

Overcoming Sexual Temptation and Sin
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James 1:12-18

I. Introduction

- A. How would you describe the dynamics of sexual temptation?

- B. Everyone faces temptation – nobody is exempt!

II. Consider James 1:12-18.

James tells us of God's sovereign working in our lives (1:2ff; 4:13ff) and the need to address our own heart issues (1:13ff; 3:1-12; 4:1-4).

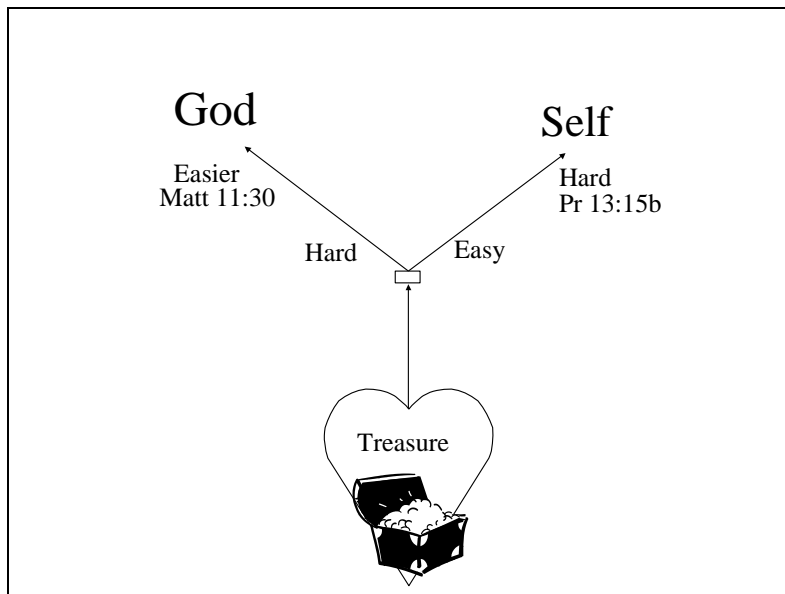
- A. Vs 12 – Eternal reward for enduring.
- B. V 13 – “tempted” – refers to sinful temptation.
- C. Vs 14 – temptation to sin is not from exterior but interior.
 - 1. “Drawn away” – our lust makes the lure attractive.
 - 2. “Enticed” – leaves caution to wind to go after the bait.
 - 3. “Lust” refers to strong desires or cravings that can be either good or bad.
- D. Vs 15 – When one has an illicit affair with lust/sinful thoughts, it will lead to sin.
 - 1. There is a sense in which sin results in death for a believer.
 - 2. In 1 Timothy 5:6 a believing widow who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.
- E. Vs 16 – Do not err! Do not be deceived!
- F. Vs 17 – God is the perfect good gift giver always giving good gifts!
- G. Vs 18 – God's Sovereign Will!

III. Consider a preliminary structure that might be necessary.

Consider an immediate “battle” plan.

- A. Probe: What are the expressions/Sinful behaviors/habits? How long? Who else may be involved? What accountability is in life (parents, church, spouse)? What relationship problems have been affected? How? What deceptions has he/she practiced? Where has he/she been losing the battle to do right? At temptation stage? At outer behavior? At habit/life dominating stage? (Follow good intensive/extensive data gathering)
- B. Set some structure: Pamphlet – “What To Do When You Know That You’re Hooked” by Jay Adams contains a helpful chart to deal with any habit.
 - 1. Example - Throw away all magazines, videos, or other sexually oriented material. Unplug computer. Remove the computer system.
 - 2. Put structure in place to make it difficult to sin such as password the computer or use a monitoring program such as Covenant Eyes, Eye Promise, Hacker Wacker, BSafe Online. (This type of software removes anonymity by periodically reporting all online activity to specified e-mail addresses. Most even report if the software is removed. These programs do not filter as much as simply report activity.)

IV. Consider the need to see the bigger picture.



V. Consider some causes of failure in temptation found in the passage.

Consider a “longer range” plan. How does this person need to grow in Christ-likeness?

A. Failure to see the danger ahead! Vs 13-16 - Failure to understand or grasp the significance of the progression of sin from the heart to behavior!

