Saying:

- (1) **We are not saying that God delights in your misery** – When James says in **James 1:2**, *"Count it all joy, my brothers, whenever you face trial of many kinds..."* He is not saying that God enjoys your misfortune and difficulty... that God likes your problems, but rather than God can use your problems to actually grown you.
- (2) **We are not saying that every difficulty and trial that comes in your life is the direct hand of God** – If your home burns down tonight, God didn't burn your home down. He certainly knows it burned down. It didn't catch Him off guard. He didn't cause it, but He can use that experience in your life to grow you it if you let Him. The truth is, we live in a fallen world where sin and the devil roam free, we are not immune to effect of this fallen world. The innocent often suffer along with the not-so-innocent. Nevertheless, God can put his hand (fingerprint) on your life in the midst of the difficulties and do amazing things in us and through us if we let him.

- (3) **We are not saying that trials and difficulty in your life should be seen as some kind of Holy retribution from God for something you have done or not done** – Although there may be times when God is trying to get ones attention through trials, or draw one who is away from Him back to Him; the reality is that there are times when trials come on innocent, unsuspecting lives that are walking wholly consecrated and devoted to God. The saintly suffer to at times.
2. **In their immediate origin... temptation comes from within; trials usually come from without** – As James says in **verse 14, “*But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*”** In other words, it comes from our own evil desires within. Jesus, Himself, said in **Matthew 15:18, “*But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart (within), and these make a man ‘unclean.’ For out of the heart (from within) come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*”** Jesus is talking about what come from within. It is from these things that temptation comes. Trials, on the other hand, although sometimes are of our own making are usually those circumstances and challenges from without that come on our lives... sometimes without warning and totally unexpected. Job, is a good example of these kind of trials. His trial came not from within, but without.
 3. **In their moral relevance... temptation usually has considerable moral significance; trial may be more morally neutral** – Here is what I mean, temptation usually has morality overtones such as the lure sexual sin, or the temptation to dishonesty, or cheating, or selfish ambition, or lying, or greed, or such... whereas, trials trend to deal more with questions of a morally neutral nature such as an illness or losing one's keys, or dealing with job loss. These, of course, can involve or lead to moral questions at times, but usually the trial itself is not really of a moral nature... not always the case, but usually.
 4. **With reference to what is tested... temptation will usually attack a weak spot, trials test our strength as well as exposing a weakness we may be unaware of** – It seems that Satan always knows where to dangle the bait in our lives, doesn't He? That's is temptation and how it works. It picks on the place where you are the most vulnerable. Trials, on the other hand, usually prove our faith or where we are spiritually. They may reveal a weakness, but they are mean to grow us in that place.
 5. **Temptations appeal to and manipulate ones' affinity to pleasure; trials challenge one to pay the price for what he cherishes** – David's fall into sin

with Bathsheba was begun with temptation, David's loss of the child conceived in that illicit affair was a trial.

6. **Temptations are meant to be resisted; trials are meant to be endured** – I love 1 Peter 5:8-9, “*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, stand firm in the faith...*” Do you see it? Satan and temptations he throws at us are meant to be resisted. And we are to “stand firm” in the trial of our faith.
7. **In temptations, you are expected not to give in, in trials, you are expected not to give up -**
8. **Temptations thrill us; trials grill us** – Someone has said, “Sin is fun for a season!” Sin always has an allure, a draw. The hook is hidden inside. Trials, on the other hand, can really take us through the fire... we can really feel like we are being grilled and tested.
9. **We pray: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil... the trials.* In other words, if it is temptation, avoid it; if it is trial go through it -**
10. **The Lord makes a way of escape for us if it is temptation; He gives us the strength to persevere through it if it is trial -**

