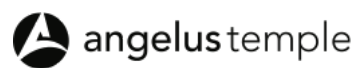


Overcoming Temptation

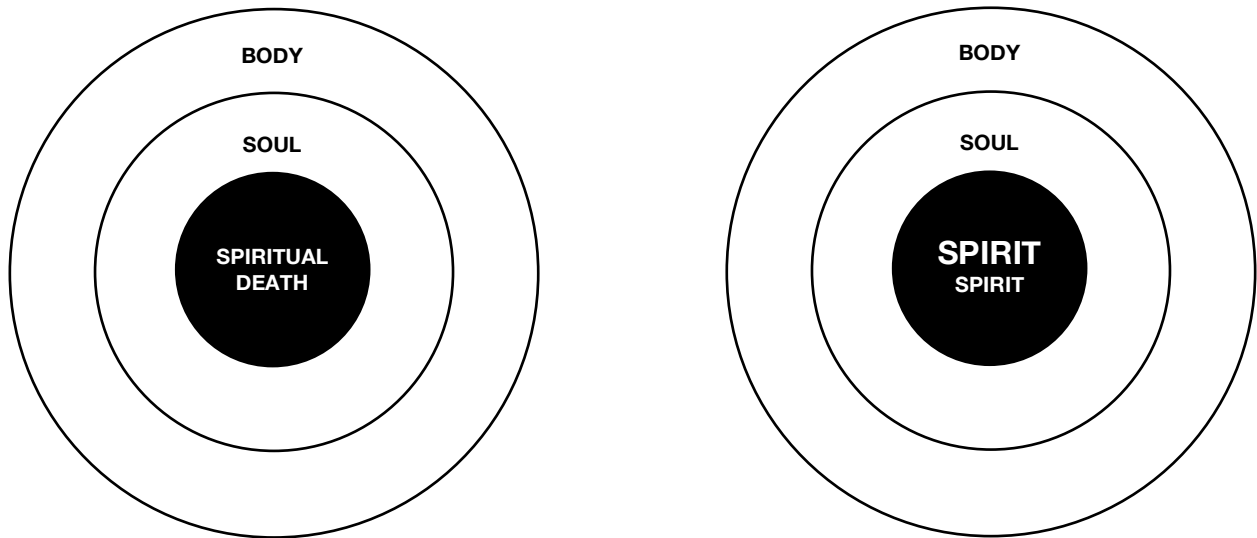


Name _____

Part One: How We Are Made

Key Verse: Ephesians 2:1-9

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.



Every Christian has two natures at work: the Spirit and the sinful nature. And we will "live by" one and "not gratify" the other at any point in our lives. Of example, Paul tells the Galatians that they should "live by the Spirit."

The Battle we fight is for the soul. The soul is made up our our mind, our will, and our emotions.

Three Enemies of the Soul

As believers, we have three enemies of the soul that we must be constantly on guard against; worldliness, the flesh, and Satan's forces.

1. Worldliness

In Jesus' parable of the soils, the third of the soils represents "worldliness" in the Bible. It implies that the world's values—social prestige, material pleasures, riches and possessions, and relationship co-dependence—become more real to us than spiritual realities. They suffocate spiritual progress in the same way that weeds suffocate grass. Careerism and overwork are two simple instances of worldliness. Worldliness can also be defined as a lack of priorities, in which God's causes and concerns are pushed to the margins of a Christian's time and attention.

2. The Flesh

"Flesh" in the Bible refers to the sin nature in the heart, which is still present in a redeemed believer. Our sin nature believes Satan's deception that if we obey God, we will be miserable, and that we must therefore save ourselves. That is the heart's deepest default mode. It results in two seemingly opposing impulses with the same goal and assumptions. The initial impulse leads us to either pride and self-righteousness OR "accusation," a feeling of self-loathing and inadequacy, leaving us vulnerable to either pride and self-righteousness OR "accusation," a feeling of self-loathing and inadequacy. The second drive pushes us to either reject God, religion, and morality, or to establish a spirituality and morality of our own.

