

"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 you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Temptation

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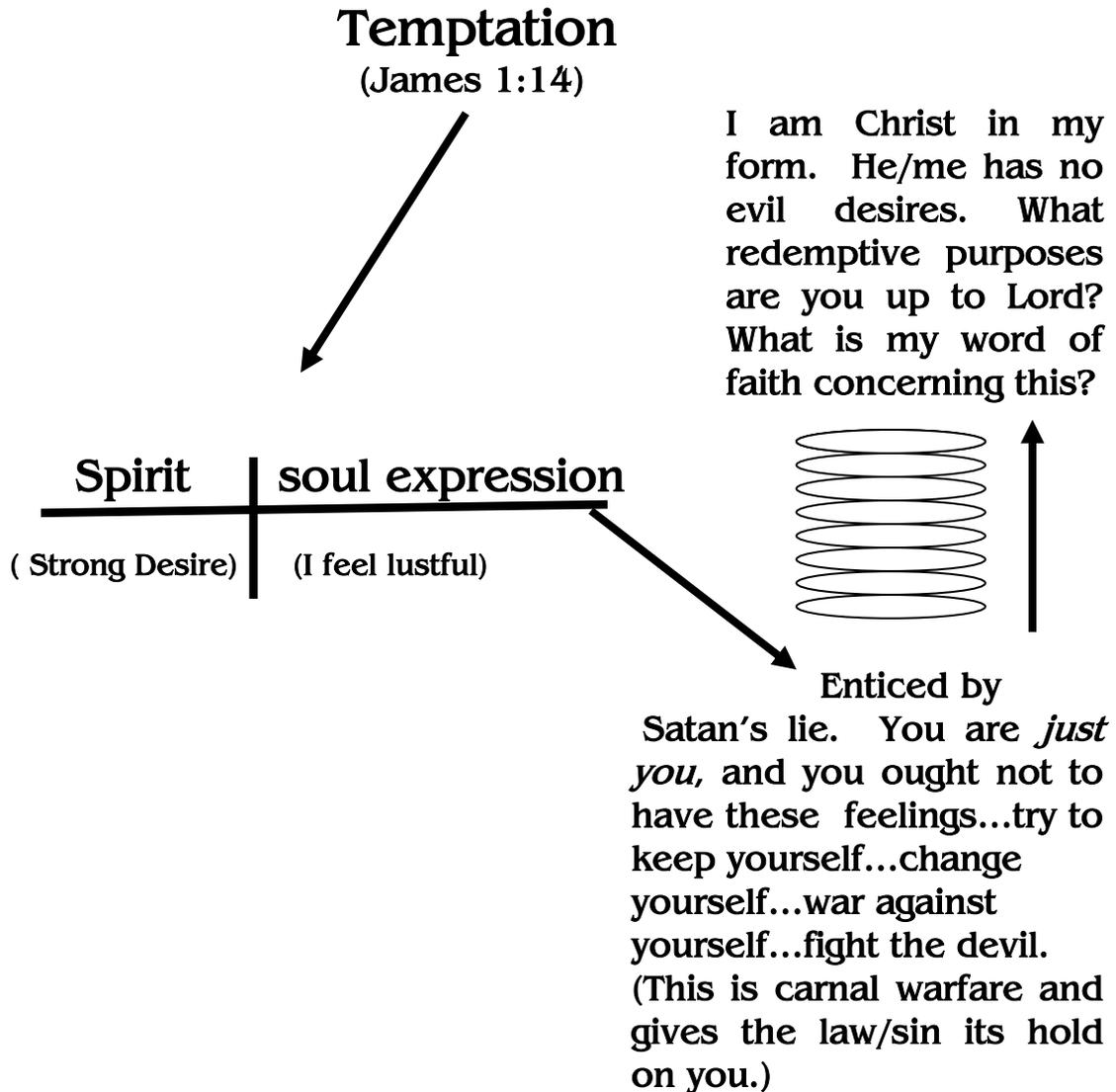
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TEMPTATION

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I will begin with a chart which to me illustrates how temptation from Satan entices us from the outside, yet plays on us inwardly through our God given desires. Since the essence of all temptation is based on the Devil's lies, then let us see how God uses these lies to train us to believe the truth. Follow the arrows:



**Temptations are God's Calling Cards
and our Springboard of Faith**

“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed” (James 1:14). What about the areas of our, Christ, as us, life that doesn’t fit with Christ living. What about the many times that I am tempted and even succumb to the pressures of temptation and sin? Temptation is very troublesome to us and can be why some say that, the Christ-life doesn’t work.” I believe that exploring the subject will encourage many a weary Christian.

