

Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship

Lesson Th224-8 Nature of Sin - Temptation

An America television entertainer, named Flip Wilson, became famous during the 1970s. He created a female character called “Geraldine.” This person he portrayed was a comedic character who seemed to always be getting into trouble. Geraldine had a go-to excuse for her bad behavior. She would say, “The devil made me do it!” This became an American catch phrase, which was repeated over and over throughout society. For many it was merely a funny statement to explain away their bad behavior. But for others, there was a subtle belief that their bad behavior was not really their fault. Thus, it would soothe their conscience of guilt. But did the devil really make them do it?

Over the next few lessons we will discover the nature of sin and temptation.

What is temptation, and where does it come from? Is it God who is tempting us to make us better? Is it the devil, or Satan, who is tempting us to sin? Temptation happens from two distinct sources. The most basic level of temptation is from our out-of-balance ‘self’ instincts. James the half- brother of Jesus wrote this: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; For God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death” (James 1:13-15, NASB).

So then, what is lust? It can be defined as a very strong or intense desire, a deep wanting, or craving. Lust is often associated with sexual desires. It can also be associated with any other strong desire that leads to inappropriate behavior.

Then there is a second origin of temptation. Satan, or his fallen angels, can be sources of temptation also. This type of temptation is not usually random in regard to a child of God. For we are held protected by the Holy Spirit. But God does allow unique situations where satanic forces are allowed with permission, to tempt God’s children. These temptations are not intended to cause us to fall into sin or to destroy us, but rather they are allowed as a test.

You have learned in the “Gospels 1” course that Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus then fasted and prayed for 40 days. Satan himself was waiting for Jesus in the wilderness. When Jesus had finished his fast, Satan approached him.

Now Jesus was very weak from fasting. He needed to eat soon, as his body was beginning to starve to death. At this point Jesus began to crave food. It was then that Satan challenged Jesus to turn a stone into a loaf of bread. We know that Jesus answered this temptation by quoting scripture. Satan again tempted Jesus by showing him all of the nations of the world and offering to give them to Jesus to rule over. The only catch was that Jesus would have to bow down and worship Satan. Again, Jesus resisted the temptation and rebuked Satan by quoting scripture. Finally, Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple. Down below were hundreds of people including all the religious leaders of Israel. Satan challenged Jesus to do something supernatural in front of these people. By doing so, Jesus would prove to everyone who he was. Yet a third time, Jesus rebuked Satan with the Scriptures. Satan then left Jesus.

At this point Jesus left the wilderness and went up into the region called Galilee. But there was something different about Jesus now. Remember how Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Holy Spirit to go into the wilderness? Now, after overcoming temptation, the Bible says that Jesus went up into Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1-14).

This is a perfect example of God allowing Satan to tempt and test us. It is the testing of our character, self-discipline, and devotion to God. Almost every great spiritual leader has gone through a time of supernatural temptation and testing. After that victory, the person goes on to demonstrate the supernatural power of God and have an extraordinary ministry.

Why do you think this happens?

In England all gun barrels are ‘proven’ before the gun is allowed to be used. The London Proof House was established in the 16th century and is still in operation to this day. A gun is placed in a proofing chamber. Then a cartridge that is loaded to 125% of the rated capacity of the barrel is placed in the gun and then shot. This process is repeated yet again. Finally, the barrel is inspected and if there is no damage, the barrel and gun have passed the test. It has been proven to be capable of withstanding the tremendous pressures associated with firing a bullet.

In the same way, God may allow us to be tempted by Satan before he uses us in supernatural ministries. We are tested to prove that we can withstand the spiritual pressures associated with God’s supernatural power.

This lesson is **important** because it sets into perspective temptation and testing.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that there are two primary types of temptation that people experience. The first temptation comes from our out-of-balance self. The second type of temptation is from satanic forces.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What are the two main types of temptation? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “Our own selfish nature and satanic testing,” you are correct.
2. When Jesus went into the wilderness he was led by the Holy Spirit. How was Jesus described in regard to the Holy Spirit when he left the wilderness and went up into Galilee? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that Jesus went up into Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit, you are correct.
3. What is the purpose of satanic temptation? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said that God allows us to be tested to prove our character, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is listen to it several times. Then watch Luke, chapter 4, from the Bible section of the olBi app. Listen carefully as the temptation of Jesus is told. Notice how Jesus used scripture to overcome satanic temptation. Then find someone and have a discussion on these two types of temptation.