

STUDY 5

Tempting Propositions

GENESIS 3:1-13; LUKE 4:1-13

Temptation is a factor in the psychological and spiritual growth process everyone must go through if we are to become mature individuals, capable of living a full and meaningful life.

The function of temptation is always to trigger a choice and provoke a definite stand or action.

—BOB MUMFORD, *The Purpose of Temptation*

Temptation has become an almost innocuous word today, a word that is not taken too seriously. We may be “tempted” to eat some chocolate, but I doubt that the fate of the world hangs in the balance if we give in. However, it is Satan’s nature to tempt us to take seemingly unimportant, small steps away from God’s expressed will and down unmarked paths that can eventually lead to our destruction. This truth came to life for me shortly after my family and I returned from Africa to live in the United States.

I had accepted a one-year position and felt insecure about our future. When I became aware of a statewide lottery that was constantly being advertised, I found myself reasoning, “Wouldn’t it be great if God provided for my needs that way?

Just think of how much money I could give away!” The reality is that I was feeling financially insecure, and there was definite appeal in an “instant” answer to my problem. After a period of struggle, I came to grips with the fact that placing my hopes in a lottery of any type was confusing financial security with true life security. We need to be ready at all times to recognize the all-too-gentle nudges of the Enemy that lead us away from trusting in God’s established order.

1. What types of temptations—personal, financial, relational—do you face when you are feeling insecure?

READ GENESIS 3:1-13.

2. All people have needs for security and significance. How did Satan appeal to those needs in the temptation of Adam and Eve?

- ✎ 3. What's the difference between Eve's restatement of God's command in verse 2 and his actual command in 2:16-17?

In what ways do we add to God's commands today?

- ✎ 4. Why do you suppose Satan didn't simply *force* Eve to take the forbidden fruit?
5. In what ways did Satan's promise in verse 5 come true? What part did he leave out?
- ✎ 6. Did Satan follow any logical progression in the temptation sequence? Explain your answer.

READ LUKE 4:1-13.

7. Who wanted Jesus to face temptation (verse 1)? Why do you think this was necessary?

- ✎ 8. What evidence do you find in this passage that Jesus experienced the same physical needs and needs for security that all human beings face?

How did Satan's temptations appeal to these needs in Jesus?

- ✎ 9. What was Jesus' attitude toward Scripture? How can we develop the same attitude?