We must start right off and say that temptation is not sin. So many of God’s people don’t know the difference between the two which causes most of the guilt we feel. I can remember a time my own life where I confessed every negative thought, and every negative thing that I said, as sin. I thought every human reaction was wrong. I wouldn’t even let myself be human, because somehow I thought that was not being Spiritual. Unknowingly, I was very much centered in on *me*, and that kind of attitude made me totally self-conscious. I was also unknowingly confusing every temptation as if it were sin.

I had little to no understanding about temptation. Remember Jesus, the man-God was “*tempted in everyway, yet without sin.*” And “*For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to help them that are tempted.*” So, temptation is not sin, and as these scriptures say it causes us to suffer. Since temptation is not sin, then what is it?

Like James says, temptation is a state where we respond to some outer stimuli which have its first stirrings from on us. The Bible clearly says, that "God tempts no man," so the enticement is not coming from God, but from Satan. However, it starts from "our own lust." Immediately everybody thinks that there it is, we have lust in us, so we falsely think that we do have an evil human nature. Well then Jesus must have had an evil human nature too. Oh, no that would be blasphemous. The point is that He did not have an evil human nature and truthfully neither do we Christians. Although, He still had strong desires just like every other human being. But strong desires don't make us have an evil nature—desire is an essential part of what makes us humans beings created in God's image.

Let's look at the word, "LUST." Webster says lust is "to have an intense or obsessive desire." Others say it is "strong desire." Why is a strong desire wrong? It isn't, but we automatically think of strong desire as something sinful in itself. We will have to say that even Jesus was tempted to lust. What? "You say," not the Son of God! But the Bible clearly says that is what temptation is, "every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust." Jesus was a man, not just God, He was also fully man.

Temptation is response to something stimulating me to desire it. It is a normal human reaction. Jesus had them, we have them,

they are common to mankind (I Corinthians 10:13). But they are not sin.

Let us think about our bodily reactions--if I were in a cold room, I would get chill bumps. If my finger got smashed, I say, "ouch," these are normal human reactions. I don't get condemned over these reactions, do I? That would be pretty silly. What I just described are bodily reactions, but on the other hand, if I have inner soul reactions, I feel guilty, and condemned. Why? It is because I am brainwashed by Satan, the accuser of the brethren, to think of my inner negative reactions or even my too positive human reactions are sinful and wrong. Not so fast, Satan. God made us human reactors.

Human soul reactions are not good or evil in themselves, they are neutral. They are neither right or wrong in themselves, they are neutral. They don't have a life of their own, they are just reactions. It is always what we end up believing that makes the differences. If I believe that I am my soul reactions (if they feel wrong) and I have to change them, then I am back under the a lie that I apart from Christ have to change them. That is the LIE. On the other hand if I believe that Jesus is living here and He is handling my reactions, then I can accept myself and be human and know that Jesus is handling it and He is the power to deliver me from the temptation.

We humans are three levels of strong desire. We wouldn't even eat food without bodily desires, we wouldn't want companionship without soulful desires, and we wouldn't ever want God without Spiritual desires. So desire is what the human being is on three levels of existence.

Temptation is actually a very important part of our sanctification process. Satan, was released on Job, and the suffering of it proved to Job that he was not self-reliant, but only a simple vessel of another life. If we are beat up enough by Satan, we will surely know that we have no human power to conquer ourselves. It is in the pit of Satanic attacks where we learn the illusion of independent-self. So, Satan is really a convenient agent in the all knowing hand of God, as He uses him to bring us to the end of ourselves.

Now what is the enticement in James 2:14? It must come from Satan. Satan is tempting you to identify yourself with your soulful and bodily desires, and he makes you feel that you need something for yourself, that you are a needy me. At that time we are beginning to forget who we are, and go with the temptation. Remember, this is not sin yet. Yes, temptation is the first forms of sin, but not sin. We have to know how to turn the temptations around, by coming to our Spiritual senses and remembering who we really are. However, I always tell the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit it is your job to remind me, I will never remember who I am if you don't remind me." When the Spirit reminds me, I remember that

I really don't want anything for myself, or I really don't want to misuse myself, or someone else. I might think I do, and I might feel like I do, but I am really joined to Christ and He doesn't want to sin, and neither do I. I divide, soul thoughts from spirit intent.

