

Flirting with Temptation

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. Judges 2:1-3 - Israel left the door to temptation unlocked when they did not remove the idols and pagan temples from the land.
 - 1. It is a metaphor for people who do the same in their own lives, leaving opportunities to return to sin within easy reach.
 - 2. The alcoholic who keeps liquor in his house, the porn addict who keeps bookmarks on his web browser, or the lazy Christian who keeps a list of excuses handy for skipping services.
- B. "Men have known from the beginning that it is not temptation without warning or overwhelming temptation that strikes him down; it is the temptation one does not fear enough to flee, but carelessly permits it to dwell nearby." (prb)
 - 1. "No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from." (George Eliot)
 - 2. "Temptation likes best those who think they have a natural immunity, for it may laugh all the harder when they succumb." (Catherine Valente)
 - 3. "Most people would like to be delivered from temptation, but would like it to keep in touch." (Robert Orben)
 - 4. "No temptation can gravitate to a man unless there is that in his heart which is capable of responding to it." (James Allen)
 - 5. Solomon - Prov. 4:14-15
 - 6. Jesus Christ - Luke 22:40
- C. "What makes resisting temptation difficult for many people is they don't want to discourage it completely." (Franklin Jones)

I. WHAT FLIRTING WITH TEMPTATION DOES

- A. It sets us up for a fall into sin.
 - 1. Gen. 39:7-10 - See how easy it can be?
- B. It sets us up for chastening by the Lord.
 - 1. Gen. 3:14-19
- C. It sets us up for "divided allegiance."
 - 1. James 4:8
- D. It sets us up for the war between flesh and spirit.
 - 1. Mark 14:67-71
- E. It entertains our desire for the things of the old life.
 - 1. Luke 9:62

II. WHY WE FLIRT WITH TEMPTATION

- A. We believe God has not fulfilled our needs - Jer. 12:1-2
- B. We have a physical body that still desires sin - Gal. 5:16-18
- C. We believe we can still be viewed as faithful Christians - Num. 32:23
- D. We believe we can't break old habits, even with the help of God - 1Cor. 10:13
- E. We believe we can control it and it will not escalate - Luke 12:16-20

III. HOW TO CEASE FLIRTING WITH TEMPTATION

- A. Make no provision for the flesh - Rom. 13:14; Neh. 4:9; Job 31:1
- B. Change our thinking - Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24
- C. Learn to recognize our weaknesses - 1Cor. 6:18; Psalm 119:101
- D. Learn to recognize our strengths - Ex. 31:1-5
- E. Put those strengths to work - 1Cor. 12:11, 18; Ex. 36:1-3

Conclusion: "A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in." (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)