

We know that we cannot blame God for our sin, or can we blame others for our sin. We know there is evil in the world and God is holy. God doesn't use evil to tempt man. Today, there are two factors to look at in the temptation of man and why. One is the nature of man, and the other is the nature of lust.

First let's look at the nature of man. Man has a sin nature, he is born into this. We have a fallen disposition that makes us susceptible to temptation. Let's take a look at the words "**each one.**" The phrase emphasizes the universality of temptation. No one is exempt. The present tense underscores the continuing, repeated, and inescapable reality of the process. Man has the natural propensity to do sinful things against the commands of God.

Second, we see the words "**carried away and enticed**". Both of these words describe closely related but different aspects of the temptation process. First is from the verb form which means a "*dragging away*" as if compelled by an inner desire. It is often used as a hunting term to refer to a baited trap designed to lure in unsuspecting animals. The second term (enticed) was commonly used as a fishing term to refer to bait, whose purpose was also to lure prey from safety to capture.

In 2 Peter the word for enticed is used twice. And let's look at the context of how it is described. 2 Peter 2:14,18 "**having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls**" "**For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires**". Animals and fish are successfully lured to their capture and death, because the bait is too attractive for them to resist. It looks good, smells good, and is appealing strongly to their senses. Their desire for the bait is so intense that it causes them to lose caution and to overlook or ignore the trap or hook until its too late.

In this sense, it is exactly the way we succumb to temptation. We let down our guard to the safety of obedience to God and His word, and go into the danger area. We are drawn towards evil things by the serpent himself, luring us into sin that can cause havoc on our lives, marriages, families and jobs. Sin can look attractive and pleasurable, and usually is, at least for a while. Otherwise it would have little power over us. Satan tries to make sin look as attractive as possible, as do the evil and seductive men we seen in 2 Peter a moment ago.

There would be no attraction of sin were it not for man's own sinful lust. Because of this it makes sin more appealing than righteousness, falsehood more appealing than truth, immorality more appealing than moral purity and the things of the world more appealing than God. We cannot blame God for our sin because it is our own lust. As John MacArthur says, "*The problem is not the tempter from without, but the traitor within.*"

Thirdly, notice that we are carried away "**by our own lust**" or "**desires**". It's better translated lust because desire can mean something good. You can desire holiness and purity and fellowship. The

point is the fault is entirely our own. No one else can be blamed. Paul, who is speaking of himself as a Christian and apostle makes this clear in Romans 7:18-25. Remember what Jeremiah said, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”¹ Matthew 15:18-19, “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.” You cannot blame anyone for this. It comes from within your fallen nature and the fallen world. This is exactly why Jesus gave this warning to His disciples “Keep watching and praying that you may **not enter into temptation**; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”²

Although we have been gloriously saved and made partakers of the divine nature, and have the Holy Spirit within us, we nevertheless retain an enemy within, a still sinful, corrupted, passions, and lusts. Even food and sleep are generous gifts of God, but when we desire them in sinful ways it becomes gluttony on one hand and slothful on another. Sexual intimacy is God’s gift He has designed exclusively for marriage and God’s word condemns few sins more severely that sexual relations apart from marriage.

The nature of lust is defined in the analogy of child birth. We see the conjunction “then” which connects the sinful fallen nature of man, who is responsible for sin and can blame no one else, to the results of his actions. Lust is depicted as a mother conceiving and bearing a child, which is sin and whose ultimate destiny is death.

Before salvation all people are slaves to lust. Ephesians 2:1-3 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

The Greek word for lust is determined by how and for what purpose it is desired. You can desire to know more of God and His word, or you can walk past a jewelry store and desire or lust after worldly things. The same goes for technology today with phones, gadgets and tablets. When something new comes out our lust for it increases. This is where it starts.

The next step is deception. When we think about a desired object, we begin to rationalize and justify getting it or accomplishing it. Just as with the animal or fish, that leaves the safety of where

Jeremiah 17:9; NASB

² Matthew 26:41; NASB

he's at to go after the bait, our fallen nature is so inclined to discount the possible dangers or harm that are there. And we go, hook line and sinker. Simply wanting it justifies the efforts to get it. And it is at this point that lust has conceived.

The next step is design, when plans start to be made and the desire to pursue the lust until it is satisfied.

The final stage is disobedience as we allow it to continue, it gives birth to sin. The longer we delay resisting, the more likely the actual sin becomes reality. It is only the Christian, with the indwelling Holy Spirit that can control the responses to temptations when they come. The truth of God activates the internal warning system which cannot be ignored.

The reality is, no one is successful every single time of resisting every temptation immediately by rejecting the wrong desires. Obviously, we can avoid many temptations simply by avoiding places and situations where we know they are most likely to occur. We don't read books or magazines, watch movies or TV programs, associate with friends, or go places where we know emotions are aroused to any sort of enticement to sin. With the internet and easy access to it, take steps to prevent looking at images and sites that pervert the mind.

We must be on guard at the level of our minds. We must train and equip our minds in preparation for temptation. Being prepared to face the battles nearly ensures a victory. So prepare your mind to do battle. Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." The Psalmist prepared himself to battle temptation and not sin against God in Psalms 119:9-11 "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You."

So prepare yourself today to react biblically to the tempter when he draws you away. Prepare yourself not to be in situations where you know there is a high likelihood of being led astray. Be intentional about it.