So, temptation ends up being a springboard to faith--instead of responding in fear, we respond in faith. It's purpose is to stimulate us to faith, not to sin. The walk of faith requires a negative to refuse for the positive to spring forth. Somewhat like a **slingshot**, the negative is the thrust to propel the positive. Temptation is God's calling card to faith. It ends up being our friend, and not our great enemy, that is, when you learn to turn it around God-ward.

Temptation can go a long way before it becomes sin, James 1:15 says, *"When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin."* **Temptation is saying, "I want to do it," while sin is saying, "I will do it."** Sin is when lust *"has conceived"* (you agree with the devil), then it brings forth sin. That does not mean that you are not married to Christ anymore, no, it means that you have slipped out on your marriage relationship and had an adulteress affair. The cleansing blood is always available. Praise the Lord for the blood, and do not promise God that won't do it again. Tell Him that you will do it unless He keeps you, and leap by faith and say that He better get on the job keeping you, and take another leap and say **"He is keeping me."**

Let us look into Jesus' own temptations, trials and testing as our "Last Adam" and see how He overcame Satan's temptation. He was baptized the Son of God at the Jordan River. But He was also the Son of Man. He had to be tested on the human level. How does the divine Spirit live and operate in a human body? That had to be fully tested and proven. The Scriptures say that He was driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. Most Christians never think of God, the Father driving Jesus to be tested by Satan, but He did. There is an element of resistance in Jesus or He would not have to be driven. Let's explore His wilderness experience and the enemy of His soul, Satan.

Satan main purpose through temptation is to pull us off of who we are and make us think that we are independent-self-sufficient being. If we think that way, then we will operate that way, and he has us under his false control.

Jesus was declared the Son of God at the Jordan River by His father God, and anointed by the Holy Spirit, which was symbolized in the dove. The Holy Spirit had prophesied by the prophets centuries earlier of the coming king and divine-man, who was to be called the Son of God. But Jesus was both, Son of God, and Son of **man**.

The question is, was Jesus going to stand true in His anointing as the Son of man, or was He going to relinquish His glory as the

first man did in the Garden of Eden? That question could only be answered through testing. The first Adam had lost his world's dominion and glorious divine image....Now was the second Adam going to do the same thing? Hebrews 5: 8 starts to answer the question: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered." When Jesus was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tested or tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12), He learned as a man how to trust the indwelling Spirit in Him, and not trust His own human resources which would have been satanic.

Jesus was the Son of God, but He was also man and He had to learn how to operate by faith as a man. He was confronted by Satan in the wilderness in order to answer the question; Would the Holy Spirit remain His source of power and wisdom and fill His bodily temple with divine glory, or would Satan have an entrance into his humanity? Only the powerful onslaughts of the prince of darkness could prove Jesus to be the divine Son of man. Satan tempted Him on all three levels of His humanity, Satan's purpose was to try to find gain entrance in Jesus' spirit, or in His soul, or in His body. If Satan could have occupied any of these three places, Jesus would have been conquered and mankind would have been forever hopelessly trapped in satanic darkness.

In Andrew Murray's book "Spirit of Christ," he says that, "man fell from the Spirit dominating his whole being into the soul and then

again how the soul sank down into flesh, so that at last God said, 'He is become flesh' (Genesis 6:3). He descended from Spirit to soul and from soul to flesh." The First Adam fell on all three levels of his being, the Last Adam, Christ had to be confronted on all three levels and found victorious, in order to gain back what Adam lost.

"Command this stone that it be made bread," Sounds only reasonable, seems like a good ideal, after all Jesus had been forty days without food. I don't think that Satan came to Him in a visible way. Jesus was tempted in a inner way just like we are. It started in His imagination, then it filtered down into thoughts and ended up in His feelings. Yes His human body did feel hungry, but would Jesus give in to the spirit of error and perform the miraculous to satisfy His outer belly? Would the Prince of glory perform out of his human flesh resources and try to get food to satisfy Himself? Jesus waited--He did nothing! He did not deny this temptation, He acknowledged it, He didn't fight it, but He waited—He dared not respond in any way from His own fleshly capacities.

So Jesus waited on His helper, the eternal Spirit of Wisdom and power dwelling within Him to answer to Satan's temptation. Satan is too subtle and too powerful for mere humanity, even Jesus'. If Jesus drew from His own flesh wisdom and power to fight against Satan's attacks it would have all been over. The Son of Man waited on the wisdom of the Spirit, and like a flash of

lightening the rebuttal fired out from within Him, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Jesus' answer came out of the divine nature within Him, the heavenly man. The new union of the heavenly and the earthly. This new heavenly man does not live by bread alone, no He eats in a new spiritual way. His new life was not sustained by outer food, but by the logos, the eternal Word of God.

