

Dealing With Temptation (Part 2)

1 John 2: 15-16

Tonight I want to continue and hopefully conclude our study concerning temptation. John offers a warning to all believers in regard to the world in [V.15 – 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.](#) Remember that the world spoken of here is the Greek word *kosmos* and refers to the “world system.” You will have to admit that many are consumed by the world today.

The problem is not the world itself, but the system that is in place, the temptation and lure that the world provides. We live in a world that is tainted by sin. Because of that, we are forced to face and deal with the temptation of the world. There isn't a one of us who doesn't face temptation of some sort or another. These temptations are revealed in [V.16 – For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.](#)

Whatever temptation we face in life will ultimately fall under one of these three categories. Now I am convinced that they can be broken down as such: a battle with the flesh, the devil, and the world. All that we will encounter concerning temptation falls between these boundaries.

As we continue our study, and even as you face temptation, keep in mind the promise of God in regard to 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.](#) Temptation will come, but we don't have to fall victim to its devastating snare. Let's continue to look at the principles of dealing with temptation.

I. The Lust of the Flesh

II. The Lust of the Eyes – Last week we dealt with the battle of the flesh. Now we come to the lust of the eyes. This is a battle with the devil.

A. The Example – Once again we need to consider the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness as a guide. [Mat.4:8-10 – Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.](#) Satan tried to tempt Jesus by appealing to His eye. He carried Him to a high

mountain from which they could see all the kingdoms of the world. It was there that Satan offered Jesus all of that if He would only worship Him.

- I find it ironic that Satan offered Jesus something that was His already. Satan may rule this earth because of the fall of man, but Jesus will one day come again to claim the earth and establish his kingdom. The point is that Satan tried to appeal to Jesus through the lust of the eye.

- Now we need to understand how that applies to us. Satan has never carried us to the top of a mountain and showed us the kingdoms of the world, offering them to us in return for our worship, but I am convinced that he has tempted each of us in this manner.

- We must realize that our eyes have an appetite as well. We've all heard the saying, "Feast your eyes on this," implying a literal feast for the desires of the eye. How many in our day have fallen victim to temptation and sin because their eyes were looking in the wrong place. Often this is how temptation begins and will lead to the lusts of the flesh.

- Dr. Warren Wiersbe describes it like this. "The lust of the flesh appeals to the lower appetites of the old nature, tempting us to indulge them in sinful ways. The lust of the eyes, however, operates in a more refined way. In view here are the pleasures that gratify the sight and the mind—sophisticated and intellectual pleasures." ¹

- We live in a society that is driven by sight. Our world is filled with television, magazines, billboards, and all manner of media to attract the eye. You will agree that in many ways this media appeals to the flesh. If they can attract your eye, then you are hooked.

- Quickly we need to consider another aspect of this temptation. The eye is the gateway to the mind. What we see goes to the mind to be processed. Satan loves to use this tool in order to contaminate the mind.

- Many have fallen prey to the adversary through this subtle approach. It is quite common in our day for temptation to come as a result of intellectual pursuits. We are daily bombarded to view things as the world does. We are tempted to abandon the truths of God's Word for a more modern approach. Few are willing to accept anything by faith; it must be proven to them. The children sing a song with a phrase, "Oh be careful little eyes what you see." That is profitable advice in our day.

B. The Escape – Keep in mind that we are dealing with a full, frontal attack of Satan. This is a temptation that comes with our eyes wide open. Thankfully the Bible gives us a means of action here as well.

- [Jam.4:7 – Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.](#) [1 Pet.5:8-9 – Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.](#) Did you notice the key that is revealed in each of these verses? We are to **resist** the devil. When dealing with the flesh, we are to flee; when dealing with Satan we must fight!

- It is important that we remain on the offensive in this battle. Just playing defense isn't good enough. We must be watchful, being sober and diligent. [Ps.119:37 – Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.](#) [Job 31:1 – I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?](#) Why not make a covenant with our eyes that we will not look upon things that are displeasing to God? We must fight the urge to indulge the lust of the eyes!

