

05232021 Why is it important to learn how to overcome temptations? Because that is one of the chief ways character is developed and maintained... **so first lets understand character**

1. **CHARACTER :is the behavior typical of a person it is your moral strength, moral strength is you ability to do right when you could easily do otherwise.**
2. **Secondly our Character is our reputation...regardless of how we define ourselves. if your asked for a character reference is...you are asked to give input on their behavior.. **Character is the combination of belief and behavior—****
3. **Here's one way to get a better understanding of what character really is. Thing of a person's "characteristics".**
4. **What are the things that "characterize" a person? those attributes Taken together, are the things that make up his or her character.**
5. **How would you characterize yourself, for example? Are you a dependable person, or are you inconsistent? Are you determined, or do you tend to give up easily? Do you tend to be well organized. Are you humble, or prideful? even tempered or quick to anger... are you self controlled or emotionally controlled?**

And know this: Character is the number one determining factor in an individual's success ...it is the most important factor in whether or not they will be successful no matter what area of life we are talking about.- vocational, educational, relationships, financial, physical spiritual...

So the path to good character is learning to overcome temptations whose goal is always to ruin our call, destroy our character and derail our life

- **God's work is to show us how to overcome the temptation to say on the right course, grow in strength, become what and who he desires us to be in our generation.**

There is a saying that sums up quite succinctly the results of giving into temptation regularly...

If I continue to do what I always do, I will continue to get what I always got

- Temptations have to be interrupted before they gain a foothold in our minds.... Listen before you and I do something, we listen to voices discussing it....we have a conversation or conversations about it...so the question is who are you listening too?
- For Who you listen to... Will influence the way you think about it
- Think about it long enough...leads to a decision
- When the decision is madeYou will do it...

You and I have been given the power by God to choose what voices we pay attention to... and what you voices you pay most attention too, will control you..... Simple as that...to paying attention to one voice and ignore another is what sets the direction of our lives...

Temptations are like little foxes...

*SS 2:15 Catch for us the foxes, the **little foxes** that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.*

- You see foxes though little....which is often how temptations disguise themselves...it's just a little temptation... have a mind and a mission all their own....
- Thought appearing little and seemingly won't cause much damage...can ruin a whole vineyards, those that have fruit and other vineyards that are in bloom, about to produce fruit, by destroy the vines the blooks are on, by pulling them down and climbing on them...
- **Foxes like temptations don't always live in the vineyard...they come and go with purpose...**
- Their purpose is to rob the garden of it's fruit...while damaging much more....they steal away life from the garden...
- Foxes can destroy in one afternoon...what took many months or years to cultivate...And they will come back again and again...if not defended against...
- **Solomon tells us what we must do...CATCH THEM...**

- You see we all have our pet sins...it's little and cute...I like it...but beware it will grow into a tiger...and if you're lucky you will only get mauled....

As I'm speaking...did you get a glimpse of any little foxes running around your life? Listen today and you will learn how to catch and dispose of them...

But There is help in overcoming the foxes of temptations... temptations...that those which appear true but in reality cause great damage and sometimes death... relationally, financially, personally
Quick review of last week and what we learned in overcoming temptation...of the foxes

- last week 1) **temptations are a common part of life for everyone** 2) **temptation is always an attack on identity**
- 3) **Satan operates from the perspective... Everyone has their price... to leave God** 3) **temptations distort the word of God... by lying to us and telling us we can test God**

Today we look at a couple more helps...in the war to overcome temptation...

4. Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation

ECC 1:9⁹ What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.¹⁰ Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. NIV

- **It is good and quite comforting to remember that someone has already lived a life that is quite similar to the one you are living now.**
- **Whatever you have been through, are currently experiencing, or will experience in the future....someone else has experience it before you, and handled it successfully**

Listen...Peter the apostle tells us...to walk with these people...

