

## INTRODUCTION

Tonight we're going to talk about how to whip temptation. A couple of weeks ago when I began the series through the book of James we talked about testing. There is a difference between testing and temptation. Testing is what God does to build us up. Tempting is what the devil does to tear us down. Tempting is something the devil sends on the inside and testing is something God sends on the outside.

You and I have trouble with temptation. A guy once said, "I can resist anything but temptation." You may be the same way. As Christians, we are tempted. In fact, Christians do sin. When you become a Christian, if you think you'll never sin you are wrong. A man came forward one Sunday and got saved. And boy, he was so excited about it. He even shared a word of testimony, saying, "I'm so happy now. Jesus is in my heart. I'll never sin again." In a nice way, I said, "Brother, I'm glad you're saved, but I want you to know that you will sin some more." "Oh no! I'll never sin. I'm just so happy about it." I didn't want to get in a fist fight with him right there in front of the church but I had to let him know that Christians do sin.

Do you know what the difference is? Before you were a Christian, you were running toward sin. Now that you are Christian you running from sin. Before you are Christian you wanted to sin. Now when Jesus came in your heart, he gave you a new "wanter" and you don't want to sin. It's like when you have your cat fixed. When you become a Christian, you get fixed on the inside—not that you can't sin—you get fixed, so that you can't sin and enjoy it. That's the difference.

How can you whip temptation when it comes your way?

James 1:13-18. "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."

The Bible tells us that we can whip temptation. You may not whip it every time, because we do succumb to sin, but we do have an advantage to knowing how to whip temptation. We also have an advantage not only knowing from Scripture how to do it, but we also have an advantage from the Lord Jesus. The Bible says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) Every time you are tempted, you can be sure that Jesus faced the same temptation you face. The Bible says he was tempted in every way, yet he did not sin. And so in the Scriptures we see how to deal with temptation. Let's notice three things about how to whip temptation.

## **I. LOOK AHEAD AT GOD'S JUDGMENT.**

That will be a great detriment to the temptation to sin, giving into temptation. That's a negative reinforcement. When you look ahead and you see God's judgment, it will deter sin in your life.

The Bible gives us a sequence, a process of sin and it's in this passage. There are four steps to sin.

### **1. Desire**

"...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed." (James 1:14) It always begins with desire, not with the devil. You cannot blame the devil for your sin. Do you remember the old Flip Wilson routine where he says, "The devil made me do it"? No. The devil doesn't make you do anything. Here's a little bonus: You and I both know we're in spiritual warfare. We are fighting an enemy on three fronts. We're fighting the world. That's the external foe. We're fighting the devil. That's the infernal foe and we're fighting what the Bible calls our flesh, our sinful, selfish nature, this evil desire, that's the internal foe.

The key to understanding how to live a victorious Christian life is understanding that the only one of those three enemies we have any control over is our own flesh and evil desires. That's where you can whip sin.

Every time you sin, it is an inside job. A jewelry store was robbed and the thieves got away. When the crime was investigated, police determined it was an inside job. An employee provided two of his friends with information about the security system, how to turn the security system off, had given them a key to get in the door, and even told them where the most valuable jewelry was hidden. There were three criminals involved and one of them was on the inside and he gave access to the other two to get inside. Anytime you give into sin, it is an inside job, your flesh, your selfish, sinful nature—the Bible calls them evil desires—says to the devil, "Come on in." If you can successfully learn to do what the Bible says and keep that self crucified, you can be on your way to living a victorious Christian life.

It all begins with desire. God gives us desires. That's normal, but he wants us to fulfill our God-given desires according to his plan. God has given you desire for food. The devil want you to feel God-given desires in unnatural ways. God's given us a desire for food. The devil says be a glutton. God has given us a desire, a need for physical rest. The devil says be lazy. The Bible teaches us that God has given each one of us a sex drive. The devil says fulfill it outside the boundaries of marriage. God says sure you have a sex drive. I gave it to you, which is supposed to be fulfilled only in the confines of marriage. There is nothing wrong with the desires, it's the devil telling you to fulfill those desires in unnatural ways and so it always begins with a desire. Don't blame it on Satan. If you want to blame, somebody blame it on your own lust.

