

Temptation

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The aim of our arch-Adversary from the beginning has been to persuade us to abandon God's perfect standard of behavior to walk in his unprincipled paths. *Temptation* describes the tool by which Satan encourages our involvement in forbidden, albeit pleasurable fulfillments of fleshly desires. Thus James wrote: "But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed" (Jam. 1:14).

Temptation is inconceivable in the absence of pleasure and/or advantage of some sort. Where these elements (or expectation of them) are absent, temptation is nonexistent. When one yields to temptation, he makes a behavioral decision, albeit a harmful and sinful one.

The fulfillment of our needs/desires outside of God's limits for them is the means through which Satan tempts us. Jesus would not have been tempted to turn stones into bread had He not been famished. It would have been no temptation to cast Himself from the temple's pinnacle had the possibility of proving He was the Christ not inhered. Likewise, the prospect of instantly bringing all men to His service made it tempting to bow before Satan (Mat. 4:1-10).

The impulses with which God has equipped mankind (e.g., seeking the necessities of life, self-preservation, sexual fulfillment, "natural affection") are innately innocent, yea good and even necessary (God gives only good gifts [Jam. 1:16-17]).

We illustrate: God limits sexual fulfillment to marriage (as He defines it), identifying this fulfillment outside of marriage as the sin of "fornication" and/or "adultery" (Mat. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4; et al.). If not repented of, these will keep one out of Heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8).

Contrariwise, Satan tells us we are free to seek sexual fulfillment with any person, including with those to whom one is not Scripturally married and those of the same sex. He further has done a good job of convincing people that such fulfillment is as acceptable as it is within marriage.

Paul recognized this dangerous allurements of the devil when he wrote that each man should have his own wife and each wife her own husband in order to avoid fornication (1 Cor. 7:1-2). He called the doctrine of "forbidding to marry" which some were teaching a "doctrine of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1, 3).

We have the promise that God will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear, but will providentially provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). Peter echoes that the Lord knows how to deliver Godly people out of temptation (2 Pet. 2:9). These promises assume one's cooperation.

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