1PE 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. NIV

- when you belong to God you are now a foreign traveler...an exile away from your new home in heaven...traveling on the earth...
- What this means is that other exiles have gone before us...on this path...
- We trod not this path alone...so do not give in to the temptation...to believe you are alone...with no options...you are a foreigner, with another culture you belong too!

Here is the truth...you will and have walked this earthly path with others...

The old path could be summed up in: Psalm 1:1 NIV Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers

- You are not the only travelers on this path. Choose your companions well...
- Many have journeyed successfully before you. So when temptations and troubles become overwhelming, find other travelers...
- What would so and so do? Who is currently where I want to go?
- I go to or call an older relative, mentor, friend...spend an hour or so...share what is going on...how I am being tempted...
- That is why community is so important...it is the way in which we battle the temptation...which proceed many hurtful actions...
- You are all alone...there is help

5.Help comes through God and other foreigners traveling this path before us

2CO 1:3³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. NLT

God comforts us by helping us overcome...comfort means to be in harmony to be at rest... when my beliefs and actions align I am in

emotional rest or comfortable...when they misaligned I am uncomfortable or disturbed.

Matt 11:28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.NLT

And He brings others into our lives, Other have gone through what you are experiencing ...who have that comfort and rest ...that they may help us and in turn we once we have that comfort and rest...will comfort others who also were disturbed like us...open yourself to them

- **They are present...but you must reach out to them...**
- **And those who are successfully handling temptations must be willing to be transparent and share ...their experiences , victories and failures...with others...**
- **We are here to help one another...as Paul tells us...**

GET PROACTIVE....I open my life to others and discover that whatever I am going through has been gone through before...and not only survived...but people have become better, stronger...they have become overcomers...they have persevered and conquered...temptations.

This is where lasting victory is accomplished...

But even that is not all....

5. We have God's manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....

HEB 4:12 ¹² For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.NLT

- His word is not just disbursing information...it is alive and literally speaks to us...His word speaks to our hearts...exposes our motives and desires...bringing understanding, correction and training to our lives...
- We will never understand the truth of God's Word if we treat it as a troublesome salesman at our door, for whom we open it a crack to get rid of him as quickly as possible.

pay attention to this ...but that is not all

6. We also have God's Spirit who will teach us all things

JN 14: 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. 27 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. NLT

- The Holy Spirit will teach us all things..
- One of those things is how to overcome temptation...
- Especially a troubled heart governed by fear...what a horrible temptation... Fear..Fear is the root of most temptations
- he teaches us how to bring in alignment our mind (beliefs) our heart ...which is the ability to carry out action... our actions with the result being peace or inner rest ...alignment! or Character!! which conquers fear!!
- there are the temptations which want to govern us.... life dominating sins!!
- There is not a temptation to worry, that comes upon us that has not enticed us before.
- There is not a temptation to Fear...which we have not experienced before...And we have all experienced broken trust...feeling naked...exposed...embarrassed, rejected

- Catastrophe imaginations” the doom and gloom forecasts... why me I cannot believe this...it is the end... do something quick now...
- The Eyore syndrome...it will never work!!...it will never happen... which are probably more common temptations ...and when acted upon cause devastating consequences usually having to do with relationships...

***** And then there is the Temptations when experiencing trials or trouble like...**

- Tempted to believe God does not love you... or not care...or can't help..or does not understand... I will handle this my way!!
- Tempted to self condemn yourself..when you make mistakes...
- Tempted to believe the thought that the problem I am facing requires a great deal of anxiety....or Being tempted to Call names as the best solution to this conflict...
- tempted to try and control people rather than love them...
- tempted to Isolation and insulation as the best way to handle hurt...
- tempted to think that Your business is nobody else's business
- tempted to sulk and whine...when you don't get your way...
- tempted to scheme to get around a “no” answer..because you need it
- tempted to manipulate...thinking that a valid way to get around someone objection or refusal..... because you need it
- tempted to believe you are hopeless and helpless... because there is no way to meet this need
- tempted to believe I am justified in doing wrong because....He, she, them, they did such and such...and always remember to throw in the word ...first... because you need it...
- tempted to believe... No one has faced the situation you're in before...or why is this happening to me? as if I should be exempt!
- tempted to believe...you have extenuating circumstances that no one else can understand nor even appreciate...
- Tempted to believe...No one can identify with what you are going through

