

LESSON SIX: HOW TO HANDLE TEMPTATION

SESSION ONE

TO THE LEADER/FACILITATOR

To help you be more effective in leading your small-group discipleship study, we have prepared the **General Leadership Guide** to help steer you through the basics of facilitating a small-group study. If you have not already done so, please read the Guide.

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This is the first of three sessions dealing with the topic of temptation. In this session, Pastor Rogers will identify the subjects and sources of temptations. This serves as the foundation for the subsequent sessions that will discuss how to actually handle temptations.

PREPARING TO LEAD/FACILITATE THIS SESSION

Read through the **Session Guide**, and watch the video in advance of the session. Review the **Additional Scripture to Study** at the end of the **Guide**, along with the suggested **Personal Application**. Make sure you print out enough copies of the **Student Handout** which mirrors this **Leader's Guide**.

CONDUCTING THE SESSION

At the beginning of the session, read the **Introduction** to your group, then open discussion by asking the **Reflection Questions** before viewing the video segment. After viewing the video together, you may want to ask for comments before next leading your group through the **Amplification and Discussion** section. Feel free to add your own commentary if needed, but be cognizant of time and do not personally dominate the session. As you read through the **Amplification** section, engage your group by using the provided **Discussion Questions** to stimulate additional dialogue.

As you prepare to conclude the session, review the **Personal Application** for the week and encourage participants to engage in the suggested activity, as well as to read and study the **Additional Scriptures to Study** section. The **Additional Scriptures to Study** section contains questions or reflections intended to guide participants in their respective personal studies. This is best presented as a positive activity designed to help everyone in the group to grow spiritually through the week (as opposed to being presented as homework).

Allow participants to share prayer requests and lead your group in prayer using any of the suggested formats in the **General Leadership Guide**. Remember to provide an atmosphere of confidentiality within the group as participants share.

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INTRODUCTION

Temptations are something that we all face in life. As Christians, sometimes temptations can cause us to stumble, thereby hurting our intimacy and walk with Christ while allowing the enemy to try to shame and overwhelm us with feelings of guilt. As we will learn in this series of sessions, being tempted in and of itself is not sinful; what matters is how we deal with temptations when they occur. Understanding the origins of temptation and how the enemy uses them against us is the first step in knowing how to effectively deal with them. In this session, Pastor Rogers will discuss the subjects and sources of temptations.

OUR KEY PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- In what ways do you believe temptations can affect the lives of believers?
- Are temptations the same for believers and for nonbelievers? How so, or how not so?

PRESENTATION OF VIDEO CLIP OF: “How to Deal with Temptations”**AMPLIFICATION AND DISCUSSION**

We are all subject to temptation so that we can learn how to depend on the Lord Jesus Christ and know victory. There is no Christian who does not know temptation.

—Adrian Rogers

Amplification: Every human alive knows the pull of temptations whether they are in the realm of ethical behavior, sensual fulfillment, materialism, pride, or greed. Christians are not immune from temptations, but unlike the person who is without Christ, believers have a source of help that always provides a “way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Whether or not we choose to take the way of escape becomes the inherent challenge.

We all have a tendency to tackle problems in our own strength, to use our intellect or personal strengths to overcome life’s countless obstacles, including temptations. That may appear to work for a while, but eventually, in the area where we perceive ourselves to be the strongest, we are bound to stumble. That is why 1 Corinthians 19:12 contains the warning, “Therefore let him **who thinks he stands** take heed lest he fall.”

For Discussion: How would you define “temptation”?

Amplification: The famous Chinese general, Sun Tzu, who wrote the “Art of War,” is famous for having said, “Know thy enemy.” But the full quote is, “Know thyself, know thy enemy.” As we become subjects (meaning the recipients) of a multitude of temptations that are thrust upon us, it is imperative that we understand our personal vulnerabilities, and that we not rely upon our inner strength to overcome temptations. The prophet Jeremiah provides a significant warning when he said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9)?

In addition to understanding our individual vulnerability as the recipients of temptation, it is important to understand where temptations originate. Pastor Rogers identified three sources which he labeled the “External Foe” (the world), the “Inner Foe” (the flesh), and the “Infernal Foe” (the devil). We can be, and often are, assaulted by each of these. Sometimes, we might even be assaulted by more than one simultaneously, making the temptation particularly challenging to overcome.

