

"When You Are Tempted"

Each of us faces temptation every day. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Will Jesus really help us overcome our sins? Stay tuned and we'll see how!

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Lord God created each of us, and He knows all about us, and He knows all about humanity. He knows the good and the bad. And His word was given to protect us. Proverbs 2:6 to 8 says, "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; and he's a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints." We do well to listen to God's wisdom. And so thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

From the moment that we're old enough to understand right from wrong and good from evil, we face the temptation to please our desires and sin rather than please God. Temptations come in many forms. Some are tempted to tell a lie, some to steal, some to sexual sin, some to take revenge, and some to gossip. When we're afraid or hurting, we may be tempted to get angry and strike back at someone. When we're selfish, greedy, or jealous, we may be tempted to take what is not ours or to put down other people.

Paul spoke of the struggle that he had faced with wanting to do good but giving in to sin. Paul said in Romans 7:15 to 17, "For what I'm doing, I do not understand; for I'm not practicing what I would like to do, but I'm doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me." Well that problem faces us all, but the answer to temptation and sin is found in Christ.

We offer this study free on what God will do to help you when we're tempted. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 9:24 to 27, and explore the fact that life in God's will matters, and there is freedom from temptation.

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. And in this passage Paul mentions his determined attitude toward doing his best to serve the Lord. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." There you see Paul's determination to serve God.

Let's pray together. "Oh heavenly Father, help us to run in such a way that we may win the prize, to discipline ourselves and to do Your will always. In Jesus name. Amen."

1 John 2:15 to 17 describes the three kinds of appeals that Satan uses to draw us toward the world and away from God. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Now every temptation known to man comes

in one of these three forms or in a combination of them. The devil is very cunning and uses our desires to lead us astray from God.

James 1:13 to 15 reveals to us how temptation appeals to us and what it will do to us. "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. But each one is tempted when he's drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it's full-grown, brings forth death."

Now Satan used these appeals to the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life when he tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 3 tells the story of how Satan led Eve to doubt God, to believe a lie, and to desire eating the fruit. Genesis 3:1 to 5 says: Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil."

Well, the devil first tries to get us to doubt God's Word and to make them think that God is trying to withhold some blessing from them. Now once Satan gets people to be self-centered rather than believing God, he tells them what they want to hear, lies that contradict God.

Now Jesus told some Jews who wouldn't listen to Him what the devil is really like. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:44 to 45, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources (or from his own heart), for he's a liar and the father of it. But because I tell you the truth (Jesus is saying), you do not believe Me."

Now the devil wants people to trust in their own judgment rather than listen to God. Of course, people who rely solely on their own judgment will turn to their feelings and desires. When the devil tempted Jesus, he first tried to take advantage of his hunger. Matthew 4:1 to 4 says:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He (Jesus) answered him and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus was able to resist the devil, because He knew the Father and He also knew the Scriptures. Jesus knew what mattered! And God helps us overcome temptation by making us His children in Christ. We belong not to ourselves but to Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross. God also helps us by giving us His Word to teach us how to live and how to avoid sin. The more we rely on God's teaching, the more we can avoid temptation and sin.

Solomon advised his son in Proverbs 3:5 to 7, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil." The Word of God can give you strength and help you through the struggles that you face with the devil and with the world. The Word is a great protection in times of trouble. The psalmist said, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119, verse 11).

Sometimes the devil appeals to the worst desires inside of us to get us to do things that are wrong. Jesus warned the people in the Sermon on the Mount to be careful what they look at. The Lord Jesus

said in Matthew 5:27 to 29, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

Our society unfortunately glamorizes sex. And our culture emphasizes and glamorizes sexy talk, and dress, and behavior. The desire for sex has led many young men and women into sin and away from God. The consequences of sin are always greater than people think. Sexual immorality can lead to unwanted pregnancy or disease, which can cause a great loss of respect. People who get involved in sexual activities outside of marriage often feel great guilt for what they've done; they wish they had never violated God's will.