- **You are all alone...God doesn't even care**
- **tempted to believe....It is so hard...whatever "it" is...I need some kind of relief...choose your favorite**
- **tempted to believe.....Why try anything new or different...it's not going to work anyway...I have tried everything when in fact you have not...**
- **tempted to believe...Giving up or giving in...is an adequate option...at least for right now**
- **How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....Catch the little foxes of temptation before they destroy your...vineyard...your future.**
- **To successfully deal with temptation...you are not alone...God has gone before you and is for you ... whatever I am going through People have gone before you... ..and not only survived...but people have become better, stronger, healthier...they have become overcomers...they have persevered and conquered...temptations...So Reach out... Remember How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....**
- **lets pray**

so to refresh...what is a temptation? the word "temptation" refers to the inducement to commit an act which appeals to an individual with negative consequences. the act tends to lead a person to regret such actions, for various reasons: spiritual, legal, social, relational, psychological (including feeling guilt and shame), health, economic, etc.

character is said to be "the stable and distinctive qualities built into an individual's life which determine his or her response regardless of circumstances."

for example, it is certainly easy to see that a person who is diligent is much more likely to have success than a person who is slothful.

When we have learned this truth...and have applied it enough it becomes our character...s

next week

How does he teach us....

6. We are to take thoughts captive to the truth...and reject the lies of temptations

2CO 10: ⁴We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. ⁵We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. ⁶And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient. NLT

- Whatever thought or temptation, obstacle, which speaks to my mind in opposition against God's word, lifting itself above what I know God wants...and attempting to get me to follow it
- I take captive... by the power of the name of Jesus to bring it down and cast it out..
- there is great power in the name of Jesus...but I must exercise it..

To successfully deal with temptation...you are not alone...God has gone before you and is for you ...People have gone before you...and are for you...Reach out... How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....

lets pray

And even John the Baptist had a season of faith struggles..

MT 11:1 After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

MT 11:2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

*MT 11:4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is the man who does not *fall away* on account of me."*

- The antidote... one's faith must run deep to endure trials and persecution...
- Because trials will cause us to question our preconceived ideas ...on how life should work...

We hear with our ears, but there is a deeper kind of listening with the mind and heart that is necessary in order to gain spiritual understanding from Jesus' words. If you truly wanted to learn and grow. Jesus' words are for the honest seekers.

Human ears hear many sounds, but there is a deeper kind of listening that results in spiritual understanding. If you honestly seek God's will, you have spiritual hearing, and God will give you new perspectives.

1.Temptations are common to man...

2.Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation

3.Help comes through pilgrims traveling this life with us

4.Jesus has been victorious over every temptation and He will help us

5.We have God's manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....

6.We have God's Spirit who will teach our spirit

7.We are taught to take thoughts captive...

How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....

Catch the little foxes of temptation before they destroy your...vineyard...your future.

As I open my life and discover that whatever I am going through has been gone through before...and not only survived...but people have become better, stronger, healthier...they have become overcomers...they have persevered and conquered...temptations.

so there is help

GOOD CHOICES BY THE SPIRIT

Change; Education; Holy Spirit; Lifestyle; New Life; Self-control
ROMANS 7; ROMANS 8:6-11; GALATIANS 5:22

In the 1990s, a group of Washington children participated in an eight-year antismoking-campaign program. The results were not impressive. Of the group that went through the program, 25.4 percent now smoke regularly. And of the control group--those who did not participate in the study--25.7 percent now smoke regularly. The education campaign hardly made any difference at all.

