

Topics of the Bible ~ Temptation ~ Leader's Guide

What exactly is temptation in a Biblical sense? Temptation is an enticement or an allurement to sin against the will of God.

1. How do you feel when you give into temptation? A) Guilty, B) Frustrated, C) Try to justify what I did, D) Enjoy the moment, E) Pray for forgiveness.

2. Does God ever tempt us? (James 1:13) NO!

James 1:13 – When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

3. Does God ever test us? (James 1:2-3) How do you respond? Do you say, "praise the Lord" when your golf ball sails into the woods?

James 1:2-3 – 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. What are the three ways in which we are tempted?

A. James 1:14 Our flesh, we ourselves, our own natural lusts

James 1:14 – but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

B. 1 Thessalonians 3:5 Satan

1 Thessalonians 3:5 – For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent Timothy 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.

C. Matthew 18:7 The world. What are some ways that the world tempts us?

1. Peer pressure 2. Consumerism 3. Job pressure 4. Expectations

Matthew 18:7 – Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!

5. Who is tempted? A) Everyone, B) Sinners, C) Weak people, D) Other _____
When you are tempted does God help? (1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Peter 2:9)

A. Everyone. Temptation is common to all men.

1 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.

2 Peter 2:9 – if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. [NIV] The two additional translations below clarify this passage.

The Lord hath known to rescue pious ones out of *temptation*, and unrighteous ones to a day of judgment, being punished, to keep, [Young's Literal Translation]

These things show that the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their temptations, and how to keep the unrighteous for punishment on the Judgement Day. [Common English Bible]

6. How is a temptation different from a trial?

A temptation is an inducement to commit some evil or disobey God. A trial is a time of difficulty in a person's life. Satan wants to use both to destroy us. But the Lord allows both temptations and trials to strengthen our faith and teach us to depend on him.

7. How does Jesus tell us to deal with temptation? (Matthew 26:41)

Matthew 26:41 – “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

8. Is temptation a sin? Was Jesus tempted? (Matthew 4:1-11)

Temptation by itself is not a sin. Even Jesus was tempted. The sin comes from giving in to temptation.

Matthew 4:1-11 – (Story of Satan's temptation of Jesus)

9. Can believers “fall” into temptation, i.e., as a result of the original fall of Adam are there some temptations we are unable to resist? (1 Thessalonians 4:8)

The Holy Spirit, given to us by God, provides us with the power to resist sin. With this, there is no temptation we cannot resist unless we deliberately give in.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 – Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

10. Is it generally best to run away from temptation? (2 Timothy 2:22)

2 Timothy 2:22 – Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Certainly fleeing from temptation is an effective way to avoid it. However, there are often circumstances that you cannot escape or temptations that pop up unexpectedly that we must be prepared to resist and deal with.

11. How can we respond wisely to temptation?

A. Focus on the big picture. Consider how yielding to a particular desire will affect your health, finances, relationships, and God's plans for you. Look for a godly way to fulfill your longing.

B. Remember that God is faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13) Claim the promise in this verse when temptation strikes.

C. Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 4:13, Acts 1:8a) As a born-again Christian you have the awesome power of the Holy Spirit to reset your thinking, change your attitude, and enable you to say no.

Philippians 4:13 – I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Acts 1:8a – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you

D. Set your mind on things above (Colossians 3:2, 1 John 2:15-17) In other words, make up your mind to live a victorious Christian life. Don't focus on desires that will draw you away from God.

Colossians 3:2 – Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

1 John 2:15-17– ¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

E. Identify areas of weakness; know your limitations. When we know our limitations, we can be more sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in an area of weakness. What are some of your areas of weakness?

F. Recognize times of weakness. Remember **HALT**: don't allow yourself to become too **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired**.

G. Build a defense by reading God's word. (Joshua 1:8)

Joshua 1:8 –Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

H. Pray in advance. Ask the Lord to build spiritual principles into your life. (Psalm 119:11)

Psalm 119:11 – I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.