

TEMPTATION

Text: James 1:12-15

INTRO: Our text recognizes that we will each face temptation. Blessings await those who overcome or endure it. Our text also has something to say about the source of temptation. From some other passages we will look at some safeguards that will help us to endure or overcome temptation.

I. TEMPTATION CAN ATTACK US FROM WITHIN OURSELVES OR FROM WITHOUT.

Eve was tempted by the serpent. The temptation did not begin completely within.

A. The wrong kind of association with the wrong kind of people will constantly subject us to temptations we otherwise might not face.

1. The unequal yoke, 2 Cor 6:14-15.
Deut 22:10

1 Cor 15:33, Do not be deceived:
"Evil company corrupts good habits."

NOTE: There is a strong temptation among young people esp. to desire to appear worse than we really are. Drunkenness, fornication, etc. Also true of many men, some women.

2. Balaam's high ideals gave way to the temptations put before him by Balak, Num 22.
3. Most likely Peter's 1st denial of Jesus came because he was gathered around the fire with Jesus' enemies, JN 18:18, 25

B. Sometimes temptation to do wrong comes from those who love us & want to see us do well financially, socially, etc. Parents, friends.

Matt 10:36, 'A man's enemies will be those of his own household.'

Mark 3:21, But when [Jesus'] own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

- II. AS OUR TEXT SHOWS, TEMPTATION OFTEN COMES FROM WITHIN OUR OWN SELVES. In fact, in a very real sense, it always involves our own desires of heart.
- A. Outside influences could never lead us to sin unless there is within our hearts a desire to do that which is contrary to God's will.
 - B. Each of us has points of weakness, areas in which our desires are difficult to control.

1 Cor 8:10, For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

Rom 14:21, It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

Heb 12:1, Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...

NOTE: Each of us has some besetting or favorite sin. Some sins do not appeal to me. Others are constant temptations. Like the young soldier who heard the 10 commandments for the 1st time: "At least I never made a graven image."

C. But another point at which people can be very vulnerable are the areas in which they are strong. One factor in Peter's denial of Jesus was his certainty that he would never do so.

NOTE: Did you ever say, "I'd never do..." & then later do the thing you that you'd never do? Balaam would never go beyond the word of the Lord—but he did.

Such certainty allows us to let our guard down.

III. THERE ARE SEVERAL SAFE-GUARDS AGAINST TEMPTATION AT OUR DISPOSAL.

1 Cor 10:13, 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.

NOTE: God provides the way. We must do the escaping. Let us notice some things that may help in overcoming temptation.

A. Knowledge of Scripture. MT 4:1-10

B. Self respect. Nehemiah's life had been threatened. His friends advised him to cease working to rebuild Jerusalem & hide in the temple. Nehemiah's answer: Neh 6:11, Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

Pres. Garfield was once advised to do something he knew to be wrong. His adviser assured him, "No one will know." Garfield responded: "Pres. Garfield will know--& I've got to sleep with him."

C. Heritage.

1. Gospel preacher.
2. Bible class teacher, elder, leader
(song, prayer, etc.)
3. Christian.

D. Impact on family, friends, Lord's church

Illustration: 2 boys talking about doing something they knew to be wrong: 1st said, "I won't do it because of what my father will do to me if he ever finds out." The 2nd said, "I won't do it because of what it will do to my father if he ever finds out."

E. Finally, a realization of the presence of Jesus the all-seeing eye of God & the certainty of judgment should help us overcome temptation.

CONCLUSION: Each of us is constantly tempted--& sometimes we give in. God wants to forgive us & help us to be stronger next time the temptation comes.

La Porte, TX, May 13, 1984

Exton, PA, June 17, 1984

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, October 31, 1993

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 23, 2005