

2026-03-03: Means of Temptation (Arabic Youth Meeting)

Introduction

- Why does Satan tempt us?
 - Envy
- What does Satan tempt us with?
 - “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.” (Genesis 3:6)
 - Temptation on the Mount (Matthew 4)
 - “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.” (1 John 2:16)
 - The Lust of the Eyes
 - The Lust of the Flesh
 - The Pride of Life
- How does Satan tempt us?
 - From All Sides

1. From Behind: Past Sins

Satan may tempt us from behind by bringing up past sins

- Nostalgia
 - "It wasn't that bad"
 - "Those were fun days"
 - "I miss that lifestyle"
 - "Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” (Exodus 16:2-3)
 - They remembered the food, but they didn't remember the slavery
 - I remember the days when I had that job that took me away from God and away from my family and away from righteousness, but I made more money... and I could buy whatever I wanted.

- Re-Engaging
 - Lot's Wife (Genesis 19)
 - I might be tempted to re-engage the sin in other ways
 - e.g. someone leaves an inappropriate relationship, but he still checks her social media or looks at old photos or reads old messages
 - e.g. someone eaves a particular sin (lust, violence, drugs, etc.) but continues to watch movies/shows/videos/music that glorifies that sin
 - e.g. re-living a sin through stories... "remember when we used to..." - "back in the day, I would..."
 - e.g. someone struggled with alcohol, they quit, but still hang around environments that smell like alcohol, people are drinking alcohol, or even talking about it
 - e.g. imagination
- Despairing
 - After sin, the devil switches tactics:
 - Before sin: "It's not a big deal"
 - After sin: "You're disgusting. God is done with you. God will not accept you."
 - Judas Iscariot
 - After sin: Despair and Suicide
 - St Peter
 - After sin: Repentance and Return
- Identity Confusion
 - I am "the guy who messed up"
 - I am "the girl who ruined her salvation"
 - St Paul
 - Opposite of this - he had persecuted the Church. He could have lived in guilt forever... but he did not allow those past actions and sins to define him or his direction in life

2. From the Front: Anxiety

Satan may tempt us from the front - through worrying about the future, fear of what will come, etc. This is called Anxiety.

Anxiety is a problem with PERCEPTION and NOT reality.

- Social Media Anxiety
 - Everyone on my feed is happier, prettier, more confident, stronger, etc. than me
 - I'm comparing myself to filtered or edited or even AI images
 - I'm worried people are talking about me in a group chat
 - When I post something, I watch the likes/comments
- Friendship
 - Why wasn't I invited to xyz? Outing, hangout, etc.
 - They're acting different - did I do something wrong?

- What if I lose my friends?
- Body Image or Appearance
 - What if I don't look good enough?
 - What if I'm judged for how I dress?
 - I HATE how I look in pictures
- Academic
 - If I fail this class, my future is RUINED
 - Everyone expects me to be perfect
 - If I don't get into the right college or grad school, I'm a failure
- Spiritual
 - What if God is disappointed in me?
 - I keep falling into the same sin
 - What if I never change
- Social
 - Wanting to please EVERYBODY (impossible)
- Paradoxical Anxiety
 - Anxiety about being anxious...

All of these are temptations to loosen our faith. But the Lord answers anxiety in Matthew 6.

3. From the Left: Obvious Sins

Sometimes, Satan tempts us from the left side with the obvious sins.

- Instant Gratification
 - "Turn these stones into bread"
 - Feed the appetite
 - Satisfy the urge
 - Take what you want now
 - Lust
 - Cheating
 - Substance Use
 - Explosive Anger
 - Gossip
 - Revenge
 - Dishonesty
- Normalized Behavior
 - "Everyone is doing it"
 - "You're the only one not doing it"
 - "It's 2026!"
- Targeting Weak Moments
 - Hungry
 - Lonely
 - Tired
 - Stressed
 - Insecure

- Bored
- False Understanding of Grace
 - "You can just confess about it tomorrow"
 - This lie assumes: I will have a tomorrow, I will still care tomorrow, my heart will be soft tomorrow, I will want to repent tomorrow
 - Pharaoh
 - "Entreat the Lord... and I will let the people go."
 - As soon as he is relieved and comfortable and the plague is gone, his heart is hard again

4. From the Right: Good Deeds, Bad Motives

If the left side is sin and evil, then the right side is good! Sometimes I am tempted to do good deeds, but with the wrong intention or motive. Or I justify my bad motives by good deeds.

