

What Every Christian Ought to Know - Adrian Rogers

How to Handle Temptation - Chapter 5

In 1 Corinthians 10:12-13, Paul told us “*12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it.*” In regards to temptation, there are no new temptations. The delivery may be different but the temptations are the same.

Satan is using the same schemes to get us to sin. Yes, we have the internet and television to pipe the temptations right into our homes. Remember, Greek temples were vile enough to have temple prostitutes so temptation was close at hand.

There are at least 3 ways to deal with temptation in our lives. The first is to Give in to it. The motto of the 1970’s was “If it feels good do it.” Giving in to the temptation in our lives makes us no different than other animals.

The second way to deal with temptation is to Fight it. James 4:7 tells us, “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” Notice James is telling us that we must first submit to God. Without God and Jesus fighting temptation is very difficult if not impossible.

The third way that Adrian Rogers tells us to deal with temptation is to Overcome it through Christ. Without the strength that comes from Jesus then we will often fail and give in to the temptation. Paul told us that there are no new temptations and Jesus has overcome them all. He even overcame temptation directly from Satan himself. (Luke 4:1-13) He did so with Scripture.

Not listed in Rogers’ book was another way to deal with temptation that we learned when we studied Satan. That way is to Run from it. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar’s wife, we are told that he fled from her. (Genesis 39:7-20) If you are being tempted to do something that you know is not right, run from it.

Take yourself out of the situation or at least give yourself time to talk to God about it or pray for strength.

Remember that God is with you through the Holy Spirit. The second part of 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that God won't allow you to be tempted more than you can endure. This verse is misquoted often. People remove the word 'tempted'. They say that God won't give you more than you can endure. God knows how much temptation we can take. Even when Job was being tempted by Satan, Satan had to ask God how much pressure to apply to Job. We are no different. Back to 1 Corinthians 10:12, there is nothing new in regards to temptation and lesser people have withstood it, so you can too with the help of Jesus.

Being human makes us subject to temptation. 1 Peter 5:8 gives us a warning to *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* No one is free from temptation, even Jesus. Remember, Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus *"has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."* Rogers says, "The proud person tempts the devil to tempt him, and if you are cavalier or careless about sin, I can tell you that you are going to fall. The person that is in the greatest danger, however, is the person who is trying to fight this temptation in the strength of his own flesh. He thinks, "I don't need to read a book on temptation. I don't have a problem with temptation. I can overcome it." But without Christ you cannot. God has to make a way of escape for you."

Rogers uses an analogy of football to temptation. Why not play the game without an opposing team? Scoring would be much easier. He says it is the victory that is important. This applies to temptation. It would be easier if there was no temptation in the world. Again it is the victory that is important. The glory is in the victory over the temptation. God has set up the "game" so that everyone is tempted but only those that call on the name of Jesus will have a victory over the temptation. Again, Hebrews 4:15 points out that only Jesus was victorious every time.

The Source of Temptation

Adrian Rogers says that there are 3 sources of temptation, the unholy trinity. They include the world (external foe), the flesh (internal foe) and the devil (infernal foe). Remember there is no new temptation in the world (1 Corinthians 13) and our temptation is going to come from one of these three ways.

1 John 2:15 tells us, *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.”* Understanding what the “world” is can be difficult.

When God through John said, *“Do not love the world”*, He is not talking about the planet Earth. After God created He said, *“It is good.”* So it is not the physical Earth that we are not to love. We are to love all people. Jesus said that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. He is talking about *“the system, an order of things.”* (Rogers)

God wants our full attention. God made one of the 10 Commandments, *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”* Consider what you can be your god. Money, your beauty, your possessions, sports and sports figures, your children . . . the list goes on and on. This is the world. These things in and of themselves are not bad. They are when they take our focus. It is ok to want to look nice but when looking nice becomes your god. Consider body builders. Their entire focus is to look better than the next person.

1 Peter 3:3 says, *“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.”* How you are on the outside does not matter to God. It is what is on the inside that is important to Him.

Consider when the Prophet Samuel came to anoint David as king. He went through all of David’s older brothers before anointing David. Before they started looking at Jesse’s seven sons, God told Samuel, *“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”*

So the world is anything around us that we can consider a god. They are not bad until we make them bad. It doesn't have to be a thing, it can be an act. If you are so wrapped up in your job that you don't have time for anything else, like family or God, then that is the 'world' and there is a problem. Remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

The Internal Foe – The Flesh

In Romans 7:15-20, Paul tells us about our Sin Nature. We want to do what is right but our Sin Nature gets the better of us and we do what we do not want to do which is sin.

Read Galatians 5:19-21. Paul lists some of the acts of the flesh. It is quite a bad list. In verse 21, Paul says that *"those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of Heaven."* Who will inherit the kingdom of Heaven according to Jesus (Matthew 5:3)? The poor in spirit. Those who are not self-focused but are humble are poor in spirit.

Verse 19 in Galatians 5 says that the "flesh" is evil. He is referring to our humanness or our sin nature. In Romans 12:1, Paul says that we are *"to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."* So our bodies are not inherently evil. Leave it to "man" to take something made to worship God and corrupt it.

The Bible uses "flesh" to mean our predisposition to sin. We inherited from Adam and Eve. David takes it back to our early years. Psalm 58:3 says, *"Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies."*

"Have you ever thought about it: You never have to teach a little baby how to lie? You have to teach a little baby to tell the truth. You don't have to teach a child how to be selfish. You have to teach a child not to be selfish. We all have in us an enemy inside the gates called flesh." (Rogers)

The Infernal Foe – the Devil

The devil is behind a large amount of evil or bad things in the world. Read Ephesians 6:12. When it comes to the war between good and evil, the battles are

fought in the spiritual realm. He was present in the garden and he is present today. Remember from our study of Satan, if he can get us to doubt that he exists then he is winning. He wants us to doubt our salvation so that we are ineffective at sharing the gospel message.

