

LESSON SIX: HOW TO HANDLE TEMPTATION

SESSION TWO

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 second of three sessions dealing with the topic of temptation. In the previous session, Pastor Rogers identified the subjects and sources of temptations. In this session, he continues to identify the seats (locations), and the seasons of temptations in the life of every believer. This material is foundational for the next session which will deal with subduing 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

In our previous session, we acknowledged that temptations are common to all men, and that temptations by themselves are not sin. We further explored the subjects (the recipients) of temptations, and the sources of temptations (the world, the flesh, and the devil). In this session, Pastor Rogers will discuss the seat of temptations and their seasons in the life of a believer. These first two sessions lay the groundwork for the third and final session which will deal with how we can have victory in subduing our 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

- The Bible says that we are made in the image of God (see Genesis 1:27). What do you think that means?
- How would you describe the difference between a person's soul and his spirit?

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

With my body I have physical life and can know the world beneath me. With my soul I have psychological life and can know the world around and within me. With my spirit I have spiritual life and can know the world above me. ... When my body is right, I am healthy. When my soul is right, I am happy. When my spirit is right, I am holy. —**Adrian Rogers**

Amplification: Temptations are a reality of life. For a believer who has become sensitized to sin, temptations are always a source of tension as one endeavors to lead a holy and sanctified (separated) life. For the unbeliever or lost person, temptations barely register on the radar screen. Temptations by themselves are not sin, but they can certainly lead to sin. Understanding who is tempted (the subject or recipients of temptations), the sources of temptations (the world, the flesh, and the devil), the seat of temptations (our body, soul, and spirit), along with the general seasons of life in which we typically face certain temptations, helps us to better prepare to handle temptations when they occur.

All temptations, whether they emanate from the world, the flesh, or the devil himself, serve as distractions to believers for the purpose of causing them to take their eyes off of Jesus. Like the Illustration in our last session of the dog who looks steadfastly at his master's face to avoid being tempted to take the morsel he wasn't supposed to have, we need to likewise recognize how the temptations in our lives serve to entice us to take our eyes off the Lord.

For Discussion: What are some of the worldly temptations that tend to manifest themselves in one's "youth"; in one's "mid-life?" Are there things one can do to help mitigate those temptations when they occur?

Amplification: Fleshly temptations, especially when we are young (but certainly not limited to our youth), are easy to recognize. The urge to fulfill passions and physical drives, whether it is in the area of sexual desires, food, drugs or alcohol, physical fitness, or any other activity that abuses or perverts the good God has intended for our lives, becomes sin when those things draw us away from Him and His law. Sex, food, and physical fitness are gifts from God given to us to enjoy happy and healthy lives. It is the abuse and perversion of these gifts that become sin and hinder a fruitful relationship with God.

Generally speaking, as we grow older, maturity sets in and helps us to better manage "youthful lusts," but those temptations are still there and can still strain the life of a believer. This is especially so if giving into a fleshly temptation has become a habit or addiction. We know from science, for example, that pornography and sexual perversion create neural pathways in the brain that release dopamine which, along with other neural chemicals, bonds the individual to the images (or experiences).

For Discussion: What are some of the spiritual temptations that you believe tend to manifest themselves in "older age?" Are there things one can do to help mitigate those temptations when they occur?

Amplification: Pastor Rogers identifies a second seat of temptation which is the soul. Unlike the body (the flesh) which is visible and which obviously reacts to physical pain and/or pleasure, the

soul is invisible and reacts more in the realm of emotions. Though the two can at times be tied together, the soul is that part of us that defines our personality. It is that unique part of us that makes us different from one another in attitude, goals, and aspirations.

That is why worldly temptations dealing with pride, possessions, and power seem to be prevalent during adulthood, or middle age. That is generally the time in our lives when we are attempting to secure our futures through professional accomplishments, awards, or prominence in social standing or business achievements. Again, the danger with these types of temptations is that they can quickly divert one's attention away from God. Jesus said, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul" (see Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25)?

For Discussion: What advice or counsel do you think you might give to a believer who is consumed with career or material success? What would you say to an unbeliever?

Amplification: The third seat of temptation works against the spirit of man and originates from the devil himself. Like the soul, the spirit is invisible. Though inextricably linked, the soul and spirit are distinct. The soul is that part of us that is "God conscious" and allows us to commune with God. The spirit within us is what makes us distinct from the animal kingdom. Animals have souls as demonstrated by their different personalities and temperaments, but they are not conscious of God, eternity, holiness, or sin.

The Bible tells us that before we came to faith we, "... were dead in trespasses and sin, ... 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" (Ephesians 2:1-6). All men have a consciousness of God, even atheists.

Paul, referring to disobedient unbelievers writes "For since the creation of the world His [God's] invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:19-21).

The devil would have us remain disconnected from God, not believing in His love and trustworthiness. That is why he, as the "infernal foe," makes direct assaults on our spirit. Though his assaults can come at any time, they usually occur when we are most vulnerable which can be in our latter years. Old age, illnesses, uncertainty over the future, and loss of a loved one are all vulnerabilities that can open the door for spiritual attacks on our faith.

We need to be fully conscious of the schemes of the devil that purposefully assault our faith. That is why the Bible says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:11-13).

For Discussion: What do you think are some of the steps believers can take to bolster their faith when facing times of spiritual crisis?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week in your personal devotions, consider how temptations may have come at you from different sources during the different stages of your life. As with last week, continue to acknowledge your weaknesses, thank God for His forgiveness, and commit to look to Him to overcome all temptations.

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Suggested group prayer – “Lord, You are our shield. We need Your protection to overcome the temptations around us. Teach us to follow Your ways and to honor You with our lives.”

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

As you study the verses, consider how the Holy Spirit of God interacts with our spirit to allow us to have communion with Him, as well as with fellow believers.

John 4:23-24 “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Romans 8:16 “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Consider the difference between the “spirit of this world,” and the Holy Spirit of God who works in us for righteousness, as you read the following:

Ephesians 2:1-6 “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, among 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. But 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), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A key way to help sensitize oneself to the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life is to make it a priority to study and apply the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

- C.C. Mitchell, “Let’s Live,” (Revell, 1975)
- Chad Meister and James K. Dew, eds., “God and Evil; The Case for God in a World Filled with Pain,” (InterVarsity Press, 2012)
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VIDEO PRESENTATION NOTES

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