## 2. Deception

"...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed." (James 1:14) Look at those two phrases, dragged away and enticed. The first one is a picture of a trap, a snare. That word literally means a snare. The devil set traps for us. The next word, enticed, is a picture of a baited hook, a lure. That's what the devil does. Your own desires lean you in that direction and then the devil comes along. He sets a snare and a baited hook before you.

When you go fishing, you always put something on the hook that will attract fish. It sees the wiggly worm and looks at it and decides it looks good. You and I both know what's coming. He bites into it and he gets the hook. The devil always gives you very attractive bait. He always makes it look so good. Hollywood portrays an adulterous relationship as something wonderful. Magazines and novels say it's wonderful. Satan puts out baited hook out there but men, when you bite that bait, you find the hook. Alcohol is glamorized in advertising by cultured people and sports figures. "Tastes great! Less filling." Why don't one on these commercials ever take you down to skid row, where you see some wino laying in his own vomit? The devil always makes it look attractive upfront, he hides the hook. There's always a hook to sin; there is always deception.

The devil has to fool you. He plays mind games with you. In your mind is right where temptation occurs, that's deception.

## 3. Disobedience

First is a desire, then the deception, but at this point you can choose either to sin or to turn your back on it and walk away from that temptation. But if you choose to send the next step is disobedience. By an act of your will you choose to disobey God. Don't blame it on anybody but yourself and take full responsibility.

Children live by feelings. Mature people live by their will. They choose to do what they know they ought to do and when you choose to sin, you pay the consequences of that sin. When you choose not to sin, you enjoy the benefits of that choice as well.

There are a lot of laws in the Bible and you can break every law in this book, except one. There is one law in this book that is woven into the very fabric of the universe that you can never break, and it is the law of sowing and reaping. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Galatians 6:7) So when by an act of disobedience you choose to sin, that's just part of the process.

## 4. Death

The final step in the process always death. "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (James 1:15) In other words, death's daddy is sin and death's granddaddy is disobedience, or sin. Let me give an example of this

desire, deception, disobedience, and death. The Bible says, "The soul who sins shall surely die." (Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV)

King David was a good guy, a man after God's own heart. God blessed David in a powerful way. But there was a time in David's life when he got lazy and he wasn't out fighting the battle like he should have been. He let someone else do the work while he stayed at home. One night he was up on his top of his palace and he looked down and that's where it started. He saw Bathsheba taking a bath. Desire kicked in. It is amazing how the devil began to work with his mind, saying, "David, you are the king you can have anything, you can have anybody you want." So the devil began to deceive him.

Who do you think caused Bathsheba to walk out that moment and take a bath? That was that was bait and David couldn't see the hook. So David took the next step in the process, he disobeyed God. He sent for Bathsheba and they committed adultery. To make matters worse, Bathsheba became pregnant and David realized he had to do something about that. By the way, one sin always gives birth to another sin, just like one lie gives birth to two or three lies to cover up that first lie.

David sent for her husband, Uriah, and tried to convince him to return home and spend some time with Bathsheba so the people would think the baby belonged to Uriah. But he was such a faithful soldier, He couldn't bear to leave his fellow soldiers on the front fighting to go be with wife. Finally, David was so desperate and so disobedient to God that he sent word back to the battlefield, ordering his men to back off and leave Uriah up front to die. Uriah continued fighting and at just the right moment. The general gave the nod, and the soldiers backed off. All of a sudden, Uriah was surrounded by the enemy and killed. He was killed just as surely by King David as if David himself held the sword and thrust it through his body. And the soul that sins shall surely die.

