

The Blueprint of Temptation

Genesis 3

OPENING: So last week we looked at Satan's three main kinds of attack, Possession, Obsession and Temptation. Today we are going to zoom in on Temptation... because this is the one attack we all face daily, and it's the front door for the other two attacks.

a. Temptation is not Sin

Hebrews 4:15 ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

Matthew 4:1 (NASB95)

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

b. Temptation cannot be prevented

Martin Luther, *You can't stop the birds from flying over your head but you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair.*

c. Temptation does not mean God is disappointed in you

God is not any more disappointed in you for being tempted than he was of Jesus when He was tempted.

d. Temptation does not mean you are unspiritual

Sometimes we get the idea that we must not be very mature spiritually because we are tempted, this is not the case at all!

e. Temptation does not equal failure

Someone said, "Well I thought it, I might as well say it!"
No! Temptation is NOT SIN!

CONTEXT: The passage we read this morning is set in the garden of Eden. God has made the first

1. The Atmosphere
2. The Attack
3. The Action

1. The Atmosphere

Genesis 3:1 (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'?"

Notice The TONE of the Question - *It's snarky and sneering* - "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" You can almost hear a subtle laugh.

So the idea is, he's not outright denying what God had said... but rather he's mocking what God said. He's saying - that was ridiculous.

That's how Satan works. He doesn't come to Eve and say, "God doesn't exist". He doesn't even begin by saying - "God is lying"... He comes with a sneer.

Before Satan tempts you to sin he will always attempt to control the emotional atmosphere.

This is one of the things that can make high school and college so difficult - the atmosphere can be very godless. It's NOT that it is inherently evil - but rather that truth is sneered at, it's mocked.

You see, most people don't lose their faith through argument, but rather through sneers.

Tim Keller said - *for every 1 argument I've gotten against the faith, I've gotten 99 sneers.*

EXAMPLE: In High School we learned that the – "Yo Mamma" cut downs lost their effect after a couple of years, so we changed our strategy. We would say things like, "Is that jersey a little tight on you or is it just me?"

EXAMPLE: If you come up to someone and say something like – "Are you feeling ok?" By the end of the day they are convinced they are dieing.

One of the main reasons I don't come out before the service is because I can get totally thrown off by what people say.

EXAMPLE: There is a guy here today in very poor health, he might have a heart attack in the middle of the service. But don't let it bother you.

From over 20 years of ministry - I have found that it is NEARLY impossible to reach a young person who has a mocking father. You want to damn you child's soul? Go home and mock and sneer about what is said at the church.

Simultaneously, one of the most powerful tools we have - is the ability to put our kids in an environment where God's Word is believed and proclaimed.

Satan begins with a sneer - it conveys the feeling that if you believe God you are a fool.

Genesis 3:2-3 (ESV)

² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

NOTE: God said you may “eat freely” of every tree of the garden – signifying generous abundance. Yet Eve left that out. It is so important that you deeply and regularly meditate on God’s goodness in your life.

Rehearsing the goodness of God in your life, focusing on it, is like a boxer training for the fight.

Eve’s words betray the fact that she was off balance emotionally.

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.’ ”

NOTE: Did you catch her addition? God said nothing about touching the tree... although I don’t know why she would want to... but she is editing the command slightly.... adding to the Word of God.

This is the of legalism. Helping God out.

ILLUSTRATION: Several years ago at my first church Miss Margaret was chewing out one of the young guys because he wore jeans to church. She was telling him it was a sin against God! I very politely said, “Now Miss Margaret - do you have a verse for that?” She said, “what on earth do you mean?” And I said, “well if it’s a sin God would have said something about it in His word don’t you think?” I’ll never forget what she said - **“well if He didn’t say anything about it He should have!”**

Do you see - it’s legalism and it’s dangerous! Don’t eat it and don’t touch it...It’s elevating yourself and YOUR morality above God’s.

Sneering at what God actually did say... **misquoting** something God didn’t say... the trap is set.

Not only the Emotional Atmosphere...

2. The Attack

Genesis 3:4–7 (ESV)

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

Now if there was any doubt before - it is clear now this creature is blatantly denying the trustworthiness of God. Not only does he say, “God is lying to you”.. he offers a **substitute truth**... he offers his word in place of God’s Word.

⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it **your eyes will be opened.**

Eve - you are like a new born puppy... and that’s cute... but honey you are blind. You don’t get it... but eat the fruit...

5b. your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Now this is a fascinating suggestion. Because there is an element of truth to it - they would have a measure of understanding that they did not have before... but while it is partially true it is a TOTAL LIE.

You see - God knows good and evil by virtue of His Omniscience.

