

Just for the Group Leader...

"Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4:9).

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2).

The story of Lot inviting strangers (actually angels) into his house and protecting them from the mob outside his door is a clear example from Scripture of how important hospitality was, and is, in the Middle East. But it's really no different for followers of God in our current culture (except for the burning sulfur.) We have been given clear commands from the New Testament that hospitality is considered a very important gift to give, whether to those known or unknown. To some, this comes easier than others.

Below are a few excuses people often use to avoid offering hospitality.

"But it's a mess!" Don't worry unnecessarily about how your house looks. A plaque my mom hung in our home said, "An immaculate house is the sign of a sick mind." While that may or may not be true, most people come to visit you, not look at your house.

While tidying up may be necessary if your cell group needs a place to sit or path to walk through, most people don't expect perfection. Remember, if your house looks differently when guests are over than it does when they aren't, you may be falling into the deception that you should look a certain way in front of certain people. Jesus called this hypocrisy.

"It's not big enough." In our Western culture, nothing ever is. We have the idea that if everybody doesn't have a two-foot box of air on each side of them, they are crowded. While we must still deal with our culture, we should learn to be grateful for the space we do have. Remember, "If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12).

"I don't know how to act when people come over." Then don't try to fake it. Try to think of them as family. Most people really appreciate it when you invite them to be as comfortable as you want to be when you're home alone.

Model this with the way you dress (take your shoes off), the language you use or don't use (none of this "It was good of you to come over"), and perhaps even the posture you take—though laying down and hogging the couch might not be wise.

"What about their children? I'm afraid they'll break something." Anything you have that can be broken is probably temporal and of this earth. While it may be very valuable—either sentimentally or monetarily—it is not going to heaven with you. We must learn to release our possessions to God and allow him to safeguard them for us. If it is too important for you to lose, put it away. If something does get broken, replace, repair, or forget about it. It's probably not worth ruining a friendship over. Right?



Life Group Lesson – Overcoming Temptation

Ice Breaker: What is your favorite dessert?

Facilitator's Comment: How would you define the word: *temptation*?

What is Temptation?

- The word 'temptation' is used in (Matthew 6:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:13). Also 'trials' (James 1:2,12, 1 Peter 1:6).

Definition – *the desire to have or do something that you know you should avoid.*

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read the following story about The Mouse Trap.

Read: The Mouse Trap

It's been said that the best way to catch mice is to place mouse traps down, put peanut butter (stickier than cheese) on them, but DON'T SET the traps at first. The reason for not setting them is to allow the mice to get used to the new traps in their environment. Slowly, the mice begin to accept being around the traps; they next try to bump them to see if anything will happen; when nothing happens, they enter the traps and enjoy the peanut butter. The mice keep coming back to the traps because the peanut butter tastes good and nothing terrible has happened. Finally, after a few days, the traps are set, and later the mice return to the place they thought was risk-free, but this time they *don't* leave.

Question: What does this illustration of the mouse trap tell us about how temptations are set in our lives?

Answer: That there are times when 'temptation traps' are placed in our lives and left there for us to get used to and return to, because nothing 'bad' has happened, until one day, we go back to the same place and the traps is sprung and we don't leave without great pain and suffering.

Question: What is the Purpose of Temptation:

- To undermine God's plan and will (Genesis 3:4-5)
- To stray man from God's way (John 10:10)
- Temptation at its core, is to deny the authority of God and to seek our independence from God.

Question: How does Temptation start?

- Temptation starts in heart and mind, in our deepest motives and desires. (James 1:14-15)
- 1 John 2:16 talks about three most fundamental means of temptation. – "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."
 - Lust of the flesh
 - Lust of the eyes
 - Pride of Life
- These three fundamental principles summarize any temptations we may face in our daily lives.
- Satan used these devices to tempt Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
 - Lust of the Eyes – "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..." (Genesis 3:6)
 - Lust of the Flesh – "...tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..."
 - Pride of Life – "...and also desirable for gaining wisdom (like God)..." (Genesis 3:5-6)
- Satan used the same devices to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11)
 - Lust of the Flesh – "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Matthew 4:3)
 - Lust of the Eyes – "the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor." (Matthew 4:8)
 - Pride of Life – "All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me." (Matthew 4:9)

Question: Is temptation Sin? Can temptation be considered as Sin?

