

Women Building Godly Lives

*The wisest of women builds her own house,
but folly with her own hands tears it down. Prov. 14:1*

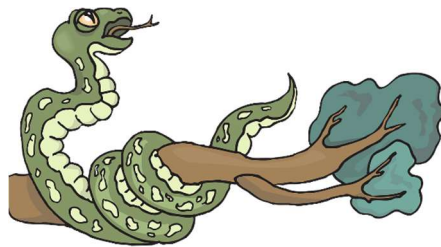
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Temptation

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Temptation

by Elizabeth Turner Beall

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (I Corinthians 10:13)

Sometimes we hear people say, "God will not give me more than I can bear," and they are talking about our trials and challenges in this life. We need

to be very careful with that thought. God, through Paul, says here that He/God will not let us be *tempted* beyond our ability. It's the temptations spoken of here, NOT our trials and challenges. We have choices to make with our temptations. We do NOT have to go through a temptation because to do so would be sin. Going through a trial is not a sin, and the temptation itself is not a sin. Everyone goes through trials, challenges, hard times. They are just a part of life. They may come to us as consequences of our own sins, from what is going on around us, from natural causes, or from the cause of someone else, but they are trials that must be met and handled. Trials are not an option, and God will help us through those if we seek His help.

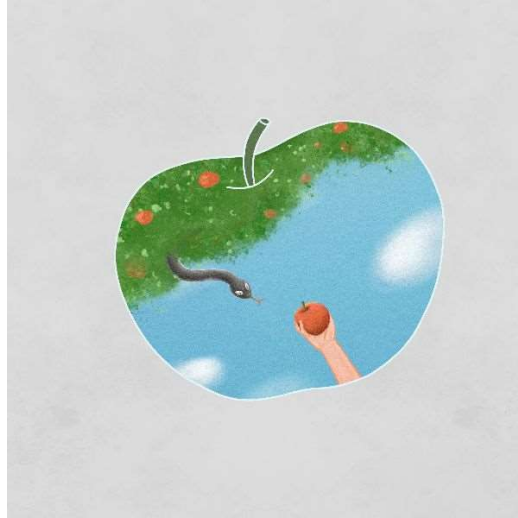
Temptations, on the other hand, are an option, a choice. They come to us because of our thoughts and desires, as will be seen in the following articles. However we meet the temptations, it is the way we handle those temptations, or the giving in to them, that bring us trouble, and we sin. But in dealing with those temptations, we have a promise from God, and God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). God will not let us be tempted beyond our ability, and God is very aware of what that ability is. True, we may question Him from time-to-time, but God knows our limits. It is self that gets us in trouble, our human weakness when we are face-to-face with whatever is tempting us, and we see it, we want it (or want to do whatever it is), and it's at that point we make our choice.

Peter talks of this same promise from God in 2 Peter 2:9, "...the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptations (KJV) and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment" (ESV). When temptations come (and they will), our first line of defense should be prayer and

words God has given us for strength to be able to turn away, to run away, from the temptation.

Temptations come in many ways, varieties, will always appear pleasurable, and will catch us in one of three areas: "For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:16). Whatever the temptation, Satan will make sure it looks beautiful, feels fantastic, and/or tastes extremely good, at least for a moment in time. But the reality is that the sin of it will destroy our souls in Hell, if we do not confess and repent of that sin. Giving in to those temptations means we are not "walking in the light," confessing our sins and being "daily cleansed" (1 John 1:7-9), focusing on God and Heaven. Yes, we may enjoy those sins for the moment (even though that "moment" may be years in reality), but our goal should be Heaven, and Heaven will be worth more than anything we gain here on earth. In dealing with sin, its pleasure for the time here on earth is NOT worth spending a never-ending time (eternity) in Hell.

My prayer is for all of us to be able to recognize the temptation as sin for us, breathe an immediate prayer to God for help, and turn and walk, yes run, away from the situation. Always remember Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). He is always near and He will help you (James 4:7-8).



The Blame Game
by Amanda Stephanus

“She hit me first!” “They made me do it!” “It was his fault!” These are phrases almost every parent has heard before; we even have a name for them: “the blame game”. This is a game that has been going on since the beginning of time. When God questioned Adam in the garden about what he had done, Adam blamed Eve and then Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:11-12). Aaron blamed the children of Israel for the golden calf (Exodus 32:21-24), Saul blamed the people for not destroying the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:20-24), and Pilate blamed the people by washing his hands ceremonially to try and show he was not responsible for the death of Christ (Matthew 27:24). Even today, we

hear people say “the devil made me do it”, “I just couldn’t help it, they made me so mad.” Politicians call for gun control when there’s a school shooting, people blame circumstances for choices made, and no one wants to take responsibility for their actions. When it comes down to it though, God is very clear in His word: we all are personally responsible for our choices, we are not tempted by God (James 1:13), and we are not forced to do wrong by the devil.

In his epistle to Christians, James describes the origin and progression of temptation and sin: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” (James 1:14-15). Regardless of who we want to blame when we do wrong, the Bible is clear: we are responsible for our actions. We are our own worst enemy and we fight the battle not with others, not with God, but with ourselves. To win this battle, we have to understand the progression of how sin occurs. The phrase “drawn away” is a hunting term and means “to lure forth.” The word “enticed” is a fishing term and means “to catch with bait.” When you think about hunters and fishers, you think of the time spent trying to lure an animal out of safety and into an area where they become an easy target. We allow ourselves to become an easy target and become ensnared when we are lured by those things that we desire that are wrong. This is not where sin occurs though – the temptation is not the sin. Just as a fish is not caught until they take the bait, we do not sin until we act upon our lusts or desires. However, once we give in to our temptations, we become a prisoner of our own choices and now have to work our way back out of that spiritual prison.

