



Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Reading Devotional

Scripture: Matthew 18

Title: From Temptations To Sins

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Summary of Chapter: Temptations are inevitable in this fallen world and humanity. Our Lord Jesus has taught us believers how to respond to temptations radically, so that these would not lead us to sin.

Key Verse(s) (NLT)

How does it speak to me?

Matthew 18:8-9

⁸ "So, if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand or one foot than to be thrown into eternal fire with both of your hands and feet. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

Jesus Himself uttered these words as the approach we need to adopt when we are faced with temptations, which can lead to sins if not nipped in the bud. Are we surprised at all by the strong words that Jesus used?

In my Christian walk, I have increasingly learnt to flee from the temptations of the world. I had to deal with the issues of craving for everything I saw and also the pride of personal achievements. I needed to be transformed from the inside out by the power of the Holy Spirit. I humbly chose to be grateful and content with whatever material possessions God has provided, and I would not actively pursue these at the expense of my spiritual health and also the welfare of my wife and 2 daughters. Or else, I would have backslid spiritually or have an unhappy marriage and dysfunctional family. Many have even asked me later why I retired from medical practice early when I turned 60 years of age, after I sensed God's leading to volunteer and serve in our church ministries for His glory.

As regards the craving for physical pleasure, I too learnt not to put myself in compromising situations. I would not venture into pornographic websites, as this was a temptation that could easily lead to sins. No one should say that he was immune. I remembered on one occasion some years ago, while I was reading the news online, I saw a titillating pop-up image on the side of my screen. Just at that moment, I felt the Holy Spirit nudging me not to click on it. And I did not. Why? God has consistently reminded me that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not only my Saviour, but also my Lord and Treasure. If I recounted how He has gone through a gruesome death to pay the price for my sins, how could I take this lightly and succumb to the temptation and sin? Instead, I would daily pray and immerse myself in His presence, experience His superior joy and also study to fill my mind with His Word and purposes to serve Him and the people within the church and without.

In summary, temptations are indeed real and we must deal with them radically and promptly before they lead us to sin.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Adult: Is there a specific temptation that you find difficult to resist? From today, how do you resolve to overcome it? Do you have a Grace group member/fathers' mentoring process member/women of Grace member that you can share with, pray together and be accountable to?

Youth: How are your dealings with pornography or boy-girl relationship issues? Do you like to chat with your youth leader or pastor about these? What factors would you consider when you look for an academic course or a job later?

Child: Are there any bad things you want to do or have done and you know you shouldn't? Temptations can be overcome. Pray R.U.N over your life. R-Rethink before you act, U-Uncover the struggle with an adult. and N-utralise it with positive thoughts/actions.

PRAYER

Praying Scripture: Our Heavenly Father, we thank You that Your Son Jesus came into the world as a man. He could overcome temptations and also did not sin. Help us by the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with our temptations radically and promptly, so that we do not sin against You, ourselves and other people. In Jesus' victorious name, we pray. Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer:	I/We thank you for _____ (e.g. delicious food we ate, places we went, prayer that was answered, etc)
Intercessory Prayer:	I/We want to pray for _____ (e.g. healing of sickness, family members, work or study, leaders, nation, etc)
Salvation Prayer:	I/We pray for the salvation of my/our unsaved loved ones _____ (add one name per day). In Jesus' Name I/we pray. Amen.