

Flint Hills Bible Church
Biblical Soul Care Sunday School
Part 2: Anatomy Of Sinful Temptation

I. Introduction

1. Temptations (incitement to do evil) are all around in a fallen and broken world. As you consider what we have learned about some of the sources of temptation in lesson 1, what are some circumstances where sinful temptations are likely to arise?

2. Is it a sin to be tempted toward sin? Why or why not?

Objectives:

We will examine what temptation to sin looks like in Scripture and learn from the examples of biblical characters.

II. Who Tempts Me?

James 1:13–15 (ESV) — 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **14** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

3. Who or what tempts us?

4. How does this begin to happen according to James?

5. What is the next step?

6. What is the final result of giving in to temptation?

7. If this is true, who or what is your greatest enemy as a Christian?

My own sinful passions are the culprit of most of my temptations. How did this happen? How can it be that I am my own worst enemy and greatest obstacle in faithful obedience and love for my God?

Romans 5:12–14 (ESV) — **12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Romans 7:8–11 (ESV) — **8** But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. **9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **10** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **11** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Romans 7:14–18 (ESV) — **14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. **15** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. **16** Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. **17** So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

Romans 7:21–24 (ESV) — **21** So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. **22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, **23** but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. **24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

8. What does the flesh do in these verses? List the acts of sinful flesh:

9. What do we learn about the capacity of our sinful flesh and God's word?

10. What is Paul's attitude toward his sinful nature?

11. In light of Paul's testimony of his sinful nature, how should we think about our own sinful flesh?

III. Biblical Illustrations

Now we will examine some of the biblical narratives about temptation and falling into sin. Take note of the patterns of thinking and of the desires at work in each of these stories. Consider what we can learn and what we observe in our own struggles with sin.

Adam and Eve

Genesis 3:1–7 (ESV) — **1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, **3** but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” **4** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

List the progression of Eve’s temptation (phrase by phrase) to sin beginning in verse 6:

12. First:

13. Second:

14. Third:

15. Fourth:

16. Imagine what she was thinking during this process. How do you think she rationalized her desires and actions at every step?

17. What was the result of Adam and Eve’s actions?

18. What can we learn from Adam and Eve’s temptation and sin?

Achan

Joshua 7:20–21 (ESV) — **20** And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21** when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200

shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

What similarities do you see between Achan’s temptation and Eve’s?

19. Where did Achan’s sin begin? How did it progress?

20. Did Achan believe he did anything wrong?

21. Consider the timing of his temptation to sin. What can we learn from his time of temptation?

22. What was the result of Achan’s actions?

The Foolish Youth

Proverbs 7:7–9 (ESV) — **7** and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, **8** passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house **9** in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness.

Proverbs 7:21–23 (ESV) — **21** With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. **22** All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast **23** till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.

23. Where did the young man’s sinful temptation begin?

24. What were the wrong steps he took leading up to his demise?

25. When do you think it became sin?

26. Thought question: Imagine that you tackled this young man as he started to follow the woman. What would his excuse be for his intended actions?

David’s Fall

2 Samuel 11:1–5 (ESV) — **1** In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah.

But David remained at Jerusalem. **2** It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. **3** And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" **4** So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. **5** And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

27. Where did David's temptation begin?

28. Consider the timing of his temptation. What can we learn from this?

29. How did his temptation progress?

30. What were the consequences of his sin?

Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:36–5:10 (ESV) — **36** Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, **37** sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. **1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, **2** and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." **5** When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. **6** The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. **7** After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." **9** But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

31. How did Ananias and Sapphira's temptation to sin begin?

32. Consider Peter's first question in verse three and his last question in verse 4. Who is responsible for the temptation that Ananias was presented with? What can we learn from this?

Thought questions:

33. What kind of insight to your particular desires do Satan and demonic forces have?
34. How might the enemy use this information to tempt us?
35. Consider a man who embezzled money from a business or organization. Is this man equally tempted to rob a bank, commit murder, or commit adultery? Could he be tempted to commit all of these acts?

Summary: We see that the sinfulness of our flesh accounts for the vast majority of our temptations. With such an enemy - how do we begin to resist temptation? Next week we will examine the weapons of our warfare, and learn how to use them to put to death the deeds of the flesh!