David disobeyed God but that's not the end of the story. The result of all that was death, not David's death. I guarantee you, I bet David wished it had been his death. David lived in disobedience for a while, and then finally Nathan the prophet came as told him a story about two ranchers. One had thousands of sheep. Across the street is a poor family that only has one little lamb, a pet that they fed from the table. One day the big farmer had company who wanted lamb chops. Rather than taking one of his own lambs, he goes across the street. He takes that one baby lamb, kills it and they cook it and eat it. David, what should happen to a man like that? And David was incensed. When you're in sin and backslidden, you're sometimes the most critical of sin at that time than any other. It's so easy to criticize other people.

David was enraged. He demanded the rancher pay fourfold what he did. He was creating his own punishment what he said that. Nathan said, "You're the man. You had it all, but you took the wife of this man and then you killed him." David admitted his guilt. Nathan told him, "Four times you will reap what you sow." David's baby with Bathsheba died. David's son, Amnon, raped his sister Tamar, and he was killed. Absalom rebelled against his father and he was killed. And then another son of David was killed as a result. Four times. Death is always the end result of sin. Lust conceives sin, sin brings forth death, LSD: Lust, sin and death. If you think you're

not going to die for your sin because you're a Christian, you're exactly right. You won't, because someone else has died and his name is Jesus Christ. How can you really claim to be a Christian knowing that every time you sin, it's like putting another nail in the hand of Jesus? How can you sin, knowing that every time that you do, it's like driving that spear deeper into the chest cavity of our Lord? He died for your sin. There's the end result of sin—you see it on Calvary. So when you see what God's judgment is against sin and death, you'll want to live a holy life, a pure life, and say no to temptation.

## **II. LOOK AROUND AT GOD'S GOODNESS.**

Judgment is a negative deterrent. But look around at God's good goodness, that's a positive reinforcement. One reason you want to live holy is because God is so good. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17) God has been good to me. I don't deserve anything he's given me because God is been so good to me. I love Him so much, I want to be obedient to Him. Notice three things about God.

### **1. God gives only good.**

The Bible says every perfect gift and every good gift comes down from above. It is not God who tempts you, it is God who gives you good gifts. Everywhere you look God is saying, "I love you." Look at a mountain and see God's love piled up. Look at the flowers and see God's love in bloom. Look at the rivers and see God's love in motion. Everywhere you look, God is saying, "I love you." You can write it down and take it to the bank that anything good in your life came from God. Why? Because the Bible says every good gift comes from Him.

### **2. God gives constantly.**

Another thing we can learn about God is that God gives constantly. Verse 17 doesn't say he *gave* good gifts. It says these good gifts are constantly coming down from the Father above. God gives you so many gifts: He gives you the gift of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts to use in ministry. He gives you the gift of faith itself.

The devil doesn't give gifts; he gives bargains. What's better, a bargain or a gift? If you're going to buy a car that costs \$8,000 and salesman says, "I'll sell you that car for \$4,000." That's a bargain. What if somebody comes along and says, "I'll do better than that. I'll give it to you as a gift." Which one are you going to take? You'll take the gift. The devil gives bargains, but they're really not bargains. God gives gifts, and He gives and keeps on giving, constantly.

### **3. God never changes.**

"The Father of the heavenly lights...does not change like shifting shadows." Everything changes: music, fads, weather, people, personalities, things, but one thing never changes in this universe: God is the same yesterday today and forever more. God was the same millions of eternities before he ever created the world and God will be the same, millions of eternities after

this world has ended. We live in a world that is in turmoil. Everything is coming loose that is not hammered down and the devil is pulling out nails as fast as he can. We live in a topsy-turvy world and the only place you can find a rock of security is in the unchanging nature of God. Isn't it good to know He'll never change? He's not like some people whose moods change so fast you have to talk to them for a while so you know what their mood going to be today. Folks like that cause stress. But God is always the same.

