

The Nature of Temptation

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What We Will Learn

- Attributes of temptation
- Based on the temptation of Jesus
- Temptation initiates from earthly desires
- Reducing temptation through prayer
- Recognition and rejection
- Screening based on “image of God” test
- Matthew 4, Luke 4, and other passages

Temptation of Jesus: Turn Stone into Bread

**Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:3–4]**

3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Temptation of Jesus: Turn Stone into Bread

- Jesus just completed forty-day fast
- He was hungry
- Temptation directed at physical need
- Lust of the flesh [1 John 2:16]
- Tempter did not know God
- Challenged Jesus to prove he is son of God

Temptation of Jesus: Jump from the Temple

**Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:9–12]**

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

Temptation of Jesus: Jump from the Temple cont'd

**Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:9–12]**

6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

““He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

Temptation of Jesus: Jump from the Temple cont'd

Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:9–12]

7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Temptation of Jesus: Jump from the Temple

- Challenged Jesus to perform a feat
- Temptation directed at pride
- Pride of life [1 John 2:16]
- Tempter did not know God
- Challenged Jesus to prove he is son of God
- Temptation disguised with bible citation
- Pretended to be “of God”

Temptation of Jesus: Worship Me, Control the Earth

**Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:5–8]**

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Temptation of Jesus: Worship Me, Control the Earth

**Matthew 4 (NIV)
[Also Luke 4:5–8]**

10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Temptation of Jesus: Worship Me, Control the Earth

- Temptation directed at “lust for fame”
- Lust of the eyes [1 John 2:16]
- Challenged Jesus’ loyalty to God
- Temptation did not reveal tempter identity
- Claimed he had dominion over earth
- Nothing in the temptation
- Revealed the claim to be false

Attributes of Temptation

- Jesus was tempted in every way

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin

[Hebrews 4:15]

- His temptations cover full range of temptation attributes

Activation of Temptation

- Temptation initiates from the worldliness in a person

14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

[James 1:14–15]

Three Attributes of Temptation

- Temptation attempts to exploit the body, soul and spirit (three-fold nature of man)
- 1 John 2:16

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Three Attributes of Temptation

- Lust of the flesh → physical desire
- Lust of the eyes → Desire to have everything you see [covetousness]
- Pride of life → Obsession with one's status or importance

First Temptation

Genesis 3:1–13

- Woman desired the forbidden fruit
- Devil (serpent) exploited that desire
 - She thought it was pleasing to the eye
 - Good to eat
 - And desirable for gaining wisdom [wishing to be like God]
- She and husband ate the fruit
- Husband blamed woman
- Woman blamed serpent

Temptation: How the Devil Operates

- Calls to question the nature of God and/or his principles in a person's life
- Exploits a crack or hole in the fence
 - Lacking faith in God
- Depending on your own strength instead of relying on God makes you vulnerable
 - Not seeking and relying on God's counsel

Dealing with Temptation

- Reduce occurrence of temptation through prayer
- Defeat temptation when it occurs
 - Recognize and reject
 - Evaluate contemplated actions
 - Provides opportunity for God to speak to you
 - Reject actions that fail “image of God” test

Reduce Temptation through Prayer and Working with God

- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one [Matthew 6:13]
- Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation [Matthew 26:41]
- Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life [Galatians 6:8]

Recognize and Reject Temptation

- Jesus recognized and rejected all three temptations
- Spiritual growth needed to recognize temptation
- Recent bible study [Self Assessment]
 - Foundation principles of spiritual growth [2 Peter 1:3–11]
 - Requirements for spiritual growth [Hebrews 10:22–25]

Evaluate Planned Actions to Defeat Temptation

- Evaluate every contemplated action
- Determine how it conveys the image of God?
- To the affected and observers
- Evaluation provides two benefits
 - Allows God to speak to you
 - Provides opportunity to reject actions that fail “image of God” test
- David evaluated battle against Goliath

What We Learned

- Temptation initiates from worldliness in a person
- Three attributes of temptation
 - Lust of the flesh → physical desire
 - Lust of the eyes → Desire to have everything you see [covetousness]
 - Pride of life → Obsession with one's status or importance
- Devil's approach to temptation

What We Learned cont'd

- We can reduce temptation through prayer
- Growing spiritually equips us better to recognize and reject temptation
- Evaluating contemplated actions
 - Allows God to speak to us
 - Provides opportunity to reject actions that will not convey the image of God