

# *Victory over Temptation*

**1 Cor 10:13**

**1**

**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.

This may be one of the most enduring promises given to God's children. Becoming a child of God does not insulate someone from ever being tempted. It does not take anyone out of the world and away from temptation. That was never a promise given to the faithful, rather the promise given is that...

**2**

***"But with the temptation will provide the way of escape also"***

**3**

The point is that being a faithful follower of God doesn't elevate us above this world of temptation, but it does give us the only tool that can be used to overcome the temptation. Temptation leads to sin. Sin separates man from God.

**James 1:12-15**

**4**

**12** Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

James is quite clear. The penalty for committing sin is death, spiritual death, separation from God, eternal death.

**2 Thess 1:5-9**

**5**

**5** This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. **6** For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Just as there is a process by which man is saved; Hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, being baptized, and continuing to be faithful and obedient to the Word, there is a process by which man is lost to eternal damnation; being tempted, lured away from the true Word of God through lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, or the pride of life, giving into that desire, the temptation coming to fruition, and being lost eternally.

This brings us back to the passage we began with in 1 Cor. 10:13; you will be tempted to engage in those things of the world that are sinful. But God will provide a way to overcome that temptation. This raises an interesting question...

**6**

***How Is Temptation Presented in the New Testament?***

The word in Greek is peirasmós, it comes from the root peíra, meaning "experience". The verb is peírō, "to pierce through with a weapon or spear." Put these thoughts together the meaning becomes...

**7**

***"To pass through"***

As a verb, *peírœ*, to pierce, does not occur in the New Testament, but the verb *peirázœ*, "to tempt," is used with various meanings...

**8** 1) To try or to prove

In a good or positive sense ...

**John 6:5-6**

**5** Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" **6** This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

I find it interesting that Jesus would "Test" Philip. This is the idea of the verb *peirázœ*, "to tempt." Jesus was testing Philip to see if he would understand that Jesus had the power to feed all those people miraculously. Philip failed that test, he hadn't yet come to the understanding that Jesus' power could do anything. This test was to help Philip and the rest of the disciples to come to that understanding.

**9** And the term is used to test in a negative way...

**Matt 22:15-18**

**15** Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said.

**16** And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. **17** "Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" **18** But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites?"

Here, the same term that was used when Jesus tested Philip to help him, is used when the Pharisees tried to trip Jesus up.

The term is also used...

**10** 2) To tempt by urging one to sin

**Matt 4:1-2**

**1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Satan, the devil, wants your soul, just as he wanted Jesus'.

**1 Peter 5:8**

**11**

**8** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

That is Satan's purpose on this Earth, to take as many away from God as he possibly can.

**1 Cor 7:5**

**12**

**5** Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Satan is the father of temptation. He is called the tempter...

**1 Thess 3:5**

**13**

**5** For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

Here is what is really interesting. In tempting man to sin, Satan is trying to prove that we are evil. Evil is defined as anything that is not of God. It may seem to be innocuous or not harmful, but

that is his deception. Anything that is not of God, regardless of how small or simple it might seem is defined as evil. Therefore, when we allow Satan to lead us into temptation and sin, all he is proving is that we have an evil heart. And something that we all need to understand is that Satan has a very real interest in discrediting believers. He tries to entangle us in sin, and thereby prove us to be sinful. Just like with Jesus, when Satan took Him up to be tempted, his temptation, if not resisted, will cause us to do that which we know is contrary to God's will.

Now, a point needs to be made here, we saw that when Jesus tested, tempted, if you will, Philip, it was for the purpose of showing Philip the strength of his own faith and trust in Jesus. But Satan's temptations are always for the purpose of causing us to fail. There are some thoughts concerning temptation that I think prudent to explore for a bit...

- 14** A) Satan wants to confuse believers and cause them to stumble; if we mistakenly believe that salvation leads to sinlessness, the impossibility of sinning, this will prove to us that we are not what we believe God made us to be.

Salvation through Christ does not make it impossible to sin, it frees of the burden of the penalty for the sins we have committed, but not necessarily for the sin we will commit, and we will commit sin, all men do.

**Rom 3:21-24**

**15**

**21** But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Yes, all sin, even the Christian, and that sin if not repented of and then that action changed can and will condemn us to eternal punishment. That is

- 16** B) Satan's intent is that he wants that any failures on our part will lead us to think that God is powerless to meet our needs. He wants us to forget that any failure comes from **OUR** refusal to meet God's conditions, and not from any limitation on God's part.

**17** I want to reinforce that thought, *if sin exists, it is because of a choice that we have made, not because of anything that God has done.*

**James 1:13-14**

**18**

**13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Temptation is always defined as man's reaction to either external or internal stimulus. What I mean by that, is that some sort of outside stimulus catches our attention and we begin to desire the forbidden fruit, "Lust of the Flesh," "Lust of the Eye." Or, that our own reactions cause us to cross the line of God's Word, "Pride of Life."