3. Satan's forces

While we should not rule out direct Satanic attacks—ranging from genuine demon possession to injecting blasphemous, despairing thoughts—the vast bulk of Satan's techniques are designed to aggravate and enhance the attacks of the world and the body. 2 Cor 2:11 refers to "Satan's Devices," but not in the sense of demonic possession, but rather in the sense of Christians refusing to forgive one another, resulting in bitterness and damaged relationships.

Group Exercise:

At your table, give some examples of how you have seen worldliness, the flesh, and Satan's forces at work in the world around us.

Part Two: Tested and Tempted

Key Verse: James 1:2-5; 1:9-15

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

The Word for Trial and Tempted is the same greek word - (πειρασμόν, peirasmon)

A test is an outward circumstance or situation that comes your way.

A temptation is an inward desire trying to get us to do things contrary to the Will of God.

Occasion to sin comes in many forms but the cause of sin is from within.

Works of the Flesh - epithumia - “epic desire” The ultimate center, the most intense spot.

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Excerpt from “Galatians for You” by: Timothy Keller

“There are three words in verse 19 having to do with the works of the flesh in the area of sexuality: sexual immorality (porneia), which is sexual intercourse between unmarried people; impurity (akatharsia), ie: unnatural sexual practices and relationships; debauchery (aselgia), ie: uncontrolled sexuality.

There are two words in verse 20 having to do with the area of religion: idolatry (eidololatria) and witchcraft (pharmak eia). Because idolatry is paired with witchcraft here, it is not referring to the very broad, inclusive practice of making good things like career into a “god” (as it is in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5). Rather, Paul is referring to very specific occult and pagan religious practices. The first is providing an inadequate substitute for God, and the second is faking the work of the Spirit. Then, in verses 20-21, come eight words that describe how the flesh destroys relationships. Four of these are destructive attitudes: selfish ambition (eritheia), namely competitiveness, a self-seeking motive; envy (phthonoi), coveting, desiring what others have; jealousy (zhdlos), the zeal and energy that comes from a hungry ego; and hatred (echthrai), meaning hostility, an adversarial attitude. Four describe the results of these attitudes in relationships: discord (eris), being argumentative or seeking to pick fights; fits of rage (thumoi), outbursts of anger; dissensions (dichostaiai), divisions between people (which is what rage leads to); and factions (aireseis), permanent parties and warring groups. Finally, there are two words that refer to substance abuse: drunkenness and orgies. These two words are linked. Orgies are not “sex orgies” but “drinking orgies”. One of the works of the flesh is addiction to pleasure-creating substances and behavior. “

Group Exercise:

At you tables, discuss this idea of an epithemia or epic desire. How does this kind of desire begin to take over peoples lives?

Part Three: Satan’s Devices and God’s precious remedies.

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 2:9-11

9 For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. 10 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Excerpt from “Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” by: Thomas Brooks

First, You must know that every man cannot be excellent, yet every man may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door with a golden treasure behind it; yes, iron can do some things that gold cannot. Secondly, Remember, it is not hasty reading—but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that make them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee’s touching of the flower, which gathers honey—but her abiding for a time upon the flower, which draws out the sweet. It is not he who reads most—but he who meditates most, who will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest

Christian. Thirdly, Know that it is not the knowing, nor the talking, nor the reading man – but the doing man, that at last will be found the happiest man.

The First 3 Devices Satan uses against us and their remedies.

1. By presenting the bait and hiding the hook: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) we ought to keep at the greatest distance from sin and from playing with the bait.
 - 2) sin is but a bitter sweet
 - 3) sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses
 - 4) sin is very deceitful and bewitching

2. By painting sin with virtue's colors: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) sin is never the less vile by being so painted
 - 2) the more sin is so painted the more dangerous it is
 - 3) we ought to look on sin with that eye with which within a few hours we shall see it.
 - 4) sin cost the life-blood of the Lord Jesus

3. By the extenuating and lessening of sin: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) sin which men account small brings God's great wrath on men
 - 2) the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater
 - 3) it is sad to stand with God for a trifle
 - 4) often there is most danger in the smallest sins
 - 5) the saints have chosen to suffer greatly rather than commit the least sin
 - 6) the soul can never stand under the guilt and weight of sin when God sets it home upon the soul.
 - 7) there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction

Questions and Answers