I. The Lust of the Flesh

II. The Lust of the Eyes

III. The Pride of Life

A. The Example – As before, let's consider the way Jesus faced and responded to this temptation. [Mat.4:5-7 – Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.](#) This may seem a bit obscure, but when we think about it, Satan was tempting Jesus with pride. After all, He is the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. Why not cast Himself down before the world to prove His deity and power over the angels? Satan knew that Jesus had power that none other possessed and he wanted Him to display that power in an arrogant way. However, Jesus was not seduced or overcome with this temptation either.

- As we consider the example involved in the Pride of Life, we need to consider Satan's role in this temptation. This was the sin that caused the Lord to cast him out of heaven. [Is. 14:12-14 – How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.](#) Pride was at the core of Satan's fall. He was filled with pride since before creation and desires that all of mankind embrace sinful pride.

- Now this is a subject that would be impossible to exhaust. The Bible is filled with accounts of people becoming consumed with pride. The word [pride](#) means “[empty, braggart talk](#).” It was used in John's day to describe one who was always trying to impress people with importance. (We all have met folks who seem to always brag about who they are or their accomplishments.)

- No doubt we have all dealt with pride at some point in our lives. Now let me say, there is nothing wrong in having pride in good things: our families, our church, our work, etc. But, when we allow our pride to consume us and drive our lives, then we have succumbed to the pride of life. It is possible to become so proud, even of good things, that it hinders our walk with God.
- Have you ever met a Christian who was so proud of his church and their way of doing things that he looked down on others? Have you ever met someone who was so proud of their children and family that no one else's measured up? Have you ever met those who are so proud of their abilities, that they felt as if they weren't doing it, that it wasn't get done? This is taking pride in good things to a dangerous level. This is where pride becomes sin.
- We must be careful that we don't allow spiritual pride to become sin. It is possible to possess the pride of life and miss the Lord all together.
- [Rev. 3:17 – Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:](#) The church at Laodicea was proud, but in reality they had nothing to brag about.
- The publican was proud, but really all he possessed was dead, empty religion. [Lu.18:11 – The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.](#)
- On and on we could go, but I'm sure that you are beginning to understand that one of the believer's greatest pitfalls concerning the pride of life is simply disguised self-righteousness. We have nothing to boast of except Christ and His finished work on Calvary! [Gal.6:14 – But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.](#)

B. The Escape – I'm sure that it would be safe to say that this is likely the problem that the average Christian deals with most. So, if most of us face the pride of life, how do we escape it? Remember that I told you that we faced three major battles: the flesh, the devil, and the world. The pride of life falls under the battle with the world. Once again God's Word is faithful to offer a course of action for believers. [1 Jn.5:4 – For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.](#)

- There is the key. We overcome the pride of life, or the world, by faith. That is simple enough isn't it? Faith says, "I can't, but God can." Faith says, "It isn't about my ability or recognition, but that I might glorify the Lord and trust in Him." Pride boasts in its own; faith boasts in the Lord. When we live by faith we have given ourselves over to the Lord. We are not depending on our ability or seeking our glory. You cannot overcome pride without faith.

This study has certainly challenged me. We may not want to admit it, but I am convinced that we all deal with temptation. The question is: what are we going to do about it? We must flee the flesh; we must fight, or resist, the devil; we must have faith to overcome pride.

Are you willing to get honest with the Lord and seek His will for your life? If not, you have already fallen victim to the pride of life. Maybe you need to come and ask the Lord to help you make a covenant with your eyes. Maybe you need to come and confess the pride in your heart and seek the faith necessary to overcome. The Lord has provided a means of escape. Are you willing to pursue that escape?

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 2*, pg.493.

Colorado: Cook Communications Ministries, 2001.