4 Principles That Apply to Temptation

1. **Temptation is inevitable (v.13a)** – “*When tempted, no one should say...*” (v.13a). Notice the issue is not one of “if,” but “when.” None of us can live without temptation. It is common to every man. The monk living behind the monastery wall wrestles with temptation just as the businessman who may work in a busy downtown area or a young teenage boy or girl struggle with moral limits. *Perspective: The Lord does not make us feel guilty because we have temptation or having tempting things come before us. In other words, temptation is not equal to sin. The issue has to do with our response when temptation comes before us.*
2. **Temptation is never directed by God (v.13)** – “*When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me...’*” (v.13). The question of agency is a particularly critical one in this discussion of temptation. How is God related to temptation? There are two different ways of describing agency in the original language of the New Testament... either directly or indirectly. James spoke of “indirect agency.” Put another way, he writes, “Let on one say that God is even indirectly involved in my actions.” The point is that God is not even indirectly engaged in bringing

us into sin. When we sin it is solely our choice. Note the concluding phrase of *verse 13*, “*For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.*”

3. **Temptation is an individual matter (v.14)** – “*But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed*” (v.14). Nothing is strong enough outside of us to alone cause sin. Sin occurs when we agree to the temptation and get involved with it. (see *I Corinthians 10:13*, “*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*”)
4. **Temptation that leads to sin follows the same process (vv.14-15)** – “*But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it give birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, give birth to death*”(vv.14-15). Put in simple terms here are four steps of that process:

4 Steps in the Temptation Process

Step 1: The outer bait is dropped

Step 2: The inner desire is attracted to the bait

Step 3: Sin occurs with the yielding

Step 4: Sin results in tragic consequences

Comment: Between the third and fourth steps, there is a temporary period of pleasure. Satan’s lie is that we will receive pleasure or gain by involving ourselves in certain acts. The pleasure occurs, but he doesn’t tell us that it is temporary... fleeting.

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters By Portia Nelson

Chapter 1. I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I am lost. I am helpless. It isn’t my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter 2. I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don’t see it. I fall in again. I can’t believe I am in the same place, but it isn’t my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter 3. I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I still fall in. It’s a habit. My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

Chapter 4. I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

Chapter 5. I walk down another street.

Questions about Five Short Chapters

1. Responding to Chapter 1... What does Chapter 1 teach us about temptation?
2. Responding to Chapter 2... What does Chapter 2 teach us about temptation?
3. Responding to Chapter 3... What does Chapter 3 teach us about temptation?
4. Responding to Chapter 4... What does chapter 4 teach us about temptation?
5. Responding to Chapter 5... What does Chapter 5 teach us about temptation?

2 Meanings Within One Word, Peirasmos: It is important to make a distinction between two meanings within this one word.

1. **Negatively...** An attempt to entice someone into evil (Often translated as temptations) - Satan is the ultimate source of all desires and actions contrary to God. He is the tempter, and He uses the weapon of temptation to lead us into sin... and I might add that he knows just what that weapon of temptation looks like for you. In Matthew, chapter 4, when Satan come to tempt Christ we are He is specifically called “tempter.” Just listen to Matthew 4:3, *“The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”* And in 1 Thessalonians 3:5, Paul says it like this, *“⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.”*
2. **Positively...** A testing which aims at spiritual good (Often translated as trials) – James uses the word “peirasmos” in this positive sense in James 1:2-4, *“² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”* In this sense of the word, “peirasoms” is seen as a positive thing in our lives that produces great fruit.

**This bible study is a more detailed description of the enemy of 'temptation' in its negative significance.*

3 Purpose of Temptation: According to Scripture we may come away with at least three purpose of temptation. These reveal something of the danger of this enemy, temptation.

