

DEVICE 8: Satan tells believers that they are doing a terrible job of being a Christian. They are troubled and tormented by their temptations. He tells Christians, “God cannot possibly love someone who struggles with sin the way you do.”

Remedy 1 - The Bible shows that some of the people God has loved most were also those who endured the most temptation from Satan. Yet, no matter how extreme his efforts, Satan could not cause a true believer to stop trusting God.

Consider the following believers experience of being tempted by Satan:

- Job:
 - God considered Job to be a very good believer - And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (Job 1:8 ESV)
 - God allowed Job to be tempted by Satan to a very great degree of hardship.
 - At first, God did not let Satan do personal harm to Job, although he lost all his possessions, and all his children - And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:12 ESV)
 - During a second phase of temptation, God allowed Satan to harm Job's body, but not to kill him - And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." (Job 2:6 ESV)
 - Job did not stop trusting God - I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. (Job 23:12 ESV)
- Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan immediately after His baptism by John the Baptist.
 - Matthew 3:13-4:11; Mark 9:1-13; Luke 4:1-13.
 - Yet, despite severe hunger and overwhelming temptation Jesus did not sin - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15 ESV)
- David was tempted, committed sin, and was later honored by God.
 - He committed sin by committing adultery, trying to cover it up, and then having the husband of Bathsheba, Uriah the Hittite, killed (2 Samuel 11:1-26).
 - God sent Nathan the prophet to convict David of his sin (2 Samuel 11:27-12:14).
 - David repented, and recorded his repentance in Psalm 51 (*To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.* Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (Ps. 51:1-2 ESV)
 - David's son, Solomon, worshipped false gods in his old age, but in the final analysis, David had a heart that was "true to the Lord" - For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (1 Ki. 11:4 ESV)
- Peter denied he knew Jesus, and was later reinstated by Jesus.
 - When Jesus was on trial, Peter was nearby, and he denied he even knew Jesus (Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27).
 - After Jesus rose from the tomb He asked Peter to lead other Christians by feeding them on the teachings of Jesus (John 21:15-17).
- Before his conversion Paul persecuted followers of Jesus Christ, yet God exalted Paul.
 - Paul participated in the persecution, and death of Christians (Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9:1-2).
 - Paul called himself the worst of sinners, most likely for this reason (
 - God caused Paul to have a great vision of the heavenly realm that few others have seen (I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven-- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. (2 Cor. 12:2 ESV); So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. (2 Cor. 12:7 ESV)

- Paul wrote about how he had persecuted Christians, and how it was a terrible sin against God - I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Tim. 1:12-16 ESV)

Remedy 2 - Every experience of temptation will be used by God to sanctify the believer by God's hand of love.

- Paul wrote about how God used what Satan intended to harm him to cause him to become more humble - So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. (2 Cor. 12:7 ESV)
- God uses temptation as a school to bring believers into a great knowledge of the great evil of sin, the emptiness of rebelling against God, and the great need every human being has to know Jesus Christ as Savior from sin. God uses the experience of believers struggling with temptation to mold and shape them into stronger and better believers.

Remedy 3 – As long as you resist temptation you won't be hurt. Only yielding to sin will damage your soul.

Don't try to outmaneuver Satan. Just react against him, plain and simple. Hosea told Ephraim, one of the tribes of Israel, to say to their idols, "What have I to do with idols". (○ Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. (Hos. 14:8 ESV)) There's no style or strategy in that response, it's simply a rejection of worshipping idols. Paul referred to it simply as "fleeing" (No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Cor. 10:13-14 ESV).

Questions

1. *If there is nothing wrong with enduring temptation then should we go where we can be tempted a lot? Why or why not?*

2. *When does temptation harm your soul?*