### **III. LOOK WITHIN GOD'S NATURE.**

"He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created." (James 1:18)

#### **1. We have been born again.**

God chose to give us birth through His word. Being born again is the second birth. Everyone in this room has been born physically and can tell me your physical birthday. But Jesus said unless you're born twice, born again, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. He says you've got to come to a time in your life where spiritually you are born from above and the Bible says God chose to give you that second birth.

How many of you are sure you been born the first time? If you're asleep, you may not be too sure. I was born the first time, January 16, 1953. I was born again March 11, 1961. I am more certain of my second birth than I am of my first birth. I'm pretty sure I was born the first time. I hope this is not a dream. Maybe you heard about the preacher who dreamed he was preaching and woke up and he was. I believe this is real. I really do.

I am more certain of my second birth than I am of my first birth. I'm here to tell you that you can know, that you know, that you know that you're saved. I remember when the second birth happened. I don't remember the first one. I'm taking my momma and daddy's word for it and I got a little certificate that says I was born, but I don't remember anything about it. But I was there and I remember what happened on March 11, 1961. I know that I know that I know.

You can know that you are born again. That's what 1 John is all about. "These things have I written unto you that believe that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13) If you don't know that you have eternal life, you need to come to a point either where you find assurance of your salvation so that you will never doubt again or either you need to be saved. If you have doubts that reveals a problem.

One reason we ought not to sin is to realize that when God birthed us into his kingdom, He came to take up residence in us. His spirit came down to live in us and because God's nature is within us, we don't want to sin.

An old Indian described when he became a Christian. "It was like there was a black dog and white dog inside my soul." That's the flesh and the spirit. "The white dog and the black dog were always fighting, the black dog saying, 'Sin' and the white dog saying, 'Don't sin.'" Someone

asked that old Indian chief which dog won the fight. He said, "The one I feed the most." You have God's nature within you, but you also still have that sinful nature.

## **2. We should not pollute that nature.**

Another reason not to sin is we should not pollute that nature. Would you pour hydrochloric acid in a baby's bath? Would you pour sewage in vegetable soup and then eat it? No. You wouldn't do it, you want to keep it pure. The Bible says, "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16) In 1 Corinthians, Paul is talking to people who been involved in sexual immorality. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are now your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) The Holy Spirit has come to take up residence in you, but the question is this: God is a resident but is He president? Not just residing, but is he reigning inside of you?

I talked about how David gave into temptation, he doesn't have to be our model. Who can be a model? In Genesis, Joseph served in the house of Potiphar. One afternoon, Potiphar's wife, who been lusting after young Joseph told him she liked him and they should get involved; nobody around to know. I believe there was a desire in Joseph, the normal desire. We all have a God-given desire. I believe there was that deception, because here comes Potiphar's wife, looking so good, but at that point, unlike David, Joseph said no.

## **CONCLUSION**

You might want to memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has seized except what is common to man. And God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." When you face sin, temptation, there is a door with a flashing light that says, "Fun! Sin! Pleasure! Enter here." David walked through that door. The Bible also says God will make a way to escape it. There's another door that says, "Faithfulness. Holiness. Honor. Purity. Truth. God's nature." You're the one who chooses: Will I walk through this door or will I walk through the other? You CAN whip temptation.

Billy Graham said, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." You cannot keep sinful tempting thoughts from running through your mind, but you can keep them from lodging there and finding a place. *You can whip temptation.*

## OUTLINE

### I. LOOK AHEAD AT GOD'S JUDGMENT

"...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers." *James 1:14-16*

The process of sin:

1. Desire
2. Deception
3. Disobedience
4. Death

### II. LOOK AROUND AT GOD'S GOODNESS

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." *James 1:17*

1. God gives only good.
2. God gives constantly.
3. God never changes.

### III. LOOK WITHIN GOD'S NATURE

"He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created." *James 1:18*

1. We have been born again.
2. We should not pollute that nature.



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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



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