- Vainglory/Praise
 - "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." (Matthew 6:1-4)
 - The Pharisees did this
 - Sometimes I do a good deed in order **to be seen by men**
- For Position or Fame
 - In Acts 8, Simon was very well known for his sorcery and was known by all the people. But when the apostles came and preached Christ, all of the people were baptized and rejected sorcery and accepted Christ. Even Simon, himself, believed and was baptized. And he was amazed by the miracles.
 - Then, Simon desired the power of laying hands. He wanted to go back to having power and people knowing him and astonishing people
 - So he offered money to the apostles to give him that power also and they rebuked him
 - YouTube Influencers...
 - Clothing the homeless, only when there's a camera.
 - Helping someone in need, but only if the camera is running.
 - Donating to a charity, but only when it is publicly disclosed.
- For Personal Benefit
 - King Saul is called in 1 Samuel 15 to destroy the Amalekites and all that they have, but he keeps King Agag alive and all of the best of the sheep and the goats.
 - And when Samuel comes to question him he says "We kept the best of the sheep and goats so that we could make a sacrifice to the Lord your God"
- To Maintain my Image
 - Ananias and Sapphira

5. From Below: Laziness

Satan may tempt me by pulling me downward, like gravity making me heavier and harder to move... laziness.

- Physical Laziness
 - Oversleeping
 - Gluttony
 - Not wanting to leave the house
 - Not wanting to do anything (e.g. on a day off)
- Mental Laziness
 - I don't want to think deeply
 - "Just tell me what to do"
 - Scrolling/YouTube Shorts
 - ChatGPT/AI Overuse
- Spiritual Laziness
 - Avoiding prayer because it feels like effort
 - Avoiding confession in order to be comfortable
 - Avoiding reconciliation because it's hard
 - Avoiding discipline because it requires sacrifice
 - "Wicked and lazy servant" in Matthew 25 who buried his talent
- "Productive" Laziness
 - I avoid doing something... by doing something else (less important)
 - I feel productive and feel I've done something
 - Everyone is always "busy" but what are they busy doing?

6. From Above: More Than I Can Handle

Satan can also tempt me from above, pulling me up and raising me up with pride to take on more than I can handle

- Ascetic Practices
 - Fasting beyond my ability
 - Prayer beyond my ability
 - Reading Scripture beyond my ability
 - **This will lead either to failure or feeding the ego**
- Services
 - Is there such thing as too many services? YES!
 - If I take on too much, I will leave something incomplete, insufficient, or ignored
- Knowledge
 - The Mysteries of the Holy Scripture and the Church and Theology
 - These are not simply academic endeavors, but they require a strong foundation and spiritual life
 - **Many "Biblical Scholars" have become Atheists because they did not have the right foundation**
- Spiritual Independence
 - I can do it all by myself! I don't need God, I don't need the Church

- Someone will try to overcome a sin by himself and say "I won't go to confession until I've overcome it" - NO! Going to Confession is PART of the process of overcoming!
- Tower of Babel
 - Build a tower so next time there's a flood, we won't be affected
 - Make myself independent from God

7. From Outside: The Senses

I can be tempted by my senses from the world around me.

- What I see/hear
 - What media do I consume
 - What kinds of places do I go to
 - What kind of music do I listen to
 - What kind of language is in the movies I watch or the videos I watch
 - What kind of images are in the movies or videos I watch
 - YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, TikTok, etc. - all of these are DANGEROUS
- It's not just about profanity
 - What about the subject matter?
 - What about the ideas?

8. From Within

Sometimes, I am tempted from within. The devil is not within me - but I can be tempted by my human thoughts, desires, passions, dreams. Many times, these are also shaped by what I take in and what media I consume (#7)

- Thoughts
 - Negative self-talk
 - Pride
 - Planning sin
 - Thoughts of revenge, envy, comparison
 - Desires/Passions
 - Lust
 - Greed
 - Ambition
 - King David and Bathsheba
 - Dreams
 - Culmination of what I've seen
 - Speech
 - What kind of language do I use
 - What kind of conversations do I engage in
 - etc.
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