

# Sources of Temptations

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In the drama of living the Christian life, temptation is an ever-present factor for those who serve the Lord. He suffered it (Mat. 4:1-11) and recognized the reality of it in our lives when by mentioning it in His teaching prayer (Mat. 6:13). Temptations are common to all and can be overcome if one seeks the “way of escape” (1 Cor. 10:13). They come from various sources, some avoidable, some unavoidable. An awareness of their sources may help us maintain mastery over them.

- **Temptations from Without.** Jesus warned about those who cause others to stumble (Mat. 18:7). Paul spoke of the tempting influence of evil companions (1 Cor. 15:33). Rehoboam listened to his foolish friends’ advice and caused the division of his kingdom (1 Kin. 11:10-11). Both Israel and Judah drifted into idolatry when they mingled with the heathen nations around them, contrary to God's command. In the presence of certain people, it is difficult to do or even suggest anything wrong, while in the company of others, it may be easier to do wrong. Entertainment media bombard us constantly with encouragement to compromise Biblical morals.
- **Temptations from Those We Love.** This may be the most difficult to resist, for we desire to please them. Jesus said, “A man's foes shall be they of his own household” (Mat. 10:36). His own family disbelieved His claims (John 7:4-5), and His friends thought Him mad (Mark 3:21). We have known of Mothers who dissuaded their sons from becoming Gospel preachers (or their daughters from marrying one) because of anticipated hardships and problems. The Christian who marries a nonspiritual, unbelieving mate may be severely tempted to please the spouse more than to please the Lord.
- **Temptations from Within.** Everyone has at least some weakness, most of us have more than one. Satan looks for our most vulnerable point and there strikes. A severe temptation to one person might not be to another. We must know our weaknesses and specially guard against temptations therein. A complete suit of spiritual armor is mandatory for our spiritual battles (Eph 6:13-17). Ironically, temptation may come at our strongest point; over-confidence has been the undoing of many a saint. Paul warned, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).
- **Temptations Relating to Reputation.** Here is a special area of danger for young people, but to a certain degree for all ages. This temptation can make us wish to appear worse than we really are, especially in certain company. We may not want to appear “holy” or “righteous.” One may thus be tempted to appear as a swashbuckling, daredevil person of the world and compromise our Biblical standards to prove we are “worldly wise.” A righteous reputation squandered takes great time and effort to rebuild.

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