1. **To undermine God's plan and will (Genesis 3:4-5)** – Remember the words of Satan to Adam and Eve in the Garden when tempting them to sin by disobeying God in Genesis 3:4-5, ⁴ *“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.* ⁵ *“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*
2. **To lead man astray from God's way (John 10:10)** – Remember Jesus words of caution concerning Satan and his way in John 10:10, ¹⁰ *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*
3. **Temptation at its core, is to deny the authority of God and to seek our independence from God (Genesis 3:1)** – Let's go back to the garden one more time and hear Satan's tempting words in Genesis 3:1 *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” “Did God really say...”* Did Satan really say that? That is an outright questions not only of God word to Adam and Eve, but of His authority to say it. And a temptation to find their independent way from God. How did that work out for them? Listen, temptation is a deadly enemy.

THE WAY OF TEMPTATION... HOW IT WORKS

What are the ways of Temptation?

1. **Temptation starts in heart and mind, in our deepest motives and desires (James 1:14-15)** – Listen to James' words in James 1:14-15, ¹⁴ *but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.* ¹⁵ *Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”* It's present in us! It's there! This enemy is present with us in our hearts and minds... in our desires and motives.
2. **Temptation finds it expression through human desire (1 John 2:16)** - Listen to 1 John 2:16, ¹⁶ *For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.”* John talks about three most fundamental means of temptation. This is significant that God's Word essentially give us the “modus operandi” (method of procedure) of how temptation works.

3 Modus Operandi of Temptation: How it works!

(1) **Lust of the flesh** – What your flesh wants

(2) **Lust of the eyes** – What your eyes like

(3) **Pride of Life** – What strokes your ego

**These three fundamental principles summarize any temptations we may face in our daily lives.*

3. **Temptation has been with man from the beginning (Genesis 3:1-6)** – Interestingly, Satan used these same devices found in 1 John 2:16 to tempt Adam and Eve way back in the garden of Eden. Listen to it again in **verse 1-6 of Genesis 3**, *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.⁵ “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”* Did you see it? In verses 5-6.

3 Modus Operandi of Satan in the Garden: How he tempted Adam and Eve!

(1) **Lust of the Eyes** – *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..” (Gen 3:6)*

(2) **Lust of the Flesh** – *“...tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..” (Gen. 3:6)*

(3) **Pride of Life** – *“...and also desirable for gaining wisdom (like God)...” (Gen 3:5-6)*

4. **Temptation was attempted with our Savior (Mat 4:1-11)** - You know the story. Thousands of years after it was first introduced in the Garden of Eden and used successful to defeat God’s most prized possession... man, God in the flesh would experience the attack of the enemy. (**READ: Matthew 4:1-11**). Interestingly, once again in the garden destroyed... the wilderness (desert), temptation... the same modus operandi would be used.

3 Modus Operandi Used in the Temptation of Christ: Did it work this time and what does that mean for us?

- (1) **Lust of the Flesh** – *“If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” (Mat 4:3)*
- (2) **Lust of the Eyes** – *“the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.” (Mat 4:8)*
- (3) **Pride of Life** – *“All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me.” (Mat 4:9)*

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: Is temptation sin? Can temptation be considered as sin? What do you think?

3 Reasons Temptation is Not Sin:

1. **Matthew 4:1-11 = Jesus was tempted** - No, temptation is not sin because Jesus was also tempted yet didn't yield... didn't sin. (Mat 4:1-11)
2. **Hebrews 4:15 = Jesus was tempted every way** – (READ: Hebrews 4:14-16) *“¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”*
3. **1 Corinthians 10:13 = Temptation is common to man** - Every Christian is faced with some kind of temptation. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13, *“¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”* It's common to man! In other words, we all face this enemy... its common. The temptation is not the sin, its giving into the temptation... acting on it that is the sin.

Why do we fall in into temptation? 3 Suggestions: Why do we see a constant struggle with sin?

1. **Because there is a temporary pleasure in it.** -
2. **Because we choose it** Hebrews 11:25 says, *“He (Moses) chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.”*
3. **Because of our own human weakness** - We are susceptible to sin because of our frailty due to sinful nature. Remember why God sent the flood... here it is in Genesis 6:5, *“⁵ The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”* And back to the Garden of Agony with Christ and His disciples... do you remember what He said in Matthew 26:41, *“⁴¹ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body*

is weak.” We fall so often because we are weak to this enemy of temptation. We need to get stronger!

