

“GOD CAN!” (Part 5)
“... Strengthen the Tempted”

INTRO: Our God has unlimited and unrivaled power. Nothing is too hard for Him. With God all things are possible. In so many practical ways our humanity and its needs intersects God’s ability. Where is God able?

Reviewing: Save the Lost, Secure the saved, Satisfy our needs

Today: God can strengthen the tempted. “Is there something in your life that is consistently there but shouldn’t be?” Two key passages: Jam. 1:13-15; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9. Definition: Temptation is anything that promises satisfaction at the cost of obedience to God.

I. THE PROBLEM OF TEMPTATION (Jam. 1:13-15)

A. CERTAINTY OF TEMPTATION: “*When...is tempted...*” v. 14 “*each person is tempted*”). ALL are tempted without exception—even Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Listen to Paul in 1 Cor. 10:13—Temptation is “*common*” to all. Part of living in a sinful world (Matt. 18:7). We never come to the place where we will not be tempted.

B. MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT TEMPTATION

1. *To be tempted is to sin*—If so, then Jesus sinned! (Heb. 2:18; 4:15) Yielding is sin. No need to feel guilty just because you’re tempted. God is not displeased when we are tempted; only when we give in.
2. *Mature Christians face less temptation* – never reach place spiritually where immune. Perhaps even more subtle assaults. Maturity probably increases the pressure. Never get too old or spiritual.
3. *Resisting temptation means it will never return*—we’ll struggle as long as the flesh on a fallen planet. The enemy is relentless (Lk. 4:13; 1 Pet. 5:8).
4. *God is often the source of our temptation*— NEVER! Jam. 1:13. God tests us to promote us. Satan tempts us to take us down.

II. THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION (vv. 13-14)

Temptation is hard to resist if don’t know the source. Temptation comes from within me (“lured and enticed by his own desire”). “Lured” is a hunting term for setting a trap. “Enticed” is a fishing term for baiting a hook. Both require deception. No bait appears as bait! Turn to 2 Cor. 2:11 and Eph. 6:16. Satan baits the hook and something in us wants to take the bait. What’s in us? Our mind and our thoughts are the source of temptation—never God. Don’t seek to shift the blame

(personality, parents, circumstances...). We get so deceived we even justify it in our mind.

III. THE PROCESS OF TEMPTATION (vv. 14-15)

There is a process suggested: From temptation to sin to death. My own internal sinful thoughts and desires (mother of sin) craves the bait (from enemy—father of sin), then in willful disobedience an act of sin is born (moved from thought to action). Sin leads to death (Rom. 6:23 general Bible truth). Began where? Thoughts! Key to resisting is thought control (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Again, though all tempted, not all by same bait. Pretzels & M&Ms? Discern *your* temptation pattern: In what areas am I tempted the most? When am I most tempted? Where am I most tempted? Who am I with when tempted?

IV. PROCEDURE FOR RESISTING – 1 Cor. 10:13 shows God’s way of escape. God provides A W-A-Y O-U-T:

ANTICIPATE it – Be alert and expect the inevitable. Keep antennae up. Know your temptation pattern—how the enemy baits you.

WATCH your emotions and mind – Since temptation begins in the mind then guarding your mind is critical. We must refocus and redirect our thinking. Refocusing requires replacement – can’t have two thoughts at once. See Phil. 4:7-8. We must watch what enters our mind.

ACCEPT personal responsibility for our actions. Don’t blame anyone else (v. 13). Don’t be irresponsible. I cause my own problems. I choose to disobey. I must know and avoid my danger zones (Rom. 13:14).

YIELD control to the power of God’s Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 5:8-10, 15-20). Christ in me is stronger than the wrong desires in me.

OPEN UP to a friend you can trust. Be willing to become accountable (Pro. 18:24; 27:5-6; 28:23).

UNLEASH your available resources, esp. prayer and God’s Word (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 2:18; Matt. 4:1-11). Source of the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). God’s Word has specific escapes for certain sins (Ex. sexual sins? run! greed? generosity). Other ways . . .

TAKE God at His Word. Look at 2 Pet. 2:9 and 1 Cor. 10:13 . . .

CONC: God will do His part. Every temptation is an invitation to depend on God. We must do ours. God is able to strengthen the tempted. Repeat Eph. 3:20 . . .