



LESSON 9

TEMPTATION

“You cannot prevent the birds from flying over your head. But let them only fly and do not let them build nests in the hair of your head. Let them be thoughts and remain such; but do not let them become conclusions.” Martin Luther ¹

Martin Luther was no stranger to temptation. It seems from his writings that Luther experienced more temptation as attacks from the world, flesh, and the Devil than most. Luther did not enjoy temptation, and yet he saw it as something from which he could grow. For many, temptation is not seen in this light. Luther believed that in order for the Christian to grow, one would face temptation and learn by the grace of God to resist and grow from it. Norwegian devotional writer O. Hallesby agreed with Luther when he wrote, *“Character cannot be formed without being tried in the flaming fires of temptation.”* ²

As we approach the topic of temptation, it is important to lay some ground work which will help in our understanding of the battle. We will look at four main issues surrounding temptation. We will first look at the nature of the Christian, and secondly, the nature of temptation. After these two foundational truths are established, we will learn how to resist temptation and then close with the Gospel promise of forgiveness.

Through this study, our hope and prayer is that you will gain a greater understanding of yourself and temptation. It is also our hope that you will learn what God has laid out for you so that, by His grace you can resist temptation. Most of all, our desire is that through the work of the Spirit of God through His Word, you will be brought to a place having peace with God through His gracious forgiveness.

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN

When dealing with temptation, it is important to lay the foundation. This is why one must look at the nature of the Christian. This is important because one’s understanding of their own nature will directly dictate how they view and handle temptation.

Study Questions

1. Based on Romans 3:9-23, Ephesians 2:1-3, and Colossians 2:13, what is the nature of man before conversion? How complete is the depravity? _____

¹ LW vol. 6 p. 133

² O. Hallesby. “Religious or Christian” p. 71



2. Based on 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:4, and Ephesians 4:20-24, describe what happens when a sinner is born again. _____

3. Do a careful study of Romans 7. What is the major thing that Paul is struggling with? _____

4. According to Paul, what role does the sinful flesh have upon the Christian regarding the issue of temptation? (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7) _____

5. What is meant by the following phrase, "*the agony of temptation is evidence of life*"? _____

THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION

It is important for us to know the nature of temptation. Through this study we will notice the difference between testing and temptation. We will also look at the causes of temptation.

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between testing and temptation? _____

2. What are some reasons why God tests His people? (2 Cor. 12:7-9; 1 Peter 1:6-7) _____

3. According to Matthew 4:1, 2 Corinthians 11:3, and 1 Chronicles 21:1 who is the main source of all temptation? _____

4. Even though Satan tempts us, what role does our sinful nature play? (Romans 7; Galatians 5:17) _____



5. According to Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:7-10, what is God's desired result of temptation for the believer? _____

FIGHTING TEMPTATION

Hallesby says that *"in the hour of temptation something very significant takes place within us, something very decisive in its importance, something vital to our whole being. The hours of temptation are brief, but fraught with destiny and filled with eternal import. The course of our life, not only the temporal, but the eternal as well, is determined in these fleeting moments."*³

Study Questions

1. According to Ephesians 6:12, against whom are we fighting the battle? _____

2. Discuss the armor of God. How does it relate to the Christian fighting temptation? _____

3. According to 1 Corinthians 10:13, what gracious promise has been given to the believer? _____

4. Read Hebrews 4:15-16. What do these verses tell us about temptation and Jesus _____

5. According to Matthew 4, how does Jesus respond to temptation? _____

6. Read James 1:2-4. What type of attitude should we have as we are being tempted or when we are in a trial? _____

TRUE FORGIVENESS

*"Temptation will gain the victory over us if we do not learn to turn to the Lord at once for help. The danger in connection with temptation is that it little by little distorts our perspective and weakens our moral judgment, as a result of which our view of the sin which is tempting us is altered little by little, under the quiet influence of the temptation."*⁴

³ Hallesby, 71



Study Questions

1. According to 1 John 1:5-10, why do we need to ask for forgiveness when we have sinned? _____

2. Consider Luke 15:11-32. Why does the father respond the way he does? _____

3. There will be times in your life after you have sinned that you will think, “God doesn’t want me.” This is a lie from Satan. The Bible is full of verses like Isaiah 30:18 *“Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him.”*
4. Psalm 34:15 says, *“The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.”* Why does King David remind us that the Lord is attentive to us when we cry out? _____

Temptation will find a way into the lives of committed disciples of Jesus. This chapter has been a warning to you, new disciple, that temptation lies ahead! Strap on that armor of God, arm yourself with the Word and Spirit of God, and go do battle!

Assignments to help you prepare for Lesson # 10

- 1) Continue to read your Bible and pray.
- 2) Complete the lesson on *Sharing Your Faith* before your next appointment.
- 3) Memorize John 14:21.
- 4) Focus on obeying the Word of God as you read it this week.
- 5) Set your heart on total commitment to knowing and obeying Jesus.

NOTES:

⁴ Ibid, 81