

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY



UNDERSTANDING THE TEMPTATION TO SIN

“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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV).

Some people think that SIN and WORLDLINESS are limited to external behavior—the people we associate with, the places we go, and the activities we enjoy. But sin and worldliness are also internal because they begin in the heart.

Look at 1 John 2:16 again – “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.” I believe every temptation and all sin can be traced or linked to one of these three things.

Let’s examine that premise. When the serpent tempted Eve (Genesis 3:6), he tempted her in these areas. Read Genesis 3:1-6 and discuss how satan used these three ideas to plant the seeds of temptation in Eve and ultimately lead her and Adam to sin.

Also, when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, these were his three areas of attack (Read Matthew 4:1-11). Once again, how did satan use these same three concepts to entice Jesus to turn His back on His mission and His Father?

What about our lives today? Temptation (and ultimately SIN) are characterized by three attitudes:

1. The LUST of the FLESH, meaning *the lust for physical pleasure*—preoccupation with gratifying physical desires. What kinds of temptations and sins could be included in this category? (Galatians 5:19-21).
2. Second is the LUST of the EYES, meaning *the lust for everything we see*—craving and accumulating things, bowing to the god of materialism. What kind of STUFF and materialism can you think of in this category – and how do THINGS constitute temptation and lead us into sin?
3. Third is the PRIDE of LIFE, meaning *pride in our possessions and obsession with one’s status, position, power or importance*. In what ways does satan use this category to tempt us to sin?

Experience tells us that it’s usually wise to develop and think through several options when faced with a problem. In the military, some officers have been known to require the soldier presenting the problem to present three options to fix the issue.

So, what’s the answer to this dilemma? How would God have us live as pilgrims and sojourners (and believing bikers) in this world?

In contrast to the three areas of temptation, God values:

SELF-CONTROL (Galatians 5:22-23)

a SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY (2 Corinthians 9:6-8), and

a COMMITMENT TO HUMBLE SERVICE (Acts 20:19; Colossians 2:18, 23, 3:12; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 5:5)

It is also possible, like Jesus, to love sinners and spend time with them while maintaining a commitment to the values of God's Kingdom. That's why we serve Jesus in CMA.

QUESTIONS?

How does your life stack up?

What values are most important to you?

Do your actions reflect the world's values or God's values?