

My Friend Jesus Understands Me When I Am Tempted

Lesson 4

I. HOW DOES JESUS UNDERSTAND ME WHEN I AM TEMPTED?

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

A. Why do you think Jesus was really tempted to do these things at this time in His life?
Matthew 4:1-10

1. How were these temptations short cuts to what would eventually be accomplished.
2. It may be that here is the best point at which to note a grim fact about the works of the flesh. Without exception, every one of them is a perversion of something which is in itself good. Immorality, impurity, licentiousness are perversions of the sexual instinct which is in itself a lovely thing and part of love. Idolatry is a perversion of worship, and was begun as an aid to worship. Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine. Envy, jealousy, and strife are perversions of that noble ambition and desire to do well which can be a spur to greatness. Enmity and anger are a perversion of that righteous indignation without which the passion for goodness cannot exist. Dissension and the party spirit are a perversion of the devotion to principle which can produce the martyr. Drunkenness and carousing are the perversion of the happy joy of social fellowship and of the things which men can happily and legitimately enjoy. Nowhere is there better illustrated the power of evil to take beauty and to twist it into ugliness, to take the finest things and to make them an avenue for sin. The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil (*Flesh and Spirit* by William Barclay, page 39).

B. What is temptation?

1. Is it a sin to be tempted?
2. Is it a sin to think about sinning?
3. Have you ever been tempted to do anything you have never thought about doing?
4. Is it a sin to want to sin?
5. Have you ever been tempted to do anything you did not want to do?

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (James 1:13-15).

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28).

6. What sacrifices might one have to make to overcome temptation?

"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:29,30).

- C. How can I know whether I am thinking about sinning as Moses or Jesus did (being tempted) or whether I am already sinning?
1. Am I looking at all known choices and their consequences?
 2. Am I looking for truth or an excuse?
 3. Am I being honest with myself?

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom (Psalm 51:6).

Also do not take to heart everything people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
For many times, also, your own heart has known
That even you have cursed others (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22).

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23, 24).

II. HOW DO I MAKE GOOD DECISIONS DURING TEMPTATION?

A. Have I given myself permission to look at more than one choice and be confused?

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:24-27).

1. Did Moses think about making the right choice (obeying and honoring God and His will)?
2. Did Moses think about sinning (making the wrong choice)?
 - a. How long was it from the time that Moses "became of age", leaving his place as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, until he led the people of God out of Egypt? Acts 7:20-35

"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai" (Acts 7:23, 30).

- b. How enthusiastic was Moses, even after this period of time to obey God, face Pharaoh, and lead the Israelites out of Egypt? Exodus 3, 4
 3. What do you learn from Moses and his decision-making process?
- B. Evaluate these statements in helping people to deal with temptation:
 1. "What you need to do is just forget about this temptation, not think about it any more, and that will solve your problem."
 2. "Many people sin, not because they think about sinning, but because they do not think about sinning enough."
- C. Is this a candy decision or a car decision?

III. HOW CAN AN UNDERSTANDING FRIEND BE HELPFUL DURING TEMPTATION?

A. What should I expect from a true friend during temptation?

1. Condemnation that I should ever think of doing the wrong thing?
2. Telling me I cannot do what I am thinking about doing?
3. Agreement with whatever I wanted to do?
4. Detailed instructions on what to think and how to act?
5. Something else?

B. How can I be a friend like Jesus to someone who is experiencing temptation?

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

Conclusion: Thinking about the next class: *My Friend Jesus Understands Me When I Am Sad*.

A. Read *Good Grief*, by Granger E. Westburg and *Tear Soup*.

B. Be prepared not to enjoy or necessarily “feel good” preparing for or participating in this class.

1. How did Jesus learn obedience?

Though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

2. How did Jesus describe the process of following Him?

Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23, 24).

C. Think about a loss or losses you have had in your life and how you have or have not experienced the stages discussed in *Good Grief* and any insight you gained from *Tear Soup*.