Christians must control what they see. They must learn to look away from the things that may attract them sexually, so that they may remain pure in their thoughts. Young men who love the Lord learn to control their eyes and not keep looking at things that tempt them. Young women need to be careful how they dress, so that they won't tempt young men or send the wrong message. A young woman, who dresses in a sexually provocative way, says to the boys that she's willing to be sexy.

1 Timothy 2 and verse 9 says Christian women, "should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control." When young people male or female dress modestly, they avoid many embarrassing situations and temptations. You know, the devil loves to appeal to the eye; and this explains why Christians should pay attention to how they appear to others. Our clothing and our appearance do reveal our character.

The apostle Paul lived for a time in Corinth in the first century, a place where the culture was filled with sexual immorality. He gave them this instruction in 1 Corinthians 6:18 to 20, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

We need to know that God is watching. He sees and knows what we are doing. The father of a small boy would occasionally sneak into a neighbor's orchard and pluck some of the choicest fruit. Now he always made sure, however, that "the coast was clear." One day with his son tagging along, after carefully looking in every direction and seeing no one, he crept through the fence. And he was just about ready to help himself when the youngster startled him by crying out, "Dad! Dad! You didn't look UP! You forgot to see if God is watching." When temptation comes upon you and you're inclined to yield because no one else seems to be around, remember, God is always watching. Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good."

Now learning to flee in times of temptation is a great strategy for avoiding sin. Those who linger around sin usually get caught up in it. Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits (or good morals)." You know, what you watch, what you listen to, what you associate with can corrupt your thinking as a Christian. Stay away from the things that weaken your devotion to God. Paul told the young man Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue (there's some things you need to grab a hold of, pursue) righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2 and verse 22).

Now whether the devil appeals to the eye, to the flesh, or to pride, he's really appealing to your selfishness. People seek what they want, and their desires can lead them away from God. Luke 4 tells us a little more about how the devil tempted Jesus:

Then the devil, taking Him up to a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Luke 4, verses 5 to 8).

Now Jesus knew whom He should worship and serve, and it wasn't the devil! And in spite of all the treasures and power he might have received in ruling the world, Jesus would still have been a slave to Satan if he had given in to the temptation. You see, Jesus knew there was only One person to worship and serve, and that's the Father in heaven.

Jesus knew people's carnal desires lead them to something other than what they expected. Sin has a high, high price: "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6 and verse 23). Ananias and Sapphira decided they wanted some of the money that they promised to God. Now their love for money led them to keep back some of the money, and pretend to give it all, and they lied to God about it. They never expected that their lie to God would cost their lives (read Acts 5, verses 1 to 10). Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but it filled him with guilt and regret. Judas went away and hanged himself (according to Matthew 27:3 to 5).

Now we must never assume that sin is no big deal. Apparently, sin was a big enough deal for Jesus to bear the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. We can't love the world and love the Lord at the same time. James 4 and verse 4 simply says, "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Now when you sin, you sin against God; when you resist sin, you tell God that you love Him.

When you're in difficulty, hard temptations, remember to watch and pray. You'll remember the Lord Jesus warned Peter, James, and John at the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26 and verse 41, "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." I tell you, prayer can help you find the spiritual strength you need to resist temptation. God is on your side, and He wants to help you.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're grateful to be Your children, and help us to be like You, to live pure and holy lives, to say no to the things that are wrong and yes to the things that are right. Help us always Father to love You, to love others, and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

1 Corinthians 10:13 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." One thing we can be sure about. If the temptation is too strong for us, God will make us a way of escape. When you feel the temptation is too strong for you, start looking for a way out of the situation.

The Lord invites us to call upon Him for the help that we need. Some people pull away from God when they are tempted. Jesus calls us to come to Him confidently. Hebrews 4:15 to 16 says, "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. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." The Lord wants to help you overcome your temptations.

God wants you to be saved and to live with Him in heaven eternally; Satan and sin are your enemies. To find God's help, you must come to Christ and follow Him. To become a Christian, believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and your Lord. Turn from sin, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins. The Lord can free you from the sin with His blood, when you're baptized (Romans 6, verses 3 to 7). Won't you be baptized and follow Christ today?

We hope that today's study about God, and what He can do to help you in times of temptation has made you think and want to serve the Lord. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend about this program. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.