Our society believes education is the answer to our culture's problems. And for some of them, it is. But for many, it is not. People don't need new ideas or new techniques but a new power within to change bad behavior or to resist temptations. It is by the Spirit that we gain self-control (Gal. 5:22); it is when we live by the Spirit that we gain life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

Citation: Mark Galli, managing editor, *Christianity Today*; source: "Harper's Index," *Harper's* (March 2001)

@@@@@ Which takes us to step seven in overcoming temptation..
 We have his power to overcome Thoughts Temptations...

7. We are to take thoughts captive to the truth... loving God is an exercise of the mind also.. we must develop a Christian world view...

In a day and age where so many Christ followers are simply fitting the Word of God into their lives, an add on, an addendum...

We must establish a world view of life according to the Word of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

A kingdom View...were citizens and family

Nothing less

will bring Him glory and expand His kingdom in the world.

We also...

We have to know that we cannot change our lives by changing our behavior. Dealing with behavior will not change your life. For "As a man thinketh..." You have to change your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your behavior. You change your life by changing what you think. Then when your thinking is lined up with God's thinking, God's Word, then that seals Satan off and he has no entrance into your life

- Ever wonder why diets generally do not work? Because it focuses on behavior...eat this don't eat that...
- Does not last
- Why? Because how people think about food does not change...they are still using it for other means than it is designed for...
- Because there world view of food ...has many meanings...comfort food, eat when lonely, eat when happy "reward yourself" tempting yourself by having the wrong kinds of food around...

Therese with bran muffins...I focus on the taste...she focuses on the nutritional and health advantages...

- French fries...I focus on the taste she focus's on the nutritional value...

Many of us are tempted with laziness and procrastination...why? Our world view tells us that putting off anything and everything if at all possible is beneficial.

Though by experience we know this to not be true...none the less we do it because we are tempted to ...because that has been our world view..

- **The mind is where we think on what we believe...and if I love God I will think God thoughts**
- **Thoughts that God says are true...**

JN 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- From Jesus perspective...world view, tewo thing are required to live a free life...
- Free from what? Believing in and living according to lies... the wrong glasses prescription
- **One...One must believe him**
- **Two.. one must hold to what he teaches**
- **Then they will experience freedom**

This then reveals the nature of our vision...world view problems..

COL 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

- Our thinking must be transformed...living in Him...a relationship of love beteewn God and child.

COL 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

- **There are hollow and deceptive philosophies**
- **Which are based on principles of this world...Temporal**
- **And the traditions of men...our own lives families cultures generations.**

2CO 10: ³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- Scripture recognizes we are in a war...it is far easier for human nature to war with others than learn to live in peace...
 1. From God perspective the war is in the invisible realm ...nor are the weapons we use visible...
 2. Nor is their power natural...it is supernatural... or it demolishes the invisible...
 3. the war is against strongholds in the mind...a stronghold is a belief that olds one strongly.... Examples..."I can never stop doing this" I can't control myself...i am no good, I cannot change, God does not love me...maybe he loves me because he has to, but he certainly does not like me... life has no purpose...I will never find fill in the blank...good job, husband, wife,
 4. This supernatural power from God can demolish arguments...that used to win us over...
 5. This supernatural power can demolish the fear of pretensions.. pretending things...false pride...showboat...not real...false ...lies
 - that which exalts it self in my mind... lifting itself above what I know God wants... or says and attempting to get me to follow it

How do we apply the power?

- I take it captive...to bring it below what I know is right and true...

Contrast these biblical truths... I am secure what God says...

Believe

When I'm tempted, my safety strategy will be ...

1.Temptations are common to man...

2.Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation

3.Help comes through pilgrims traveling this life with us

4.Jesus has been victorious over every temptation and He will help us

5..We have God's Spirit who will teach our spirit

6.We have God's manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....

7.We are taught to take thoughts captive...

How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....

The Great Wall of China is a gigantic structure which cost an immense amount of money and labor. When it was finished, it appeared impregnable. But the enemy breached it. Not by breaking it down or going around it. They did it by bribing the gatekeepers.

