

## Dealing With Temptation (Part 1)

1 John 2: 15-16

This passage begins with a warning to all believers: **Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** This is the greatest hindrance in our Christian walk of life, a love for the world. This is the Greek word *kosmos*, and it is speaking of the world system, the authority, attitude and lure of the world, not the earth itself.

We also discover that all this world possesses is **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**; in essence the temptation of mankind. All that we will ever face in this life in regard to temptation is found in one of these three categories.

Now I know that we all deal with temptation. It is just a part of living. We all have different temptations and some are stronger than others, but we all deal with temptation nonetheless. It is a ruthless enemy of the believer, but all is not lost when it comes to temptation. We can overcome if we know how to identify temptation and properly deal with it.

I want to warn you upfront, this isn't an easy task. We face a determined adversary who is well seasoned in presenting temptation. He began to present temptation in the Garden of Eden. He was there in Jesus' day as our Lord spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted of Satan.

We do have a promise that we can claim in the Word of God regarding temptation. **1 Cor.10:13 – There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.** I want to take a few moments to examine the principle of dealing with temptation as we look at each aspect of temptation that we will face. In doing so, I want to point out an example as well as an escape for each.

**I. The Lust of the Flesh** – This is the first temptation that John identifies in our text. Keep in mind that all temptation falls under one of these categories. We face a battle in three areas: the flesh, the devil, and the world. Here we will deal with the temptation of the flesh.

**A. The Example** – As we begin, let's consider this temptation from Jesus' point of view in the wilderness. **Mat.4:3-4 – And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.** Jesus declared unto Satan that there was more to life than satisfying the lusts of the flesh. We are to live by the Word of God rather than according to the lusts and desires of the flesh.

▪ To better understand the lust of the flesh we can look at [Gal.5:19-21](#) – Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let's consider the works of the flesh.

• **Adultery** – Sexual unfaithfulness to husband or wife. It is also looking on a man or a woman to lust after him or her. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act.

• **Fornication** – A broad act including all forms of immoral and sexual acts, any and every type of sexual perversion.

• **Uncleanness** – Moral impurity; doing things that pollute and defile the life.

• **Lasciviousness** – Filthiness, open and shameless indecency. It means unrestrained evil thoughts and behavior.

• **Idolatry** – The worship of idols, whether mental or made by man's hands; the giving of one's primary devotion (time and energy) to something other than God. Idolatry can take on many forms.

• **Witchcraft** – “*Pharmakeia*, from which we get our word pharmacy.” Sorcery; the use or administering of drugs. In the present context it would include all forms of seeking the control of one's fate including astrology, séances, fortune telling, crystals, or any form of witchcraft.

• **Hatred** – Enmity, hostility, animosity. It is the hatred that lingers and is held for a long time; a hatred that is deep within.

• **Variance** – Strife, discord, contention, fighting, quarreling, dissension. It means that a man strives against another person in order to get something. He deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

• **Emulations** – Wanting and desiring to have what someone else has. It may be material things, recognition, honor, or position.

• **Wrath** – Indignation; a violent, explosive temper; anger; quick and explosive reactions that arise from stirred and boiling emotions, but quickly fade. It is not anger that lasts.

• **Strife** – Conflict, to struggle, fight, contention, or dissension.

• **Seditions** – Division, rebellion, standing against others.

• **Heresies** – Rejecting the fundamental beliefs of Christ, the Bible, and the church; believing some teaching other than the truth.

- **Envyings** – This word goes beyond jealousy. It is the spirit that wants not only the things that others have, but begrudges the fact that they have them. It wants to see loss and suffering through that loss.
- **Murders** – To kill, to take the life of another person. We say that we could never do that, but consider what Jesus said. **Mat.5:21-22a – Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.** Unjustified anger is viewed as murder.
- **Drunkenness** – Intoxication; Taking strong drink or drugs to affect one's senses for lust or pleasure. **Prov.20:1 – Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Hab.2:15 – Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!**
- **Revellings** – Indulgence and pleasure; indulging in feeding the lusts of the flesh.

**B. The Escape** – Overcoming the flesh is a difficult task. There are many who have succumbed to the lusts of the flesh. The Bible gives us instruction on dealing with the flesh. **Jn.6:63 – It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. Rom.7:18 – For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Rom.13:14 – But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**

- We only have one course of action; only one means of escape. **2 Tim.2:22 – Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.** The truth of the matter is we cannot handle the flesh. It will defeat us every time! The only hope that we have in the battle with the flesh is to flee. You know the areas in which you are weak in the flesh and Satan does as well. He will do all he can to keep that temptation before you. The door of escape is to flee the flesh! You will never reach the place that you can handle it. We must avoid it at all costs. If that means changing our routines or habits, then that is how it must be.

We will continue to look at Dealing with Temptation next week, but I have to ask if there are areas in your life that need attention. We must realize that we cannot overcome the flesh apart from the Lord. It will take His strength and grace to be able to flee the flesh rather than choosing to indulge the lusts thereof. Why not come and seek the Lord while He is calling?