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION... HOW TO FIND VICTORY OVER THE ENEMY OF TEMPTATION

So how can I overcome this enemy, temptation? How do I find victory over this enemy that hits me where I am most weak and vulnerable? How? What are the steps one can take? You know there are not short cuts... not magic pills to take to counteract the attack, never the less, victory is not only possible it is desired for you by the One who gave His life for you. Remember **John 10:10**, while warning of the attack also said, *“... I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”* He is cheering for you to win this fight... not only that He is fighting along side of you and many times instead of you to assure your victory. That’s good news. Now how do I fight in practical ways, this enemy that so often defeats me.

Prescription for Overcoming Temptation: The three “P’s” are preparation, perseverance, and planning.

1. Preparation - Bible often picture temptation and struggle with sin as a battlefield, it is fighting against temptation and if you want to succeed in the battle, you need to prepare well. So here is how God’s Word says to prepare:

Preparation for the Fight:

- (1) **Ready yourself for the battle** - (Eph 6:11, 13-17) **Ephesians 6:11** says we are to, *“¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”*
- (2) **Watch and pray** - (Mk 14:38) Here we go again back to the garden one more time this time from **Mark 14:38** and Jesus’ instructions to his followers, *“³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*
- (3) **Use the Word of God** – (Psalm 119:11) Remember Jesus used the Word of God to attack and overcome all three temptations in the wilderness. We are no better, so spend time in the word of God. Immerse yourself into word of God, study it, memorize it. Remember, you may not have your bible with you when Satan confronts you with some kind of temptation! I love the wonderful word in **Psalm 119:11**... it’s a good one to memorize, *“They word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee (God).”*
- (4) **Be alert and self-controlled**- (1 Pet 5:8) For every Christian, temptation can come in different form. Peter warns us in **1 Peter 5:8-9**, *“⁸ Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know*

that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

(5) **Stand strong in faith** - (Ephesians 6:10, 1 Pet 5:8-9) I love Ephesians 6:10, *“¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”*

2. **Perseverance and Endurance** - So often the battle long and we grow weary, and we just give up and give in. We need to persevere, persist and continue to resist temptation. Don't you think that is the idea Paul had in mind in 1 Corinthians 10:13, *“¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*
3. **Planning (Strategy)** - Remember that there is always a way to overcome temptation. In the passage we just quoted above we are reminded, *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”* There are basically two strategies, which I have discovered in Bible when dealing with temptation.

3 Strategies for Fighting Temptation:

- (1) **Resist... fightback** - James 4: 7 says to, *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* There are times when you need to fight back and resist the temptation. You need to stand firm.
- (2) **Retreat... fallback** - 2 Timothy 2:22 says, *“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness...”* There are times when you need to flee, run away or retreat to escape temptation. Joseph, of the Old Testament, is an excellent example of both of these methods. He tried to resist Potiphar's wife as much as he could, but when the time came, he chose to flee out rather than resist her. (Gen 39: 6-12) I believe that many times, we choose wrong ways, we flee when we need to stand firm, and vice versa.
- (3) **Regroup... fallback** - Listen to the rest of James 4:7 and 8, *“⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* I get the idea in that verse that while we are resisting and standing firm or even retreating and fleeing that God is fighting for us as we are washing our hands and purifying our hearts for Him... so lean most fully on His ability to win that one for you.

“Temptation may even be a blessing to a man when it reveals to him his weakness and drives him to the almighty Savior. Do not be surprised, then, dear child of God, if you are tempted at every step of your earthly journey, and almost beyond endurance; but you will not be tempted beyond what you are able to bear, and with every temptation there will be a way of escape... Watch the morning watch. Do not see the face of man until you have seen the face of God. Before you enter on the day with its temptations, look up into His face and hide His Word in your heart.” - F.B. Meyer