

Temptation

Lesson Text: Genesis 3:1-6 & 1 John 2:15

INTRODUCTION:

A. **Genesis 3:1-6** - "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

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

(3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

(4) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

(5) For God knows that in the day 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, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

1. We have just read from the pages of recorded Bible history that account of:

- a. The world's first temptation.
- b. The world's first deception.
- c. The world's first two sins.

2. Specifically we have read about how Satan tempts us to sin;

- a. Almost 4100 years later the apostle John would write in **1 John 2:15** - "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world."

- b. The three avenues through which Satan tempted Eve and Adam, he continues to parade before us today.

1. "The lust of the flesh" - Eve "saw that the tree was good for food."

2. "The lust of the eyes" - "It was pleasant to the eyes" of Eve.

3. "The pride of life" - Even saw it as "A tree desirable to make one wise."

B. Picture with me now a man entering the Texas State penitentiary.

1. The iron gates forcefully close behind him as he walks down the long corridor.

2. There are some things about him I would like for you to think about.

- a. He is in for twenty years for attempted rape.
- b. The man is a Christian . . . a preacher . . . a graduate of a Christian college.
- c. After his college days, he had served as the minister of two congregations . . . both of them were very successful when evaluated by human terms.
- d. He had demonstrated a fantastic ability in the field of evangelism.
- e. He was considered to be a great teacher.

3. Several men had testified at his trial.
 - a. They testified that he has changed their lives by motivating them toward a deeper commitment in discipleship.
 - b. Others spoke of being led to Christ by him. They spoke of his apparent sincerity.
 - c. They said that, *as he preached one could sense the power and presence of God.*
4. This man had left his print upon:
 - a. His family.
 - b. The congregation.
 - c. The community.
 - d. All those whose lives he had touched.
5. And now he is in a Texas penitentiary. In one dark moment of temptation fell into the abyss of sin.
 - a. He ruined his reputation.
 - b. He destroyed his ministry.
 - c. He hurt the church.
 - d. He left an ugly stain upon the testimony of Jesus Christ.
6. Many questions are left.
 - a. What is it . . . what happens in a person's life that would cause him to do such a thing?
 - b. What do you suppose went through his mind?
 - c. What is it that causes one to pay such a high price for a moment of sin's pleasure?
 - d. What is it that leads a person to such destruction?
- C. As we consider these questions, we realize we are not just asking about this preacher, but about ourselves.
 1. As Christian people temptation dogs us at every turn. Satan never gives up.
 2. While many of our sins may not be as open to the public as this preacher who fell, they are just as wrong and condemning to our souls.. Satan never quits
 3. Have you ever said "I know this is wrong . . . I know this is a sin, but I want it anyway?" So, we do it?
- D. What is it that brings us to such a decision. In Genesis 3:1-6 we have a case study in Temptation.
 1. We need to watch the way Satan comes to Eve.
 2. We recognize that while this story comes to us out of the ancient past . . .
 - a. It is as up-to-date as the temptation that you may be facing today.
 - b. It is as up-to-date as the temptation you faced last night . . . or last week.
 1. In your office.
 2. At your exercise gym.
 3. At school.
 4. On a date.
 5. At a friend's house.
 6. At home.

3. You see . . . the scene . . . the names . . . and the places have changed, but the methodology has not.
 - a. Satan has used . . . and continues to use . . . this time tested pattern.
 - b. Why should he give it up when it is so successful.
 - c. Friends, since he will not give it up, we need to learn about Satan and how he works in our lives so we can defeat him and the temptations he places before us.