For Discussion: What are some specific temptations of the world that we tend to face? How can we readily recognize them when they occur, and what are some ways we can defend ourselves against worldly temptations?

Amplification: As with knowing ourselves, it is important to understand the enemy we face and how he operates. The world, from the Greek word “cosmos,” represents the order and system of life that surrounds us. The lure of material wealth, social prestige, political or corporate power, etc., all work to take our eyes away from the Lord. Remember the seed that was choked by the thorns and weeds which Jesus said represented “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches” (see Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14). In that parable (repeated by three Gospel writers validating its importance), Jesus clearly warned His disciples of the power of the world to sway followers away from His kingdom.

In addition to external temptations, we face the internal temptations of the flesh. Too often we may relegate fleshly temptations to the arena of sexual lust or sensuality, when in fact, the

word “flesh” translated from the Greek word “psuche,” encompasses much more. As Pastor Rogers explained, “psuche” is the word from which we derive the English word “psyche.” Our psyche embodies our feelings and a wide range of other passions.

The Bible declares, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). In this list hatred, envy, jealousy, murder, drunkenness, wild behavior, and even drug abuse (the Greek word “pharmacia” translated as “sorcery”) are all included to represent acting out fleshly temptations.

For Discussion: Discuss some specific temptations of the flesh. How can we readily recognize them when they occur? What are some ways we can defend ourselves against fleshly temptations?

Amplification: The third source of temptations comes directly from the devil himself, not to say that the other sources are not satanically inspired, but these infernal temptations are aimed directly at the believer. As a true Christian, one has in essence, “drawn a line in the sand” and stepped over it away from Satan. All people suffer consequences for their sins, but they are never direct targets of the devil until they choose to follow Christ. At that point, a believer becomes his enemy. Satan cannot take away a person’s salvation, but he will earnestly work to keep a Christian defeated, feeling guilty, and fruitless.

Our ultimate delivery from temptations comes from Jesus Himself; this delivery will be expanded upon in succeeding sessions. Until then, consider the following story that illustrates a significant truth:

A dog trainer would place a bit of meat on the floor near a dog he was training and say, “No!” The dog knew he must not touch the meat, but he also learned to never look at it. He seemed to feel that if he did, the temptation to disobey would be too great, so he instead looked steadily at his master’s face. The lesson here is, “Always look up to the Master’s face when facing temptation.”

For Discussion: Share with one another ways in which the Lord provides “the way of escape” when we are tempted.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week in your personal devotions, consider how the enemy has used temptations in your life. Acknowledge your weaknesses, thank God for His forgiveness for any failures, and commit to always look to Him for the way to overcome temptations.

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Suggested group prayer – “Lord, You are our strong tower. Help us to learn to run to you when we find ourselves under siege by the enemy.”

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

As you study the following verses, ask the Lord to confirm in your heart how you are to be wholly separated unto Him, and that you are not to be controlled by the world, but by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:19 “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

Satan, “the prince of the power of the air” (see Ephesians 2:2), is the enemy of every believer, but he no longer holds us captive to sin. It is important for every true follower of Christ to recognize where temptations and spiritual assaults come from, and to combat temptation through prayer and submissive obedience to the Lord and His Word.

Ephesians 2:1-5 “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

James 4:4 “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

The term “adulterers and adulteresses” is used to express the unfaithfulness of those claiming to be Christ’s, but who are more devoted to the world than they are to the things of God. Ask the Lord to reveal anything in your life for which you hold more devotion than you have for God.

1 John 2:15-16 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”

ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

- Beverly Carradine, “The Old Man,” (First Fruits Press, 2016)
- C.I. Scofield, “The New Life in Christ; Messages of Joy and Victory,” (Palala Press, 2016)
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VIDEO PRESENTATION NOTES

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For Discussion: How would you define “temptation”?

For Discussion: What are some specific temptations of the world that we tend to face? How can we readily recognize them when they occur, and what are some ways we can defend ourselves against worldly temptations?

For Discussion: Discuss some specific temptations of the flesh. How can we readily recognize them when they occur? What are some ways we can defend ourselves against fleshly temptations?

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