Adrian Rogers says, "Think of your flesh as a pool of gasoline. Think of the world as a match. Think of the devil as the one who strikes the match and throws it. Then you will see how temptation comes about."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul tells us, "*May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Temptation can attack us in one of three ways, in body, soul or spirit.

The desires of the body are easy see. I would hate to count how many times that I have heard the line "The body wants what it wants," on TV or in a movie. Most of the seven deadly sins were caused by temptation of the body.

The second way that you can be tempted is the soul. Your soul is what makes you who you are. Your sense of humor, intellect and personality help make up your soul. Unfortunately, your ego is also part of your soul and it is highly susceptible to temptation.

The third way that Satan can tempt us as listed in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is our spirit. You may think that the soul and the spirit are the same thing but they are not exactly the same. The spirit is how we interact with God.

John 4:24 says that we are to worship God in spirit and truth. Rogers says that we are the only animal that has a spirit. The spirit is how we can know God, fellowship with God and commune with God.

The body is our physical life (the world around me), the soul is our psychological life (the world around me and within me) and the spirit is our spiritual life (the world above me). (Rogers)

Rogers says, “When my body is right, I am healthy. When my soul is right, I am happy. When my spirit is right, I am holy.” Today as I look around me, I see a lot of unhealthy, unhappy and unholy people.

Remember that we have three enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. The world attacks your soul. It influences the way we think about ourselves and everything around us. It attacks our will, our emotions and our ego. Consider Moses, his anger caused him to kill a man, his will was destroyed by his sin, his desire to serve God was gone.

The flesh attacks our bodies. As I said earlier, our bodies are subject to attack with lust and other desires of the body. Consider King David, he headed down sin’s long and winding road when he was tempted by seeing Bathseba.

The Devil attacks the spirit. He will do anything to destroy your relationship with God. He will do anything to keep you from serving God. In a previous chapter, we learned that he will even get you to doubt your salvation. Consider how he twisted and confused God’s words in Eve’s mind. *“but God did say, `You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die. ’”* (Genesis 3:1) The temptation in the Garden ruined her relationship with God and strained man’s relationship with God for all time.

Consider Peter. He went from declaring that he would defend Jesus to the death if necessary, to denying Jesus. His relationship with God was ruined until Jesus reconciled Peter. Satan can attack our faith and get us to deny Jesus too.

The Seasons of Temptations

According to Adrian Rogers, as you mature the ways that you are tempted change. He says that when you were in your youth, you were tempted by things of the body. He lists sex, drugs, violence and laziness.

What do you consider middle age? He says that the primary sins of middle age men and women are “soulish” sins. He says that in your middle age you have put off the sins of the flesh. I am not sure that I agree with that. Have you ever seen a middle age man driving a red sports car?

He says that in your middle age your sins are related to ego. I want the best house, the best car, my occupation, . . . He says most people are trying to be Mr. Big or Ms. Big. When you reach old age, he says that we are too old to commit the sins of our youth and middle age has passed us by. He says that our sins are the sins caused by Satan. Satan puts doubt and fear into our minds. We question the existence of Heaven or your salvation or . . .

The Subduing of Temptation

Rogers breaks down subduing temptation in our life into three areas with each having one key word. He gave us the unholy trinity with three sources of temptation; the world (external foe), the flesh (internal foe) and the devil (infernal foe).

In order to battle our external foe or the world, we have faith. 1 John 5:4 says, *“for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”* As the hymn writer said, “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.”

A worldly Christian says they are a believer but is on an ego trip. Somebody who is trying to satisfy “life’s hidden hunger with an ungodly system of values.” A true Christian has put their faith in Jesus. 1 John 2:15 says, *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

There is an old adage that says, “No Jesus, No Peace. Know Jesus, Know Peace.” Sticking with what we are saying about the world, this could be changed to “No Jesus, Know the World. Know Jesus, No World.” You can’t have Jesus and also have the world.

“Everybody wants to be satisfied. The reason most people don’t find satisfaction is that they are looking for it in the wrong place. When we see what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, really understand who He is, this world has no allure for us because we are already satisfied.” (Rogers)

As the hymn writer said it, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and

grace.” A mature Christian puts his/her full faith in Jesus. They completely rely on God and not depend on themselves.

Against the flesh, we must take flight. When we studied Satan we used the example of Joseph being tempted by Potiphar’s wife. Genesis 39:11-12 tells us when he was tempted, Joseph ran.

Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that we won’t be tempted beyond what we are able to stand and that God will give us a way out. Most of the time the way out is to run, leave or don’t stay in a situation that may cause you to sin.

Adrian Rogers uses the example of Twinkies. If Twinkies are your problem, don’t buy them. Our standing rule when our boys were growing up was, “No girls in the house unless we are home.” We didn’t want them to be in a situation that would lead to problems. If you are in the midst of temptation, “RUN”!

When battling Satan, the key word is Fight. James 4:7 says, “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*” When you feel Satan driving a wedge between you and God, tell him to get lost.

The first step in resisting Satan is to make sure that you have confessed any sin in your life to God. Rogers says, “Get your heart clean.” Jesus defeated Satan on the cross. Remember what Pastor Brian says, Satan is no match for Jesus. They aren’t equals. All power and authority in heaven and on the earth have been given to Jesus.

In the name of Jesus, tell Satan to GO. 1 John 4:4 tells us “*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*”