- **God knows evil the way a Oncologist knows cancer.**
- **But Eve would know evil the way a cancer patient knows cancer.**

It would be INTERNAL, EXPERIENTIAL.

The essence of every temptation is a belief that God is holding out on you. That there is something out there that would be good, if God would only let you have it.

- That's why people commit adultery - they believe God can't meet their needs in their marriage.
- That's why people don't give - they believe God is trying to get their stuff.

ILLUSTRATION: Al Pacino's played John Milton a human personification of Satan in the 1997 movie, "The Devil's Advocate". *He said at one point, "Let me give you a little inside information about God. He is a prankster. Think about it. He gives man instincts. He gives you this extraordinary gift, and then what does He do? I swear for His own amusement, his own private, cosmic gag reel, He sets the rules in opposition. It's the goof of all time. Look but don't touch. Touch, but don't taste. Taste, don't swallow.*

That's basis of satanic thought. God is keeping something from you. You can't trust Him.

EVERY TEMPTATION - has at it's root that God is not to be trusted.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember when my kids were younger - there would be times when I would command them to do something and they would come back with something like, "Dad, I would be perfectly happy to do what you suggest if you would simply explain to me why this would benefit me or humanity in general in some way." But do you see what's happening - if they only respond positively when they understand - they aren't obeying me, or even trusting me, they simply agree with me.

BIGGEST LESSON AS A PARENT - THEY DON'T HAVE TO AGREE, THEY DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND... THEY HAVE TO LEARN TO OBEY.

By the way - all progress in becoming like Christ happens as we learn what God actually says and trust him as God.

3. The Action

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.

Consider for a moment the nature of the fruit - what was it about the fruit that made it so bad? Did it have sin juice inside it?

No - you see it wasn't so much the fruit it was **what eating the fruit stood for**. It was a declaration that God was not to be trusted - that if I'm going to have what I need I have to be God for myself.

That's why we face this fruit every day of our life.

6b. and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Now - Adam's decision to eat was peculiar. **1 Timothy 2:14** tells us that Eve was deceived, she foolishly believed a lie. But it seems to indicate that Adam's sin was **willful it was an act of treason**.. he was willfully joining a rebellion against the Creator.

Throughout time Adam would be held **as the most responsible party** for all that would follow.

Romans 5:12 - 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—

Adam as the Federal head of his home, as the King of Eden - declared war against God in his decision. There is a lot of debate about the difference between the role of the man and the role of the woman today... but let this passage tell you...these two are equal, but very different.

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.

This is the first man made religion - an attempt to cover our sin and shame. Poor pitiful attempt it is. Covering their shame with something man made.

Genesis 3:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

Notice that man by nature runs from God, we HIDE... God by nature is SEEKING... PURSUING... EVEN when we have committed cosmic treason. God seeks us.

Genesis 3:10–11 (ESV)

¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Adam says, "I'm so glad you asked... because you see..."

Genesis 3:12 (ESV)

¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

It's her fault - kill her, send her to hell - she totally deserves it. Blame shifting 101. Eve learns quick...

Genesis 3:13 (ESV)

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So there we have the humanist manifesto - the Universe is really all about ME and the problems are all caused by somebody else.

Adam is cursed, Eve is cursed, the serpent is cursed, the ground is cursed - all creation suffers and as Paul says GRONES under the curse. Adam and Eve are driven out of Eden and a great Angel stands guard with a flaming sword lest they return.

But even in the midst of the CURSE we see GOSPEL -

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he** shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise **his** heel."

A promise that a single male descendant of Eve will one day settle the score and destroy Satan. Do you see - God preached the first Gospel.

Then there is such a peculiar verse -

Genesis 3:20–21 (ESV)

²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

After all of that - Adam seems to look at his wife and say, "Oh yes - you need a name". He gives her the name Eve because she would be a mother. Eve means "LIVING".

God has promised that a Son would be born that would destroy Satan... Do you see that even here **humanity leans with curiosity toward the little town of Bethlehem**... they have hope in the cry of a Baby.

That baby would set things right - he would be called, "the Second Adam". For you see

Romans 5:17 (ESV)

17 ...if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

The Second Adam (Jesus) was unlike the first - Adam said, "Not God's will but my will be done". Jesus said, "Not my will, but thy will be done".

It was no accident that at the last supper Jesus said to His disciples, "take and eat". Because you see through his work - "take and eat" are no longer verbs of death - but now they are verbs of life.

21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

So if there was any doubt about what was to come through the promised male descendant of Eve - we see the first sacrifice. God kills an animal and covers the shame of man.

Countless other animals would die over the millennia as substitute for man's sin - until the Prophet John declares, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world".