1. Matt 15:19 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”
2. “Temptation always carries with it some bait that appeals to our natural desires. The bait not only distracts us, but it also hides the fact that yielding to the desire will eventually bring sorrow and punishment. It is the bait that is the exciting thing. The bait keeps us from seeing the consequences of sin.” Warren Wiersbe, Be Mature: Growing Up in Christ (Book of James).
3. The circle of pleasure vs the circle of consequences – This concept is the lie of Satan. Gen 3

4. Assignment: List potential dangers and end results of giving in to sexual temptations. “If I cross the line”

5. A more subtle danger is the movement away from biblical love to selfish lust! (From giving to getting!)

B. Failure to see God's goodness! – vs 17

1. Need to cultivate gratitude and praise to God.
2. Make a list of 150 ways in which God has been good to you.
3. Make a list of and review the character of God. (List time you meditated on each)
4. Memorize: James 1:2-5 and/or Romans 5:3,4 (How does a Good God use pressured situations?)
5. 1 Corinthians 10:13
6. At the heart of sexual sin is discontentment!

C. Failure to remember your new birth! – vs 18

1. Do not forget what should be obvious is not always so obvious.
 - a. God desires that the believer bring Him glory – 2 Cor 5:9; 1 Cor 10:31
 - b. Believers bring God glory by reflecting Christ – Rom 8:29
 - c. God knows no one is sinlessly perfect but He does expect every believer to be growing – 2 Pet 3:18; Col 3
 - d. Every response to temptation is a response of worship.
 - e. Heb 12:2 – focus on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith! Life is to be lived for God and His Glory.

D. Consider a plan to encourage biblical growth in heart issues!

1. Confess sin when it begins in heart - 1 John 1:9. (Don't blame circumstances – they may have made it easier but you choose!)
2. Since it's a battle of the heart – guard your heart/mind – Pr 4:23.
3. Philippians 4:8

4. Possible assignment: Write out the dangers of making soft choices!
Study, memorize, meditate
5. Be prepared to apply principle of radical amputation – Matthew 5:28ff.
6. Flee where necessary!
7. Romans 13:14 –make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts.
8. Build consistent accountability with godly friends.

E. Steps in Helping Individuals Gain Moral Freedom:

1. Help the individual recognize, accept and acknowledge his sin
2. Repent and keep repenting
3. Confess your sin to God and cry out for forgiveness
4. Confess your sin to appropriate people and seek forgiveness (Mt 5:23-24;
1 John 1:8-9; Prov 28:13)
5. Perform “radical amputation,” removing from your life what draws you into
sin (Mt 5:29-30; Heb 12:1)
6. Cultivate a heart for God and godliness

Some Recommended Resources:

Adams, Jay, *What Do You Do When You Know That You're Hooked?*

Biblical Principles of Love, Sex & Dating. Lafayette, IN: Faith Baptist Church.

Two versions - high school or adult. Each version also has a leader guide available.

Bruce, Ruth Ann. When Homosexuality Invades the Family.

Cleveland, Mike. Pure Freedom (Also Mentor's Guide)

Cleveland, Mike. The Way of Purity: Enjoy Lasting Freedom in Christ (Setting Captives Free)

Dallas, Joe. When Homosexuality Hits Home: What to Do When a Loved One Says They're Gay.

Daniels, Robert. The War Within: Gaining Victory in the Battle for Sexual Purity.

Dutton, Mark. “Helping Counselors Understand Sexual Sin” CD Faith Baptist Resources

Gallagher, Steve (2000). At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry. Pure Life Ministries (also has workbook)

Gallagher, Steve. The Walk of Repentance. Dry Ridge, KY: Pure Life Ministries.

Harris, Joshua. Sex Is Not the Problem, Lust Is (Not Even a Hint). (wrkbks for men & women)

“Journal of Biblical Counseling.” Various Articles (See indexes)

Keeter, Tim (counseling@gracechurchhuntsville.org) “Disciplines & Tools For The Internet” (NANC 2004)

Knable, Joseph. Sex and the Single Guy: Winning Your Battle for Purity.

Powlison, David, *Pornography: Slaying the Dragon*.

Patten, Randy “Preventing Moral Failures.” Biblical Cslg Conf, Track 2. Lafayette, IN: Faith Baptist Church.

Smith, Robert. “Biblical Principles of Sex.’ Lafayette, IN: Faith Baptist Church.

Street, John “Counseling Those Enslaved by Lust.” NANC 1994.

Street, John “Helping Men Overcome by Life Dominating Lust.” NANC 1995.

Street, John, *Purifying the Heart of Sexual Idolatry*. D. Min Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2002.

Welch, Edward. Homosexuality: Speaking the Truth in Love.