Now there is a thought that comes up, this idea of being tested...

- 19** C) Is said to be initiated by God in several Scriptures

As we saw with the interchange between Jesus and Philip, God uses testing, the idea of temptation, to help improve what He wants us to be and to give us the confidence that comes from recognizing growth in ourselves. When God tempts us, it is for the purpose of proving us in order to strengthen us. This use of temptation is equivalent to taking a test in school; it is not for the purpose of failing anyone, though I have to admit there were times when I felt that way, but rather it is for the purpose of preparing us to grow. What's the saying, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger?

In Luke 11, in the prayer that Jesus uses to teach the disciples the proper way to pray, Christ tells them to pray that God would not lead them into temptation?

The word for lead here is from the Greek...

Eisphero (ice-fer'-o); NT:1533 20

From NT:1519 and NT:5342; to carry inward (literally or figuratively): KJV - bring (in), lead into.

Now, we have already seen that God never leads man toward sin. God is not tempted nor does he tempt man, towards sin. But God does test us. So, I understand this prayer to mean that we are to ask that we are not caught on the path that would lead us toward sin or temptation from Satan. To me this is an acknowledgment of my weakness in dealing with and handling Satan's temptations. All too often people think that they are more than capable of turning Satan away and resisting him. But the truth of the matter is that we can't, not without help. That's really the point of what James says in...

**James 4:7-10** 21

**7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

God wants us to resist Satan and the temptations he sets before us, but He also know that without His help we can't. That's why we must humble ourselves before Him and accept His Word as our guide.

When it comes to Satan, friends, we must humbly accept that we cannot handle him on our own.

So with that said, let's take another look at...

**James 1:12-15** 22

**12** Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

James is talking here about the temptations that Christians face in their lives, and maybe, even more important, is how we face them and what happens when they are met. He doesn't try to illustrate any specific temptation because for the sake of his argument, the temptation, whether lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, or pride of life isn't relevant. James makes some points that are relevant, one is...

23 1. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation"

The term "Blessed" comes from the Greek "*makários*" which means "indwelt by God, and because of that indwelling, fully satisfied." I think the idea is that when we put forth the effort, based on faith, of being patient, enduring, in the face of temptation, that we grow spiritually, in knowledge, understanding, wisdom and God, through His Word, dwells within us even more greatly. Our faith and commitment will be tested by the things of this world, but the reward for our enduring, is coming closer to God. James then speaks of the idea of being tempted, this is "*dokimê*," a "testing in the positive sense." The second part of the verse makes it pretty clear:

**24** *"For when he [the blessed person] is tried [and endures], he shall receive the crown of life."*

James then affirms that God does not tempt us to cause us to sin, ever. Only Satan does that through our sinful desires. That's why James says

**25** *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God"*

God does, however, test us through temptation. Not to entice us to sin, but to give us an opportunity to show ourselves approved. Note what the chapter of the hall of faith, if you will, has to say...

*Heb 11:1-4*

**26**

*1* Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. *2* For by it the men of old gained approval. *3* By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. *4* By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous,

Abraham, Noah, Enoch are all listed as those who gained approval through faith by enduring the trials of this world by obeying God. Abel's sacrifice is defined as better. Have you ever really looked at why? We understand that it was because it was done in faith, according to God's commandment. OK. Look at the commandments of God that He has given to man today. Assemble, sing, give, pray, preach, take the Lord's Supper, all commandments that are to be obeyed, and not just obeyed, but obeyed the way God has dictated they be obeyed. Just as Abel's obedience was termed to be better than Cain's because of his faithful obedience, so will the obedience of the man today who faithfully obeys will be deemed to be better than those who choose to do their own thing as did Cain.

We now come back to the passage we began with in 1 Cor. 10:13, what is this temptation that is...

**27**

*"Common to Man"*

James acknowledges the principle of what Paul says, temptation comes from within. As Paul illustrates in Romans 7, beginning in verse 14, our physical nature desires to partake of the physical pleasures the world offers. That is our battle, we fight to control the desires of the flesh so that we might endure and be "blessed."

That is the temptation "Common to Man."

Paul acknowledges that temptation surrounds us. That is the nature of the physical world that we live. That is the nature of our flesh.

There is only one way to overcome this common temptation of the flesh, and that is to quit living in this physical world and start living in the spiritual world of God. James gives us the summation of the discussion we have had in this lesson...

*James 4:3-4*

**28**

*3* You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. *4* You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Victory over temptation can happen, but only when we give ourselves wholly over to God through Christ and faithful obedience to the Word.