

Pa232 Counseling

Lesson Pa232-19 Temptation: Addiction

This last of seven lessons on trials and temptations considers addictions. How difficult it is to help someone who will not help themselves! You can think of some people who seem to be struggling with the same issues for a long time. They are tempted when they are drawn away by their own desires. You may have people say, "I cannot help myself; this is just the way I am." It is hard for a person who has given themselves over to their desires to stop their harmful behavior. When that harmful behavior has done its damage, however, they may seek your help and advice. You can encourage them to know there is deliverance. They can be free of the bondage or addiction of desire, lust, and harmful things they believe control them.

The scriptures encourage us with the hope that with every temptation, there is a way of escape. As a person plays with the temptations of their heart, God also shows them a way of escape. As you hear this story count the ways that Amnon could have escaped from his lust and the shame he brought to his sister.

Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, his beautiful half-sister. He became so obsessed with her that he made himself ill. He became very frustrated. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her. He was miserable. Amnon had a friend, actually his older cousin, who often advised him. This friend was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon replied to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." Now what Amnon was actually saying was, "*What I desire to do is wrong, this is my sister.*" He used the word 'love,' but he knew in his heart it was the wrong kind of love. It was lust. At this point, he could have listened to his conscience and asked God for help, but he did not. He was drawn away from what was right by his own desire.

Then, instead of agreeing with Amnon that what he wanted to do was wrong, his friend encouraged him to ignore that fact. He too knew that it was wrong, but he had a clever scheme to help his cousin get what he wanted anyway. So Amnon was tempted further, by the very person who was his counselor. "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," said his friend. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

Amnon did not refuse his friend's temptation to lie to his father. If Amnon had been truthful with David, he could possibly have helped him find a way out of his frustration and desire. Instead, Amnon carried out the friend's plan and pretended to be sick. He lied to his father David. Wanting to help his son, King David believed the lie (2Sam 13:1-6).

David sent word for Tamar to go to her brother's house and prepare food for him. After Tamar made the bread and baked it, she took the pan into his bedroom as he had asked. She served it to Amnon, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon ordered all his servants to leave the room, again

allowing his desire or lust to control his behavior. When a person knows he is doing wrong, he does not want witnesses, nor anyone to stop him.

So when everyone had left the room and Tamar took Amnon the food to eat, he grabbed her. “Come to bed with me, my sister,” he said. By saying this to her, he again showed that he knew what he was about to do was wrong.

If he had any doubt, Tamar cried out, “No, my brother! Don’t force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.”

But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!” (2Sam 13:7-15).

The Bible tells us that there is no temptation that “has overtaken you except what is common to mankind” (1Cor 10:13). And that with each temptation God will make a way of escape. Amnon knew his intentions were wrong. He could have refused his friend’s evil suggestion. Amnon lied to his father about being ill. Then he tried to conceal his actions and forced himself upon his sister. As you heard in the story, Amnon could have stopped what was about to happen at a number of points. Instead, he chose to give in to his lust.

The apostle Peter assures believers that “the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2Peter 2:9, KJV). And the apostle Paul adds, “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 endure it” (1Cor 10:13).

Guiding people who live their lives by the lust, desires, and fears of their heart can be difficult. When Christ spoke to his disciples, he said that some things will take prayer and fasting on our part as ministers and counselors. A lot of the work of a minister is the work of redemption. It is leading a person back to Jesus. It is helping to restore a person after they have given in to their temptations. The deliverance of one person is worth the effort it takes.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches that every person is responsible for the choices they make. One wrong choice leads to another, until great harm comes to them. Addiction or bondage to that desire may result. The good news is that God has promised to make a way for us to break the cycle. He will help us to begin to make right choices and to find our way to forgiveness and restoration in Christ.

This **main truth** of this story is that God stands ready to deliver people from temptation if they will take one step in his direction. We as Christian leaders and counselors, through prayer, can give people godly direction and help them find a way of escape from the desires that seem to control them.

Let’s **review** this lesson by answering the following questions:

1. What is one way Amnon could have avoided his sin? [Pause]
A. If you said, “Realizing that what he wanted to do was wrong, Amnon could have chosen to do right,” you answered correctly.
2. Why did Amnon ask his servants to leave when Tamar came into the room? [Pause]
A. If you said, “So that he could fulfill his lustful desire and not be seen,” you are right.
3. What did the apostle Peter say about temptations? [Pause]
A. If you answered that Peter said, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen and watch it until you can retell the story of Amnon and Tamar in your own words. Train your heart to rely on the Spirit of God for wisdom. Pray and ask God to prepare you to speak to someone you know who seems to be struggling with temptation. He will give you the strength to do so and the words to say. He will also let you know when the time is right. Learn to wait upon the Lord and follow his leading. Memorize Paul’s words to the Corinthian church, “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 endure it” (First Corinthians 10:13).