

Temptation

There is almost nothing like it in the world. To see the eyes and expression on a little boy's face the very first time he experiences it. Little boys dream about it. Old men still tell about it with great excitement and enthusiasm. Nothing else compares to the thrill of fighting to bring in your very first giant, rainbow trout. The experienced and wise fisherman knows that to catch the really big ones, it takes more than a worm and a hook. It takes cunning, forethought and imagination. The great anglers know that "temptation" is the name of the game.

The process begins by a serious study of their prey. What does he (the fish) like, his habits and his environment? The angler then tries to fabricate a bait that will grab attention, arouse desire and lure the fish into biting the illusion. The bait is made of hair or feathers. It is constructed in such a way that when the fish sees it, he will think, "That's the most unusual fly I've ever seen. It looks big and fat and juicy. I bet it tastes great! If I don't grab it now, I'll never know just how good and satisfying it is. Oh, I can't resist..." And then "POW!" Through the enticement of a lie, the fish finds not satisfaction, but death. The Devil is a great and skillful angler. His bait has never changed. And - he's fishing for you!

Matthew 4: 1 – 11

TEMPTATION OFTEN COMES THE MOST AT TIMES OF VULNERABILITY

1) Temptation is not sin

- Hebrews 4: 15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin".
- Every person is tempted but that doesn't mean that we sin when we are tempted. It is if we give in to temptation that we sin.
- BOY CONFESSING : Bless me Father for I have sinned... Father, I had bad thoughts...
PRIEST : Did you entertain them?
BOY : No Father... but they entertained me!
- 1 Corinthians 10: 13 "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so you can stand up under it".
- His grace teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions – Titus 2: 11 – 12
 - For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

2) The devil, not God, is the tempter

- Matthew interchanges the devil, the tempter, and Satan
 - Matthew 4: 1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
 - Matthew 4:3 The tempter came to him and said, ...
 - Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!"
- James 1: 13 – 15 "When tempted no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death."
- The ultimate purpose for temptation is our downfall and destruction. That is the devil's purpose not God's purpose.

3) Temptation comes in various forms

- 1 John 2: 16 “For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world”.
- Satan puts doubt on the word of God – “Did God really say?” – leading to unbelief and disobedience to God
- He lures us with our cravings, lusts and boasting.
- It can be in our mind or by putting something in our path that would lure us.
- It can be to do something bad or to do something good and become proud about our success.
- Temptation to do the spectacular – not being content with the ordinary.

4) Ways we overcome temptation

- Know and apply the Word of God – Jesus answered, “It is written.”
- Know who you are in Christ.
- Walk in humility (Pride goes before a fall)
- Stay away from the areas of your vulnerability
 - You probably heard about the guy who was trying to lose weight, but came to the office one day with two dozen donuts.
His co-workers asked him why he got donuts if he's trying to diet, and he answered, "Well, as I came to the corner where the donut shop was, I told God that if He wanted me to buy some donuts to have a parking spot open right in front of the donut shop. And on the eighth time around the block, there it was...!"
- James 4: 7 “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”