"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." The subtle serpent had come again , this time with the written word for he knows it so well. He used Psalms 91:11-12 to tempt Jesus to try in His own flesh efforts to prove that He had been anointing at the Jordan.

By this time Jesus didn't feel His anointing. His soul was feeling weak and dry, where was his great power? Jesus could have been saying these things to Himself; "Why aren't I (Satan speaks in first person) having a ministry? Where is the miraculous? Aren't angels supposed to minister unto me--it says so in the scriptures? Maybe if I cast myself down from this pinnacle of the temple the angels will show up?" "Why am I so tormented? How could I be the savior of the world, and not be able to get myself out of this? Here I am at the temple, I see all the perversion here--it is actually a mockery, but I can't do anything about it--they don't even know that I am the Son of God--how is this ever going to

happen?" I, I, I-temptation is always in this form, Satan is always tempting us to launch out and operate independently from who we really are.

Satan was after his soul, would Jesus perform by self-effort to try to prove His authority and divinity? Not only was Jesus' weak in body, but now He was weak in soul feelings and thoughts as well. The confusion was strong, and the helplessness prevailed. Again Jesus waited, He did nothing! The Spirit flashed in His mind, "I am the son of God, I don't have to prove who I already am." Release came, he too had to operate by faith the same way that we Christians do. Against confusions, and weak feelings he simply spoke the truth, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Satan ran. Why? Because the Spirit of truth always makes him run. If we will only speak the Spirit truth, the lie will flee like a cowardly snake. But if we try to untangle the lie, we will be tangled up in its maze of impossible solutions.

Lastly, "The devil took Him up on a high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, all these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Now comes "the pride of life" and the lust for power. Jesus could have thought to Himself, "This could be the way, look at all the kingdoms of the world, I could have them. I could master them, I would be the ultimate ruler of all the world. I could have them right now, I wouldn't have to wait, and I wouldn't have to suffer. All I have to do is take it all for myself."

Sweat poured on Jesus' face. "I want this," He could have thought. "Oh, no I shouldn't want this." "But will I take it?" Again Jesus waited, "Father I only really want your will." The light came. "Wait, it isn't me that wants this, it is Satan pulling at my soul." "Now I see, it is Satan tempting me making me think that I am an independent-self" "Get behind me Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The Devil departed from Him for a season, and the angels came and ministered unto Him. After he regained his bodily strength, the Holy Spirit anointed His humanity and He was declared the Son of Man. Jesus could say with authority, "Of my own **self**, I can do nothing, but what I see the Father do, I do." Jesus passed the test, He conquered through human weakness, receiving the power of the God through the Holy Spirit making Him the victorious Last Adam. He conquered through the inner operation of the Cross. Jesus learned how to operate the inner Cross long before he went to his outer Cross.

Since our identity is not soul, but spirit, then we accept these strong negatives on our souls as our privileged position as Cross bearers, and living sacrifices, which is "our reasonable service" and inner worship to God.

Do we like it, no, that goes beyond saying. These pulls cause us to suffer, as well as causes us to experience weakness, and sometime prolonged great weakness. No one likes suffering, if we did, it wouldn't be suffering.

Yet the secret of great power is accepted great weakness. Accepting our negatives, temptations and weaknesses as our privilege and not wrong is very hard to remember. The “old man” memory patterns, which is the mind of the flesh, spontaneously wants to protect itself from suffering. Our natural response is to fight, to flee, deny, or to fix. Now as Spirit persons we learn a new Spirit way, “for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;” We can reinterpret these pulls coming from Satan and learn not to fight them. What, accept Satanic pulls?

What we can accept is that these pulls are not coming from our flesh, because flesh is neutral and not evil or good in itself. Then we can accept that we are meant to be tempted, and we are meant to respond to such temptations. Our response is not wrong, so I need not take condemnation. I can accept that God is “training me for reigning,” as my good friend Fran Giles says. I can accept that God gets our attention through the negative. I can accept that God is on His job, and is stirring me up to faith, for all temptation is only an opportunity for faith. Usually I first believe the truth about myself, and then I am free to know that God is up to something for the other person. Therefore, temptation is redeemable and very valuable to us as well as to God.