

“You are on the verge of wrecking your life.”

– Russell Moore, Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ



What We Want is What the Devil Wants for Us

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:2-4)

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:12-15)

Trials and Temptations

“The difference between testing and tempting is no trivial matter. The goal of tempting is evil; the goal of testing is ‘that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing’ (James 1:4).” (Russell Moore)

- ❖ Trial – the testing of our faith to increase our faith
- ❖ Temptation – the lure of evil to make us doubt
- ❖ Trial and Temptation are often found together

The Spawning of Temptation

- ❖ We are tempted by what we want – desire, passion, craving; that for which we long
- ❖ We are lured and enticed – both hunting/fishing words used of baiting game with what they desire in order to snare, shoot or hook them

- ❖ We are lured by the excess or perversion of what we naturally desire – for example food (Adam and Eve needed to eat), sex, money, restful pleasure, etc.
- ❖ We are lured individually according to our own inclinations – the devil knows what makes you tingle

The Process of Temptation

- ❖ Our desire kicks into overdrive
- ❖ The desire gives birth to sin
- ❖ Sin results in death – the loss of something or everything

How We Get into Trouble

(from Charles Stanley)

Step 1: Entrance of the Thought – We do not sin when a thought comes our way that we know is not of God. In fact, this is where we can dismiss the thought and end the possibility of the next five steps.

Step 2: Entertainment of the Thought – Now we're entering dangerous territory. We have not rejected the thought. We have let it linger.

Step 3: Enjoyment of the Thought – It may be fantasy or daydreaming, but the thought now has become comfortable.

Step 4: Experience of the Thought – The thought becomes an action. If we don't deal with the thought somewhere within the first four steps, step five is inevitable.

Step 5: Excuse the Attitude – Not only have we fallen, we even become defensive and defiant about our wrong attitude and actions.

Step 6: Enveloped by the Sin – Completely consumed with having our way, we have no intention of doing anything but continuing in our sin. Just as waves will destroy a beautiful beach over time, so sin will carve into the beautiful plans God has for us.

Whether the moment turns out to your edification or your destruction depends on to whom you turn – to God to increase your faith or to Satan and self for the indulgence of your flesh. Either way it's no game; it's real life with real results for you and those you love.

Next Week: **Lessons from the Desert**