

## **Three Categories of Temptation Common to Every Man Including Jesus**

Start by remembering: “The devil is on a 'sovereign string' (in) serving as a tempter and tester of men.” He, too, in all finality, is under the ultimate dominion of God, the Creator of all that is material and spirit.

The first time these categories are seen is in the Garden of Eden when the Serpent spoke to Eve asking her, “Did God really say you were not eat from any of the trees in the garden?” She, of course, quickly clarified his misinformation by saying that they could eat any of the fruit of the trees except the one in the middle of the garden, adding that they were not to touch it. God did not say they were not to touch it. So, here we see in this first garden of perfection and innocence the first incident of our human inclination to add our opinion to God's Word. (See Genesis 2:16 for the complete quote of God's command.) She went on to explain that if they did, they would die. The Serpent quickly added his own slant to what God said and exclaimed, “No! You will not die! God knows, in fact, that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Eve had no idea of what evil was and she didn't ask.

But she quite quickly began to examine “the fruit tree”:

1. She knew that it would be good food, for all that God had created was good. Now the natural appetite of her flesh was awakened as well as the curiosity to know the taste of this fruit not yet experienced. So feeling reassured that she wouldn't die, whatever that meant, she took it.
2. She saw that it was beautiful to the eye. By taking the beauty of this rare fruit into her hand she was now the first one to take “possession” and could do with it whatever she wished.
3. Best of all, it was desirable for what it would give her by the eating of it: she would know the rest of all the important things that God knows and has withheld from them. They would be able to rule and control their domain without any help or direction from Him. She would “be like” Him!

Give her credit. She shared all this wonderful new information, and the fruit, with Adam; he fell for the same line only from the woman's mouth. He was probably looking on as all this happened anyway. And, like Eve, I now have just shared my 2 cents worth of opinion. The Bible does not say what he was doing.

John, the apostle, also lists these three categories of temptation in 1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world (and its ways) nor the things in the world. If anyone's love is centered on the world, the love of the Father finds no place 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of the Father remains forever.”

Let me now expand on the three lustful ways of the world:

- 1.) the lust of the flesh: the natural physical human needs become disordered drives to satisfy the unnatural cravings and appetites of the fallen human nature.
- 2.) the lust of the eyes: the natural pleasure of the things and our place in it here on earth becomes the disordered drive to possess, to own, to have that which the eye (the mind) sees as something to be admired, coveted and, which when seen in the viewpoint of the world, would increase ones value and importance,
- 3.) and the pride of life, the sense of pride in the simple position of being a loved, created being

under the direction of God becomes the disordered drive to be Master of one's own life. The deceived fallen human nature comes to believe, "I am the one who directs my life and lives by my say so.

4.)

I will use some references from Blackby's book, Encounters with God: Matthew, to help in comparing Satan's temptation of Jesus, when He was fasting and completely alone for 40 days in the wilderness, to the temptation of Eve that came by the words of the Serpent in the garden.

It was necessary that it be established that Jesus faced the same human experience that comes to all of us. Though He was truly God the Son it was necessary that He also be completely human in order that a man would fulfill all the requirements of the law as written by God, and through this life lived in willing obedience, once again man might come into the presence of God the Father and live.

Keep Matthew 4:2-10 in front of you as your reference for here we see Jesus humanity being put to the test: the Devil plays on the key facets of behavior common to all human beings – called drives or lusts:

1.) the human need for physical satisfaction,

the hunger drive,

the sexual drive,

the drive to feel safe and comfortable,

which become the disordered gratification of the human sensual desires and appetites.

The temptation: use whatever means we can to satisfy our fleshly, bodily drives. (Now.)

Jesus condition after 40 days of fasting was life-draining; the temptation was to use His God-power to turn stone into bread. Matthew 4:2-4.

2.) the disordered emotional need for recognition,

to be seen as having value, worth,

the hope of being important, recognized for who or what we are (position), and/or what we can do (influence).

The temptation: to get, to do and be whatever we see that will, in our eyes, fulfill our need for worth and recognition. (Even negative attention can seem better than none.)

The Devil transported Jesus to the top of a tower; the temptation this time was to use His God-favor to gain the instant attention and, thus, recognition of who He is by jumping from the tower -- the host of angels assigned to Him would have instantly interceded and rescued Him to forestall the untimely resulting, human death. Matthew 4: 5-7.

3.) the basic human version of pride,

to be first, right, and/or best in one's own mind,

to be in charge, in control, "the Master on one's own ship".

The temptation: the disordered human need to have the power and authority to know and call the "shots" over one's own place and person in life. The Devil is the Prince of this world due to man's abdication of that position in Eden when he chose the Serpent's way over God's way. The Devil offered Jesus immediate ruler-ship over the world if He would just make him, Satan, His "personal councilor". Jesus would be able to step right over the crucifixion into, what at the time, was going to be a very difficult journey for His coming into His rightful place of King of the Jews and of the whole earth. Again He could use His own "Godness" (I can do this and trump Satan, too.) instead of waiting on the Father's direction. Matthew 4:8-10.

Purpose of these testings:

Jesus used the Word of God to reinforce the Truth within Himself. He spoke it each time the Devil/Satan presented his case to Him, assaulting His mind with a "natural, legitimate" human need. By Jesus responding with the Truth of the written Word of God, the Devil ran out of options in this

particular situation and he left. (He didn't quit.)

We come to know solidly who we are in Christ Jesus; and come solidly into the use of His Word as the weapon to defeat the devil and the fallen nature that lusts for self-rule. We emerge better and better equipped for the abundant life and service He's prepared for us. The devil's unwavering commitment is to make us think that a particular activity, substance, relationship, position or even a way of thinking is justifiable or is going to be beneficial to you or even to others. It can even be your ministry or work as a Christian. He causes us to see an easier way, or an attractive scheme to give more success, a shortcut to a worthy goal.