WHEN SATAN COMES, HE DISGUISES HIS PERSON

- A. One of the first things we recognize from Genesis 3 is that when Satan comes, he comes to us in a disguise.
 1. Moses, the author of the Book of genesis, tells us that the serpent is more crafty, more cunning than the other animals.
 - a. The King James translation renders it as subtle.
 - b. The word could be translated smoothness.
 - c. Moses is saying that when the serpent came to Eve, he didn't come in ugliness.
 2. We need to remember that the temptations came before the curse, before the serpent is destined to crawl on the ground.
 - a. There are no warning rattlers here that the serpent is about to strike.
 - b. There is no proud standing king cobra with it hood widened.
 - c. There is no coiled position warning of an impending strike.
 - d. Satan does not come with:
 1. The roar of a lion.
 2. Or the wail of a siren.
 3. Nor does he come waving a red flag warning us of his danger in our lives.
- B. Satan slides into our lives.
 1. He comes easing in as a comfortable concerned companion.
 2. He wants what he offers (sin) to feel good.
 3. He wants to us to feel that there is nothing about him that we should dread or fear.
- C. The New Testament tells us that he often comes:
 1. As an angel of light.
 2. As a minister of righteousness.
 3. Resembling God.
- D. One thing we can always count on is that when Satan comes, he will come disguised.
 1. Perhaps he will come disguised as a beautiful blue-eyed blond or brunette.
 2. Perhaps he will come disguised as a new business opportunity.
 3. Perhaps he will come disguised as a bottle or can of some alcoholic beverage.
 4. Perhaps he will come disguised as a new way of feeling good, the end desire of some drug.
 5. Perhaps he will come disguised in a book . . . magazine . . . video . . . or movie.
- E. The problem is that:
 1. We won't know who he is.

2. We won't know what his intentions are.
 3. We won't know until he has us by the throat.
- F. Remember this: SATAN COMES IN A DISGUISE.

WHEN SATAN COMES, HE DISGUISES HIS PURPOSE

- A. Not only is Satan disguised in his person, but he is also disguised in his purpose.
1. When he came to Eve:
 - a. He did not say, "I have come to tempt you."
 - b. He did not say, "I have come to kill you."
 - c. He did not say, "I have come to introduce sin and death into the world through you."
 - d. He did not say, "I have come to inject pain and suffering into the world through you."
 - d. He did not say, "I have come to cause you to hurt the heart of God."
 - e. He did not say, "I have come to take all that is presently good and wonderful in your life away from you."
 - f. He did not say, "I have come to deceive you, and trick you, and destroy you."
- B. He makes it appear that he came to have a religious discussion about God and a certain tree.
1. Satan comes to Eve wanting to discuss theology (The study of the nature of God and religious truth). He doesn't want to talk about sin.
 2. He begins by saying, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"
 - a. Nothing wrong with that is there?
 - b. It sounds innocent enough.
 - c. It sounds as if a stranger is merely asking a question.
 - d. It sounds like Satan is interested in religion too.
 - e. He seems to be saying, "I just want to be sure of the exegesis (critical explanation or interpretation) here. I just want see if I understand what God said."
 3. Friends, Satan is a "religious" devil.
 - a. He doesn't come kicking down the door of life and soul saying, "Pardon me sir, pardon me madam, give me half an hour of your life and I'll damn your soul . . . destroy you for eternity."
 - b. No, he doesn't approach us like that.
 1. All he wants to do is want to talk about theology for a while.
 2. All he wants to do is talk about religion for a while.
- C. is it possible to discuss religion to our own peril? The answer is yes.
1. This very thing happened to our brethren in Rome.
 - a. They were big on the subject of grace.
 - b. They were strong on the subject of Christian liberty.
 - c. No doubt, they could debate those two subjects with anyone . . . and win.
 2. Every man or woman who has turned liberty into license has done it on a theological basis.
 - a. Many have come to the point that they reason like this:
 1. Even when we sin more, God's grace abound more and more and more.

2. Therefore the more we sin the more God forgives.
3. So we have reached the conclusion that we need to sin more so that we can experience God's grace more.
- b. Satan had lured the brethren at Rome into believing that they could do anything they wanted . . . anytime they wanted . . . with anyone they wanted . . . no restrictions . . . no hang ups . . . they were free . . . they knew about God's grace.
3. How did the apostle Paul respond to their erroneous reasoning?
 - a. **Romans 6:1-2** - "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? "
 - b. **Romans 6:14-23** - "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
 - (15) What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!
 - (16) Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?
 - (17) But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.
 - (18) And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
 - (19) I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.
 - (20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.
 - (21) What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.
 - (22) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.
 - (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. "
 - c. In essence, Paul is saying:
 1. God forbid that we swallow that kind of theology.
 2. We died to sin so how can we live in it any longer.
 3. We have crucified the old man of sin.
 4. We buried him in the act of New Testament baptism.
 5. Now we have become instruments of God, slaves to righteousness, living sacrifices, etc.
 - d. I commend the 6th and 12th chapters of Romans to you for further reading and study.
- D. Satan would love to discuss theology with you.
 1. He would love to convince you that evolution is true and creation is false.
 2. He would love to convince you that the Bible has contradictions, therefore is unreliable.