My experience as a Pastor tells me that people rarely plan to get into trouble, their problem is that they fail to plan to stay out of trouble...

When tempted you have ways of escape ...it is up to you to apply them...

*PR 25:28 Like a **city** whose **walls** are broken down
is a man who lacks self-control.*

The great wall of China...breached through the door...our great lives are breached through the door of our mind and the window of our eyes...

Scripturally people often referred in terms of a city

Two way cities were breached...walls and water...

A city was breached by cutting off the water flow to it...the river feeding the city starves out the city...no water no produce, no livestock, so the city dies of thirst and starvation.

But if the water rises up inside of the city...it always will provide for the city...so it will not be susceptible to attack...

*JN 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of **living water** will flow from within him." ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

*REV 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the **middle** of the great street of the city. On each side of the **river** stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

Our world view must become a Kingdom

We are part of a Kingdom belonging to God both as citizens and members of the royal family....view...

When tempted remember who you belong to...and what he says about you...

We are continually learning to see more clearly, that we may walk this journey of life more assuredly ...loving God and loving others...

Part of the journey is learning to overcome Temptations that appear to be life giving...but only leave us with greater thirst...instead choosing life drinking from living water...

When I'm tempted, my safety strategy will be ...

1. Temptations are common to man...
2. Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation
3. Help comes through pilgrims traveling this life with us
4. Jesus has been victorious over every temptation and He will help us
5. We have God's Spirit who will teach our spirit
6. We have God's manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....
7. We are taught to take thoughts captive...

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We need help in overcoming temptations which always sound in our head sound very appealing but which in reality...hurt us and others...

Here are some helps which if applied will help us overcome temptations...

1. Temptations are common to man...

Listen to what Paul the apostle tell us...

*1CO 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 that you can stand up under it.*

- A. there are only so many temptations...which by implication means there are only so many sin....a finite number
- B. and these are common (ordinary, frequent, general, universal, familiar, widespread)
- C. God is faithful...(truthful, realistic, accurate) you can bear up under it...able to carry it...because
- D. he will show you the way out so you can stand up under it....

and this is how he does it....

Temptations always hope to entice a person into believing a lie... however cleverly packaged....and a lie will control you if you believe it.....

Our Choice of attention...to pay attention to this and ignore that is vitally important for us to grow spiritually , emotionally, relationally and financially...who are you listening too?

You see...The word "temptation" refers to the inducement to commit an act which appeals to an individual. It is used to describe acts with negative connotations and tends to lead a person to regret such actions, for various reasons: spiritual, legal, social, relational, psychological (including feeling guilt), health, economic, etc.

Temptation also describes the coaxing or inducing a person into committing such an act, by manipulation or otherwise of curiosity, desire or fear of loss.

Temptation begins in the mind by enticing us to believe certain thoughts to be true...when in reality they are lies...

Temptations have an intoxicating effect...and when people become intoxicated they lose touch with reality...

- The temptation comes...we romance it...thinks about it.....have discussions with it in our head...
- And like all intoxicants...it can cause a good trip or a nightmare trip
- Good trip...do this it will be great!
- Bad trip ... I am spiraling out of control...panic... and however that will appear...

- Temptations always finds a place of resonance within us...or we would not be tempted....

For example...

Although scripture teaches us to not compare ourselves to others:

*GAL 6: 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can **take pride** in himself, without **comparing** himself to somebody else, ⁵ for each one should carry his own load.*

- But how often do we compare ourselves to others...thinking...I am better than so and so
- Or I'm doing worse than so and so...
- [Read baseball](#)...the American Pastime...listen...



- **Temptation always finds a place of resonance within us...or we would not be tempted....and temptations are a common part of life for everyone**

today we will continue with the last four way if implemented ...can destroy the power of temptation in our lives...maybe not perfectly but consistently...

Opportunity may knock only once, but temptation leans on the doorbell.