

I John 2:15-17

The word temptation often used casually today. People often say I am tempted to eat all these food. “These food” can be very oily, very sweet or salty that can harm your body in long term. People often don’t take those types of temptations seriously. However, some temptations are quite serious such as gambling and take illegal drug. One major event or one try can seriously harm or destroy your life. I think the most serious temptation is the Evil alluring us to be away from God. This can lead us to lose eternal life. The book of I John has a section about temptations.

The book of I John was written by apostle John between AD 85 to 95. The letter indicates John tried to correct the people at that time with the issue of Gnosticism. John explained the true identity of Jesus Christ to the readers. This book covers the basics of faith in Christ. In addition, it addresses two main characters of God that is God is forgiving (I John 1:9-10) and God is love (I John 4:8), and one character of human that is easily yield to temptations.

1) The fact about temptation

Human desires are normal and acceptable when the desires are according to what God has intended for us. Temptation is an enticement to sin and not to follow God. I John 2:15 states “Do not love the world or anything in the world...” The “worldly things” in this verse are the matters that are not what God want us to strive for. When one’s desire and action yield to the temptation, disobedience to God occurs. That is why the second half of the verse states “the love for the Father is not in them”.

2) Types of temptations

I John 2:16 lists three main types of temptations

a) Lust of the flesh

God designed us with bodily needs and desires. It is proper to have the right desire and the appropriate amount. However, the temptation comes when one wants a wrong desire or wants an excessive number of certain desires beyond what God has intended. Examples are idolatry, drunkenness, drug, adultery, envy, laziness, etc. (Gal. 5:19-21)

b) Lust of the eyes

A lot of things are very appealing to our eyes and our heart. Temptation

comes when one wants it beyond one's mean such as obtaining them unethically or not in God's will.

c) The pride of life

The pride of life can be summarized as an attitude of thinking you are better than others. You feel, say and/or show to others you are "better" in an arrogant way. One having this attitude of false assurance and false superiority reveals he/she is not being humble. The most serious issue is the arrogant spirit of self-sufficiency. One doesn't even need God.

3) Temptations of Eve and the temptations of Christ

The temptations of Eve is found in Gen. 3:1-6. The tempter in this case is the Evil. The Evil distorted God's word, and used the three types of temptations: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The lust of flesh is wanting to eat the fruit. The lust of the eyes is the fruit is very appealing. To gain more wisdom is appealing. The pride of life is wanting to get the specific knowledge that is not supposed to in this case. The underlying fact is that she was tempted to become God and not become like God. She failed all three.

The temptations of Christ is found in Matt. 4:1-11. Jesus resisted all three types of temptations. He did it by knowing and obeying God's Words. Heb. 4:15 states "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin."

4) Beyond temptations

1 John 2:17 states "The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever".

Ways to overcome temptations: to pray and to know God's Words. Matt. 26:41 states "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Having God's word deep in our heart like Jesus has, can defend temptations just like what Jesus has done.

In summary, be aware of the different types of temptation. Seek God's will by prayer and knowing His words. Have a very close relationship with God, and God will lead you (Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6). Remember, the world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.