

No Trespassing III – Temptation

Joke: Deliver Us From...

A mother was teaching her 3-year old daughter the Lord's Prayer. At bedtime, she repeated after her mother the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. Mom listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some E-mail. Amen.

- I. Overview: We have been talking about the spiritual realities that underlie the physical realities. The evil spiritual forces that exist are at work in our world and against us to produce in people the same attitude that their leader has. Which in a word is to be “god” of our own lives.
 - a. We have learned about the nature of Satan, what his methods and what his agenda is.
 - b. We have learned that at its core, the work of Satan involves “trespassing” upon ground that Jesus owns. (our lives).
 - i. And we have learned that our job is primarily to “enforce” the no trespassing signs that God has erected upon the borders of our lives.
 - ii. But too often we don’t and we have to deal with invaders who take over.
 - c. We have learned that we are in a battle and that we must know our enemy and be prepared each day for battle. To fail to do so will leave us either casualties or captives; and a mockery to the Kingdom of God.

- II. Temptation Overview
 - a. Oscar Wilde wrote, "I can resist everything, except temptation."
 - b. I read about a man who was suing a hospital. A doctor had performed staple surgery on his stomach to help him lose weight. A couple of days after his operation, he raided the hospital refrigerator and stuffed himself with everything he could find. This tore open the staples and forced another surgery. He was suing the hospital for having a refrigerator near his room. He claimed the temptation was too great. Thus, his complications were not his own fault but the hospital's fault!
 - c. Temptation– what does it mean?
 - i. Peirasmos - the trial (or an experiment) done on a person’s fidelity, integrity, virtue, and constancy through an enticement, whether arising from your desires or from your outward circumstances.
 - d. Purpose of Temptation – Why is it allowed?
 - i. **Because temptation resisted, produces strength in us...of character.**
 1. Weight lifting is sometimes called “resistance training.”
 2. The more resistance to movement you face, the stronger the muscles become.
 3. Did you know that when you are doing resistance training, what you are doing is destroying muscle?
 - a. Yes, that is why after a serious work out you will find your muscles WEAKER immediately afterwards.
 - b. This is because you have literally DESTROYED muscle tissue so that it would grow back bigger and stronger.
 - ii. **Temptation teaches us to rely upon God and not ourselves.**
 1. I hope that you have discovered by now that you do not have the strength in yourself to overcome your nature.
 2. You need supernatural help to overcome these “tests” of our integrity.
 3. The women’s bible study that Kay is leading beginning next month is dealing with learning how to walk in Victory...in God’s strength.
 - iii. **Temptation teaches us to distinguish between the voice of God, the voice of the devil and our own voice.**

1. If you have any familiarity with temptation, you know that there isn't this little devil sitting on your shoulder whispering in your ear.... "Hey, Bob, doesn't that look appealing?"
2. In fact, temptation never speaks in the 2nd or 3rd person (ie. calling you by name).
3. Temptation always speaks in our own voice from our own mind, will and emotions. "I want..." "I like..." "I can't..." "Did God really say?"
4. How do you learn where the source of that voice is?
5. The answer is by the fruit that the voice gives...and that is through the successes and failures of life.

III. What is temptation's target?

- a. Temptation generally consists of an appeal to choose to meet a need or a desire in a manner that is not consistent with God's best for me.
- b. This appeal, which might be a solicitation of our nature and our desires, is the avenue the adversary uses to distract us, deceive us or destroy us.
 - i. James 1:14 "but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."
 1. Look at the first half of this verse: "By his own evil desire (lust)"
 2. Temptation appeals to our DESIRES
 - a. Ever notice, you're never tempted to do something you don't like!
 - b. The Greek word for this is "epi-thumeo" which is a combination of two Greek words, "epi" (around, upon) and "thumeo" which deals with "passion, wrath, hot firing temper that quickly cools."
 - c. So it is commonly translated as "covet" and "lust."
 - d. Our modern versions translate it "evil desires" but it is more than just evil.
 - e. The word thumeo is used to describe hot emotions.
 - i. Temptation comes from a very strong IMPULSE (thumeo) to meet a need.
 - ii. It is not just a casual temptation that plays on your mind but rather often uses an emotional trigger.
 - f. So temptation makes its greatest appeal to our strongest emotional needs and desires.
 - i. Do you think that that guy who raided the refrigerator after his stomach surgery was just trying to meet a physical hunger need or desire?
 - ii. Of course not!
 1. If hunger was really the temptation, he would have stopped with a sandwich.
 2. But he ate everything in it.
 3. He was overcome with epi-thumeo, an emotional need had been triggered and he felt helpless to resist it.
 - iii. This is part of the reason that just getting your stomach stapled won't solve an overeating habit any more than having your hands cut off will solve a thieving problem.
 1. There is a core issue at stake. Dealing with only the outer symptoms will almost always fail.
- ii. The second half of this verse is James 1:14 "but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."
 1. Dragged away: (is not a good word choice for this translation) the Greek word for this means to draw or lure game out (Gr. "ex") of hiding with an "enticement" which is the 2nd word used here:

2. Enticed: “to bait” or “to deceive”
 - a. If you have ever gone fly fishing you understand that the presentation of the fly is vital to luring the fish out of its safe place.
 - b. Everything about the fly must be perfect. Fish know what bugs are in season and which are not.
 - c. Think about the nature of a lure. It is made to look like the real thing. It acts like the real thing. It moves like the real thing.
3. What the devil does is the result of careful hunting on his part.
 - a. He has observed our lives for years.
 - b. He knows what “impulses” and “emotional triggers” we all have.
 - c. So he hangs the bait out there that will appeal to the triggers in our lives so that we will move out of our secure place and grab the hook. We will take the bait.
4. What do you do when...
 - a. You are rejected...or your boss writes you up for something, or your feeling vulnerable, lonely, afraid....what is your strongest impulse?
 - b. What is your “medication?”
 - c. If you can find that, you will discover a stronghold. EXPAND.

IV. What is the Appeal of Temptation

- a. 1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*
- b. **The lust** (desires –there’s that word - epithumeo) **of the flesh and the lust of the eyes...**
 - i. Flesh – God says it is weak.
 1. Mr 14:38 - "*Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"
 2. We cannot wage war with the weapons of the flesh. We cannot win spiritual wars in the power of our flesh...or our own strength.
 3. Our flesh cries out for its needs to be met; it has appetites that it wants met...feed me, I’m sleepy...our flesh has limits.
 4. But flesh also consists of our soul – our mind, our will and our emotions. When the bible speaks of the flesh, it is speaking of the “carnal” man. That is the man or the part of the man who is under the control of the Spirit of God.
 5. And sometimes a struggle masquerades as a bodily struggle when it is in fact a struggle in our mind or our emotions.
 - ii. This is because **Temptation often consists of meeting our own needs our own way**:
 1. Psychologists have studied people's battles with temptation.
 2. They have found that about 80% of those trying to break a bad habit will relapse within 90 days.
 3. With many such habits, nicotine addiction for example, this 90 day period takes the person beyond the struggle with physical withdrawal.
 4. The large percentage relapse, not because of the physical dependence, but rather because of their struggle with the emotional distress.
 - a. 60% of the people who resume bad habits do so when they feel angry, anxious, depressed, bored or lonely.
 - b. Conquering temptation is often a matter of unlearning God–dishonoring ways of meeting our deepest emotional needs our own way.
 - c. Rather than fleeing to the solace of a bad habit, with humility need to go to God and seek out His method for dealing with our pain or struggle.

- iii. I think it is interesting that most temptations to disobey God seem to originate in our bodies, but actually end up being rooted in our souls.
 - 1. You can give a heroin addict the drug Methadone, but if you don't deal with his core need, he will skip his treatments and go back to Smack.
 - 2. He craves something more than the physical satisfaction that Methadone provides.
 - 3. He like all of us, wants something to numb that pain inside, and to fill that empty spot inside of us that only God can fill.
- iv. Have you been trying to meet a need with external stuff?
 - 1. Have you been pushing God away from your life because you think you can meet your own needs?
 - 2. You might be here today because you know you are running out of options, running out of road, and running out of time.
 - 3. Turn to Jesus today. He came to fill that big empty space in your life and to quench that thirst so that you never have to go back to the way you once were.

c. The pride of life

i. Pride is ALWAYS associated with deception.

- 1. The key word for "pride of life" comes from the Gr. Word for life used here.
- 2. It is the word "bios" which is used in 1 Jn 3:17, Lk 8:14 and means "wealth, goods and resources."
- 3. In other words, bios describes the outward aspect of life as opposed to the inward aspect of life (Zoe).
- 4. The word Pride comes from a root word that means vagrancy, which is someone who is an EMPTY PRETENDER.
 - a. Such is one who wants acclaim without accomplishment.
 - b. Proud people don't need advice. They know the answers, they think they have "it" together."

ii. Deception is the primary tool of the enemy

- 1. We mentioned earlier in our study of the passage from James that the Devil uses lures that look like the real thing to draw us and entice us out of our safe place into vulnerability.
- 2. Deceive – to make a person believe what is not true, mislead or delude
 - a. It disconnects us from the truth
- 3. I read that "The easiest man to deceive is oneself."
 - a. In fact the bible even says, "*The heart is deceitful above all else, who can know its ways?*"
- 4. Remember the lures that look like and act like the real thing?
 - a. Perhaps you have heard of the saying, "If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it's a duck?"
 - b. Such great reasoning, isn't it?
 - c. But it is also a reliance upon our head instead of the truth of God's word.

iii. Premises and conclusions.

