

## The Case of Abandoned Temptation (2 Chronicles 32:31)

**Introduction:** *Thinking about temptation*

Many Christians don't give temptation the consideration it deserves and indeed requires.

### 1. The case of abandonment and temptation

"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16, see Eph 5:18, Matt 26:41). "If the grace of God should leave the best Christian, there is enough of sin in his heart to make him the worst of transgressors. ... Like the moon, we borrow our light; bright as we are when grace shines on us, we are darkness itself when the Sun of Righteousness withdraws himself. Therefore let us cry to God never to leave us. 'Lord, take not thy Holy Spirit from us!'" (C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening*, June 21, evening).

### 2. The loving, wise, and good purposes of God

"Christ sometimes strengthens the soul [under temptation like he did] with Joseph (Gen 39:9). ... Christ sometimes takes away the temptation itself when it grows so strong and violent that the poor soul does not know what to do (2Pe 2:9) ... Christ sometimes gives wisdom to make a right, holy, and spiritual use of all temptations [as] James tells us to do [just as] Peter tells us that sometimes it is necessary to be left in many temptations (James 1:2, 1Pe 1:6). Christ supports the soul [whenever it is] overcome by temptations, with mercy and pardon so that it will not sink utterly under the burden" (John Owen, *Communion with God*, p. 111-112).

"The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled;<sup>(c)</sup> and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.<sup>(u)</sup>"  
*(i) 2Chron. 32:25,26,31; 2Sam. 24:1 (u) 2Cor. 12:7-9; Ps. ch. 73; 77:1-12; Mk. 14:66-72 with John 21:15-17.*" (WCF 5.5)

Jesus uses trials and afflictions and even temptations in a holy way, to cause us to abide in him more and more, to seek help from him, to find grace from him. The Lord sometimes puts us on our backs that we might learn to look up to him. In fact, the very same temptations that cause others to stumble are used by the Lord to help us depend more and more upon Jesus. In the winter of our spiritual desertion, the weeds of our sins are killed back and mortified. Peter was in a healthier condition when he was weeping bitterly at the end of his betrayal than he was when, in the Upper Room, he had confidently promised his undying and unshakeable loyalty to the Lord (Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 13).

### Encouragements in times of desertion and temptation

1. *Salvation is by grace, entirely the gift of God to the undeserving.*
2. *Faith tried is faith tested and approved (Rom 16:10).*
3. *The Lord will not cast us off forever (Isa 54:7, Ps 13, 77:7-8)*
4. *Our sinfulness doesn't nullify our usefulness and fruitfulness*
5. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2Cor 12:8-10).

## The Test of Purity (Genesis 39)

**Introduction:** *A challenging contemporary test*

### The temptation of immorality

Derek Kidner's five steps of seduction from Proverbs 7:

1. *Physical seduction:* She's dressed like a harlot, takes hold of him and kisses him.
2. *Convenient invitation:* A meal that must be eaten today.
3. *Flattery:* He's just the one she's been looking for.
4. *Sensuous appeal:* She has her bed spread with perfumes, etc.
5. *Reassurance:* Her husband won't be home for a long time.

### Biblical resources to pass the test of purity

**1. Fear God:** *The source of all victory (v. 2, 3, 9, 21, 23, Gen 28:15, Mt 28:20, Acts 7:9)* "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight" (Psa 51:4). "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!" (Psa 119:11). "Nothing is more powerful to [resist] temptation than the fear of God" (Calvin). "The essence of chastity is not the suppression of lust, but the total orientation of one's life towards a goal. Without such a goal, chastity is bound to become ridiculous" (Bonhoeffer).

**2. Faith:** *Telling ourselves what we know is true (v. 8-9)*

Faith looks past the appeal to see the inevitable consequence of the foolish choice. We sin in part because we forget or refuse to remember what we know. "As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life" (Pro 7:23). "The whole art of Christian living is knowing how to talk to yourself" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

**3. Fright:** *Avoiding occasions for sin and removing sources of temptation (v. 10)*

It is much, much easier to avoid sexual sin and temptation that it is to resist it. It is far easier to steer clear of it than to flee it in the heat of the moment. She spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her "*or to be with her*" (verse 10). "Remove your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house" (Pro 5:8). "Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths" (Pro 7:25). "Satan often tempts me to go as near to temptations as possible without committing the sin" (M'Cheyne).

**4. Flight:** *A good pair of legs and the King's highway! (v. 13)*

"*Flee* sexual immorality" (1Co 6:18). "*Flee* also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2Ti 2:22)

**Conclusion:** *The Lord was with him!*

A true Christian is someone who consciously lives and moves and has his being in God. How vastly different must be the life of one who walks with God and has fellowship with him. Our first petition is, "Hallowed be your name," and our chief desire and thought is for the holiness and glory of God.

You can't help but think of Jesus as we read this, the beloved son who leaves his father and takes the form of a bondservant. As he lives as a servant, he grows in favor with God and man. And then he's tempted. But he doesn't give in at any point. But through envy and rage, he's falsely accused and publicly maligned. And he's condemned, although innocent. And he's sent to suffer in the darkness. But God doesn't leave him there. He's raised up high for all to see. And before him, every knee will bow. The Lord was with him, and will be with us always (Matt 28:20).

<b>Tests of the Godly Young</b> The Test of Home The Test of Injustice <b>The Test of Purity</b> The Test of Obscurity The Test of Popularity The Test of Power The Test of Justice The Test of Grace Joseph as a Picture of Christ
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