The good news is God always provides a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). We don't have to become like that fish or deer who, once caught, has no hope of survival. Understanding the progression of sin is crucial when it comes to taking responsibility for our actions, but so is examining ourselves and having an honest heart about what our sinful desires are and how to combat them. When we study God's word and make the proper application, we are better prepared to recognize those things that cause us to stumble and be lured away from God.



"The Devil Made Me Do It!"

by Wilburta Arrowood

Several years ago Flip Wilson built an entire comedic career around the premise of, "The Devil made me do it." Some of the skits were funny, some not so much, but one had to do with a wardrobe choice where Flip told Satan to "get behind me, Satan," to which Satan replied, "It looks good from back here, too." We know our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. He is going to tell us whatever we want to hear. He will not tell us what we need to hear to grow closer to God.

We also know all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That means Satan's wiles are effective a good bit of the time. Thus, we need to be diligent in keeping our guard up, but how do we recognize all the battle fronts? First, we must realize what the danger zones are. That leads back to knowing what God expects of us, and that leads to the necessity of a familiarity of the bible and the teachings therein.

When we open our bibles and examine closely, it is clear that being tempted to sin is not sin. Jesus was tempted when he fasted for forty days, and yet we are told he did not sin. Sin happens when we give in to temptation. [1](#) [Corinthians 10:13](#) says, No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. That puts the responsibility for obedience directly on us, but it also assures us we have an advocate helping to protect us and our decisions. We can escape, but we must choose to do so.

It is important that we learn our weaknesses. What is a strong temptation for one person may not be an issue for another at all. For some alcohol or drugs have a strong pull that is very difficult to resist. For others, those two things hold no pull at all. If you are one not tempted by those things, it is important to be sensitive to those who are. If you know someone struggles with alcohol, don't take them to places where it is served, and don't casually offer it.

If pornography is an issue, block those sites on your computer, and stay away from newsstands that offer such.

Another tactic is to replace the temptation with something positive. If alcohol,

and the social atmosphere where it is served, pulls at you, find a different social group. Build a relationship with friends who do not drink, and do activities with them instead.

Some women find seductive clothing a huge temptation. Many factors may feed into that. Is it because of poor self-esteem, and they think seductive clothing makes them more attractive? Is it because they think it is the only way to attract the attention of the opposite sex, and those men would salve their self-esteem or appease their loneliness? Consider two things. First you are a daughter of the king, and you—yes, you—are most valuable. Second, what sort of men are attracted to the sort of women who sell themselves so very short with seductive attire. Is that the sort of man you want to spend quality time with?

Consider these things and then work on strengthening your temptation resistance. Saying, “the devil made me do it,” won’t exempt you from the consequences, and you certainly don’t want to hear Satan say about anything you do, “It looks good from back here, too.”

Questions for discussion and meditation:

1. Give/write your own definitions of "temptation."
2. How can we prepare ourselves--hearts and minds-- to meet temptations?
3. Read James 1:12-18. Underline the words "drawn away," "enticed," and "conceived" to remind yourself of the progression of sin.

4. What are some examples in Scripture/of Scripture that show this progression of sin? For example, David in 1 Kings 11; Psalm 1
5. Thinking about 1 Corinthians 10:13, what are some things you can mentally do to help remind you of the escapes available when tempted to sin?

Ideas for application of this topic:

1. Give thought to your life and what things are temptations for you. List them. Share them if you will. There will probably be others who have those same temptations. In sharing, you can be help and strength to each other.
2. Considering number 5 above, what plans can you develop to turn from your temptations? (Example: not going where those temptations are, not being with the people who bring those temptations on.....)

Prayer suggestions:

1. Ask God to help you grow in your knowledge of His Word so you can meet temptations with God and His word in your heart. Share that knowledge with others who may be weaker than you in the same areas.
2. Ask God to help you be strong the next time temptation comes to you.
3. Know that your sisters in Christ also have temptations and pray for them to be strong as well.

Find the following words in the puzzle:

ABLE	BEYOND	GOD	RESPONSIBILITY
ADVERSARY	CHOICES	HONEST	SIN
ADVOCATE	COMMON	KING	STRENGTHEN
ALLOW	CONCEIVED	LURE	STUDY
BEAR	DEVOUR	POSITIVE	STUMBLE
BIRTH	DILIGENT	PROGRESSION	
BLAME	ENTICED	ESCAPE	
FALL	WIN	TEMPTATION	

R U O V E D E V I E C N O C
T E M P T A T I O N E R U L
N N S T U D Y C N O M M O C
E T I P R O G R E S S I O N
G I N P O S I T I V E O S K
I C M R T N E T A C O V D A
L E H O N E S T N Q E L J D
I D O O L L Q I A L L O W V
D G O D I I B H B L L A F E
H B E A R C G A K I N G C R
T E P A C S E F E U L U T S
R E L B M U T S D C W I N A
I E N E H T G N E R T S T R
B L A M E A B D N O Y E B Y

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