- 1. In college I took a LOGIC class. We learned that your conclusion is only as good as your premise. In other words, if the core assumption or fact you start with is wrong, then everything else that builds on that foundation is going in the wrong direction.
- 2. Satan desires to deceive us so that we will build upon the wrong foundation.
 - a. Deception is at the root of temptation.

- b. Gn. 3:15 – “*The serpent deceived me and I ate.*” (Eve was deceived, Adam ate with eyes wide open).
 - c. Gal 6:7 – “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*”
 - d. Thoughts about Deception
 - i. **Deception was a part of our past:**
 - 1. Titus 3:3 “*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.*”
 - 2. Does that verse describe you? What is your past like?
 - ii. **Deception is part of our present**
 - 1. We sing songs to God on Sunday morning while our minds are miles away on another object of worship (self, idols) instead of on the words and the true object of our worship (God).
 - a. This is self-deception
 - 2. Our deception also keeps us from getting help, counseling when we need it the most.
 - 3. (No, its their fault, they need the help, not me!).
 - 4. 1 Jn 1:8 “*If we say we have no sin we are deceiving our selves and the truth is not in us.*”
 - 5. I believe every one of us needs someone to smash the mirror we use to deceive ourselves and to hold up a real one!
 - 6.
 - iii. **Deception makes us feel better about ourselves.**
 - 1. It makes us look better in other’s eyes.
 - 2. On the other hand the truth can be painful, difficult and frightening.
 - iv. Exposure to the truth – the cure for deception
 - 1. X-ray vision: If I could hand out special glasses to everyone in this congregation so that suddenly you could see your brother, sister, husband and wife without any of the illusion, masks, or deception that each of us walk around with...how would you feel about others knowing your secrets?
 - 2. Imagine others seeing you as you really are...past the façade, the illusion you want them to see?
 - 3. Who wears these glasses? Most often it is our spouse or our children.
 - a. They see past the illusion we wear for all to see.
 - b. They see us when few others do. In fact, they sometimes see things that we have chosen ourselves not to see.
 - 4. **Do I have to let EVERYONE know?**
 - a. **The truth is if you are afraid of EVERYONE you are truly afraid of ANYONE knowing. In other words, you don’t want the truth to come to the light because it would either make you feel worse about yourself or break an illusion others might have about you.**
 - b. When you come to the place where you care MORE about what God thinks about you than what others (or even yourself) thinks, then you will find freedom over deception.

V. The Escape Plan!

- a. **Temptation in itself is not sin. (acting on it is)**
- b. **You are not compelled to act on temptation.**

- i. Just because the refrigerator was next to the room didn't mean that you had to act on the temptation. .
- c. None of us are IMMUNE to temptation.
 - i. JOKE: A story about a married man appeared in Readers Digest recently. He was shopping with his wife, minding his own business, trying to look interested, when a shapely young woman in a short, well fitting dress walked by. As she walked by his eyes followed her. Without looking up from the item she was examining his wife asked, "Was it worth the trouble that you are in now? "
- d. Every one of us is subject to at least one area in our lives (that we are aware of) that we find we must deal with temptation in.
- e. How do we escape temptation?
 - i. **Draw Near to the Throne of Grace:**
 1. Hebrews 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
 2. This is about GRACE! God knows our weaknesses.
 3. It is not about law but about grace. That is the best remedy to temptation. Grace.
 4. There is a silly idea that people who don't sin don't know what temptation is like.
 - a. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.
 - b. You find out the strength of an opposing army by fighting against it, not by surrendering to it.
 - c. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down.
 - d. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later.
 - e. **We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it:** and Christ, because He was the only man who **never** yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation really is— [Mere Christianity, quoted by Kent Hughes in Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul, 131].
 5. **So draw near to him! (instead of running away because you feel bad about yourself)**
 - a. "*Come near to God and He will come near to you*" (James 4:8).
 - b. Heb 2:18 - *For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*
 - ii. **Get the right attitude:**
 1. Set aside the pride which is delusional and admit your need. (this is the act of humbling oneself). (Humbling yourself isn't beating yourself up. It is admitting your need for help)
 2. "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*" (James 4:6).
 - iii. **Stand up to the enemy** (Next week's sermon)
 1. "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7).
 - iv. **If you fail, get back up:**
 1. *for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again*" (Proverbs 24:16).
 2. Gal 6:1 - *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted*
 - v. **Look for a Exit!**

1. 1Co 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

- VI. Closing verse: Mark 4:19 “worries of the world, deceitfulness of riches and desires for other things enter in and CHOKER the word and it becomes unfruitful.
- a. What is the enemy’s agenda for your life? To steal, kill and destroy.
 - b. He wants to tempt you, deceive you and lead you to become unfruitful by choking off the Word of God in your life.
 - c. If you are focusing on the Outer Life (Bios) instead of (Zoe) then you can count on the fact that you are being strangled.