- No, Jesus was also tempted. (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Hebrews 4:15 – "but we have one (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."
- Every Christian is faced with some kind of temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Question: Why is it so 'easy' to fall or give in to temptation? Why do we see a constant struggle with sin?

- Because there is a temporary pleasure in it
- Hebrews 11:25. Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time."
- We are susceptible to sin because of our frailty due to sinful nature. (Genesis 6:5)

Commentary

Temptation will *never* go away, but neither will God's power to provide you with a way of escape from suffering, shame, and sin. With every successful escape, you will be strengthened in your inner spirit, and have continued peace with God. Right now, while you still have the chance, examine your life. Have you acquired habits or gotten involved in activities that you know are not the will and plan of God for your life? If you have, Christ has prepared a way of escape for you. Now is the time to listen to the voice of the Spirit and with God's help, move these habits and activities out of our lives.

Question: What are the steps to overcome or resist temptation?

Preparation:

- The Bible often pictures temptation and struggle with sin as a battlefield. If you want to succeed in the battle, you need to prepare well.
- Ready for the battle. (Ephesians 6:11, 13-17)
- Watch and pray. (Mark 14:38)
- Remember Jesus used word of God to attack and overcome all three temptations in the wilderness. We are no better, so spend time in the word of God. Immerse yourself into word of God, study it, memorize it. Remember, you may not have your bible with you when Satan confronts you with some kind of temptation!
- Be alert and self-controlled (1 Peter 5:8). (For every Christian, temptation can come in different forms.)
- Be strong in faith. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Perseverance and Endurance:

- So often the battle goes weary, and we just give up and give in. We need to persevere, persist and continue to resist temptation.

Planning: (Strategy)

- Remember that there is always a way to overcome temptation.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 – “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
- There are two strategies, which I have discovered in bible when dealing with temptation.

1. Resist or Fightback:

- James 4: 7 - “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- There are times when you need to fight back and resist the temptation. You need to stand firm.

2. Retreat:

- 2 Timothy 2:22: “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness. . .”
- There are times when you need to flee, run away or retreat to escape temptation.

- Joseph is an excellent example of both of these methods. He tried to resist Potiphar's wife as much as he could, but when the time came, he chose to flee out rather than resist her. (Gen 39: 6-12)
- Many times we flee when we need to stand firm, and vice versa.

Application:

- Are you ready for the battle?
- Are you prepared? (Remember that Satan does not take your appointment for the time of temptation!)
- Is your 'Sword of the Spirit' sharpened and 'Shield of Faith' strong?
- How are you going to be an overcomer in your temptations and trials?

Facilitator's Final Comments: Let's join together in prayer and ask the Lord to search our hearts and reveal to us the 'temptation traps' in our lives and to give us strength to endure temptation as we seek to please the Lord, live our lives for Him and His Kingdom.

Notes from the weekend sermon:

2 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV

2 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV

5 REASONS FOR TROUBLE

1. MY WRONG DECISIONS

2. MY FLESH

3. MY SIN

4. PERSECUTION

5. SATAN and the Kingdom of Darkness

1 John 5:4-5 NKJV

Colossians 2:14-15 NKJV

2 WEAPONS IN WARFARE

1. Satan has a **LEGAL CLAIM** on every person outside Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:2-3 NKJV

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NKJV

1 John 5:18-19 NKJV

2. Christ has **CANCELLED** the legal claim that is against us.

Hebrews 2:14 NKJV

1 John 3:8 NKJV

A. By dying for the **ACCUSED**

B. He defeated the **ACCUSER**