3. He would love to convince you any religion and any church would be pleasing to God.
 4. He would love to convince you to loosen up and accept homosexuality as an acceptable alternate life-style.
 5. He would love to convince you that the Bible is not to be taken literally. Changes are in order.
 6. He would love to convince you that once you become a Christian there is absolutely nothing that you can ever do to be lost again.
 7. He would love to convince you to neglect God's way and worship him any way you please.
 8. He would love to convince you to base your religion upon feelings rather than upon Scripture.
 9. He would love to convince you that there is no life after death, just enjoyment here.
- E. Another thing Satan does in Genesis 3 in this temptation discussion is to focus Eve's attention on a single tree in the center of the garden . . . The tree of knowledge of good and evil.
1. Can't you just hear Satan saying:
 - a. "God wouldn't do that."
 - b. "God wouldn't restrict you so."
 - c. "I mean what's one tree."
 - d. "Everybody knows one tree is just as good as another."
 2. We need to remember three important things.
 - a. Satan comes in disguise.
 - b. He conceals who he is.
 - c. He conceals what he is trying to do.

SATAN ATTACKS GOD

A. SATAN ATTACKS GOD BY ATTACKING GOD'S WORD.

1. God had said, "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, you shall not eat, nor shall you touch it, lest you die" (**Genesis 6:3**)
2. Notice Satan's attack what God had said.
 - a. Genesis 6:4 - "Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not die."
 - b. Satan was contradicting what God had told Adam and Eve.
 - c. The battle was on . . . The words of God or the words of Satan.
3. Can you imagine the rationale Satan may have put forth.
 - a. "No, you're kidding . . . Surely die?"
 - b. "You don't really believe that, do you? . . ."
 - c. "God is just trying to get your attention . . ."
 - d. "Surely die? . . . Come now, you're much too sophisticated for that . . ."
 - e. "Look around you, God is so good . . . He loves you so much . . ."
 - f. "He's good enough to give you this marvelous garden with all these trees and beautiful fruit"

- g. "He is so excited about you . . . "
- h. "Surely die? . . . No, God certainly didn't mean that."
- 4. Friends, oh how easy it is to fall into this trap.
 - a. We believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, but on ONE particular issue, an issue that is just between God and you, we begin to question . . we begin to have doubts..
 - b. For example:
 - 1. How do we feel about "those who live after the flesh shall die?"
 - 2. Do we believe, "Seek first the kingdom of God?"
 - 3. How do we feel about "fornicators and adulterers, God will judge?"
 - 4. How do we feel about "no drunkard shall inherit eternal life?"
- 5. Does God mean it when he says:
 - a. **1 John 2:15** - "Do not love the world or the things in the world . . . "
 - b. **1 John 4:20** - "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"
 - c. **Matthew 18:23-24** - "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
 - d. **Acts 2:38** - ". . . Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ."
 - e. **Ephesians 4:** - "There is one body . . ." And in Ephesians 1:22-23 says ". . . To the church which is His body . . ."
 - f. **1 Corinthians 16:2** - "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper . . ."
- 6. Does God really mean these things? Certainly He does, just as much as he meant "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" **Genesis 2:16-17**
- 7. Brethren, it is easy to apply Scripture to others but very difficult to apply it to ourselves and our situation while completely ignoring others.
- 8. Satan attacks God by attacking God's Word.

B. SATAN ATTACKS GOD BY ATTACKING GOD'S CHARACTER.

- 1. **Genesis 3:5** - "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
- 2. In this verse Satan is attacking God's character by attacking God's goodness.
 - a. "God just wants you to submit . . . to keep you on a leash."
 - b. "God doesn't want you to be free and to experience the abundant good life."
 - c. "He knows that when you eat of that fruit tree you'll experience things you can't experience any other way."
 - d. God has an ulterior motive in all this . . . He has a hidden agenda . . . an evil motive."

- e. "Don't allow Him to keep you under His thumb."
- f. God just doesn't want you to be as smart as He is."
- 3. Friends, once the well is poisoned, all the water is ruined . . . All of it!
- 4. If Satan can get us to doubt God's goodness in any one are, he is already on the way to winning the battle.
- 5. EXAMPLE: One of the most beautiful confessions of love and faith in the Bible is Ruth's statement to Naomi as recorded in **Ruth 1:16** - "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God."
 - a. What a beautiful vow Ruth made to her mother-in-law, Naomi.
 - b. But suppose someone came to Naomi and said, "Naomi, listen"
 - 1. Ruth is a gold digger.
 - 2. She's a manipulator.
 - 3. What Ruth really wants to do is to go to Israel and marry a wealthy Jew.
 - 4. Naomi, she knows you are her passport to Palestine and she will say, promise, or do anything for you to take her there.
 - 5. She's just using you, can't you see that?"
 - c. If those things had been said and if Naomi had believed them,:
 - 1. Every good thing that Ruth ever did or tried to do would be suspect.
 - 2. Every kind word Ruth spoke would be rejected or questioned.
- 6. Satan wants us to come to the point where we question and doubt even the purest of motives.
 - a. How can he do that? **Genesis 3:6** - "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."
 - 1. "Saw that the tree was good for food."
 - 2. Saw that "it was pleasant to the eyes."
 - 3. Saw that it was "desirable to make one wise."
 - b. She took some of the fruit and ate it.
- 7. Sin becomes desirable to us for two reasons:
 - a. Because we listen to the lie of Satan.
 - b. Because of lust, our own evil desires take control.
- 8. When we question:
 - a. God's Word.
 - b. God's character.
 - c. God's goodness.
 - d. God's motive.
 - 1. The suddenly our lust comes alive and lures us into what is evil, if it is not controlled.
 - 2. You see, what was once out of bounds . . . off limits . . . becomes the one thing we desire more than anything in the world at that moment in time.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Satan's methodology is the same today as it was in Genesis 3.
1. Notice the progression:
 - a. She considered . . . that is, she thought about it.
 - b. She looked at it.
 - c. She handled it.
 - d. She partook of it.
 - e. She shared it with someone else.
 2. Friends, this is the same progression that put a gospel preacher in a Texas penitentiary.
 3. Sin is the transgression of God's law . . . it always is.
 - a. God is serious about sin because he is serious about us.
 - b. Sin separates the soul from God. **Isaiah 59:2** - ". . . Your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."
 4. When Satan comes to tempt us, he never comes dragging the chains that will bind us or the fire of passion that will consume us.
 - a. If Satan had come to Eve that day in the garden, and said "look, sign this paper and be done with God forever," she would have never signed.
 - b. He comes with a crown that will enoble us. He comes offering:

1. Pleasure	5. Popularity
2. Expansiveness	6. Power
3. Experience	7. Freedom
4. Money	8. Enjoyment
 - c. He never comes speaking of consequences. In fact, he never really says there are any consequences at all. He wants you to just dwell on the moment . . . not on the future.
- B. I hope that this study has helped us to become aware of Satan and the devices he uses to destroy you, your family, and your friends.
- C. We have observed that:
1. When Satan comes, he disguises his person.
 2. When Satan comes, he disguises his purpose.
 3. Satan attacks God by attacking God's Word.
 4. Satan attacks God by attacking God's character.
- D. Friends, God is willing to forgive us for all our sins and make us his children. Are you interested?
1. **Luke 13:3** - ". . . Unless you repent you will all likewise perish."
 2. **Matthew 10:32** - "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."
 3. **Acts 2:38** - ". . . Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

4. **Galatians 3:26-27** - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 5. **1 John 1:7** - "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."
- E. God's Plan for Man's Salvation.