

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/10/92 PM
Proverbs 16:17 "How to Overcome Temptation According to Proverbs"

Intro: Parable of the Forest (D. Jeremiah, Wisdom of God, 92)

Tonight we want to deal with a topic that hits all of us. Temptation. God's Word has a lot to say about "temptation." Who could forget...

- Eve and the forbidden fruit (Gen 3)
- Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Gen 39)
- The Israelites in the Wilderness of Temptation
- David and Bathsheba (II Sam 11)
- Jesus in the Wilderness (Mt 4)
- The Disciples forsaking Jesus the night of His arrest
- Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:9 "How is it that you have agreed to test the Spirit of God?")

Many verses in God's Word address the topic:
Dt 6:16 "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God..."
I Cor 7:5 (to married couples) "Don't defraud each other... so that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."
I Cor 10:13 "There has no temptation taken you..."
Gal 6:1 "...you who are spiritual restore... considering yourself, lest you be tempted."
Heb 2:18 "Inthat He has suffered being tempted, He is able to help..."
James 1:13-14 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God..."
II Pt 2:9 "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations..."
How does God deliver us? How can we experience victory over temptation?
Proverbs will show us tonight...

Q: What does Proverbs have to say about Temptation?

Key: If I am going to be wise in life, I must learn how to overcome temptation!

Proverbs: God's Wisdom for Daily Living

How to be Wise. . .

1. In Life--An Introduction (1:1-7)
2. In Developing Friendships (1:10-19; 22:24; 17:17)
3. In Your Marriage Relationship
4. As a Parent (6:1ff)
5. In Your Finances
6. On the Job
7. In Dealing with Temptation (23:26-27)
8. When It Comes to Alcohol (23:28ff)
9. In Handling Your Tongue (15:1-4; 18:4-8)
10. By Being the Man or Woman God Wants You to Be

Note: Role plays at the end to apply the truths we learn...

Key: If I am going to be wise in life, I must learn how to overcome temptation!

Proposition: Proverbs will help us do 2 things tonight.

- I. Identifying Temptation
- II. Overcoming Temptation

Key verse...

Pr 16:17 "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; he that keeps his way preserves his soul." (NIV "The highway of the upright avoids evil; he who guards his way guards his life.")

Illust: Life is like a journey on a road. The man and woman of God is the one who takes great care to avoid the unethical shortcuts and detours that intersect the road. It's not easy. The moral temptations are great.

Let's look at another passage drawing on this same image of life being a road...

4:14 "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."

4:15 "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

4:17-18 "... But the path of the just is like the shining light..."

4:19 "The way of the wicked is like darkness; they know not ... stumble."

Here's the scene. Proverbs says that there are 2 paths in life. One is the path of blessing. It's the path that pleases God. It's the right path. The other is the way that results in tragedy. It's appealing to the senses initially. But it's the wrong path. It's the path that displeases God.

Q: What influences God's people to stray from the right path?

A: Temptation

Q: How can we overcome temptation?

A: Prov 4 gives us the practical answer. We'll return there in a moment. But there's something else we must do first. We must define the problem.

I. Identifying Temptation

Here's where it starts. We must identify temptation. Recognize it.

Definition?

What is it that tempts us to stray from the right path in life?

Proverbs identifies pointedly several temptations which bombard us.

1. Ungodly Friends (1:10-19; 13:20; 14:7, 15; 22:24-25; 23:17; 24:1-2)
2. Illicit Sex (5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 23:26-28; 27:8; 30:20; 31:3)
3. Alcohol (20:1; 23:29-35)
4. Materialism (16:19; 23:4-5)
5. Laziness (20:13; see also "sluggard" texts)
6. Pleasure (21:17)
7. Food (23:1-3; 28:7)

1. Ungodly Friends (1:10-19; 13:20; 14:7, 15; 22:24-25; 23:17; 24:1-2)

READ 1:10-19

What does that passage say? A wise person is one who is willing to say "No" to the crowd. And even to those that may call themselves "friends." It says, "Look out for those that bid you follow them into activities that God forbids." It says, "Look out when someone gives you advice that contradicts what God's Word says." Look out, because you're being tempted!

Who are ungodly friends?

13:20 "... a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Who is a fool? In the Bible, a fool is not someone who lacks knowledge. A fool is not someone with low intelligence. A fool is someone who has a moral problem. A fool is someone who has access to God's truth, but willfully rejects it.

Look out for such a person!

Key: Ungodly friends are "friends" that give ungodly counsel

Illust: A woman encouraging another woman to chuck her husband...

Illust: A teen saying, "Awe, come on and party with us..."

What should we do if we have that kind of "friend"?

14:7 "Go from the presence of a foolish man..."

14:15 "...the prudent look well to his going."

16:29 "A violent man entices his neighbor...leads him into the way that's not good."

22:24-25 "Make no friendship with an angry man... lest you learn his ways."

24:1-2 "Be not envious of evil men, neither desire to be with them."

Young people, do you see why it's important who you choose to be your friends?

Illust:

2. Illicit Sex (5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 23:26-28; 27:8; 30:20; 31:3)

Proverbs certainly has much to say about Sexual Temptation. Sex is a beautiful gift from God, designed to be enjoyed within the parameters of a loving marriage commitment. But what God offers us as pure, the world pollutes and perverts.

READ 6:20-29

Sexual temptation is so rampant today! It's all around us. We must fight aggressively with our minds to detect it, and avoid it!

Sexual temptation comes in the form of pornography. Sexual temptation often begins in a seemingly "innocent" work relationship. But emotional ties lead to physical violations.

Illust:

3. Alcohol (20:1; 23:29-35)

20:1 "Wine is a mocker..."

Alcohol is a great deceiver in our day. Its temptation is powerful.

Illust: I'm always amazed at the alcohol commercials! Aren't you? "It doesn't get any better than this!" Beautiful scenes of mountains and rushing streams. Just once I'd like to see them show a shot of a that same fellow the next morning, with red eyes and a wasted brain! Or even worse to see a picture of the car he drove that went left of center and hit innocent victims in an oncoming passenger car.

Alcohol is a mocker.

We're going to devote an entire evening to delving into that topic in Proverbs later...

4. Materialism (16:19; 23:4-5)

In our society illicit sex is a blatant temptation. So is alcohol. They're right out in the open. Flagrant temptations. Not so with the temptation of materialism.

Materialism is subtle. In fact, materialism may be the greatest sin infecting the church in America today. Mr. Drollinger described materialism well 2 weeks ago from I Jn 2, "Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world..."

16:19 "Better to be of a humble spirit... than to divide the spoil with the proud."

23:4-5 "Labor not to be rich...For riches certainly make themselves wings..."

Listen. Materialism is a temptation. Identify it! Call it what it is. Don't buy into the ungodly counsel you hear in the commercials...

Illust: Neighbors keeping up with each other (new deck, etc)

Illust: Prom (spending \$1000 bucks for a 6 hour activity!)

5. Laziness (20:13; see also "sluggard" texts)

Laziness is a sin. God created work. Adam worked in the garden before sin ever entered the world. We will work in the new heavens and new earth.

20:13 "Love not sleep..."

See: "Sluggard" texts from last week...

6. Pleasure (21:17)

21:17 "He that loves pleasure shall be a poor man..."

There's nothing inherently wrong with pleasure. Pleasure is a gift from God. A nice vacation on the beach is pleasurable. A walk in the woods. 9 holes of golf. Sports.

The problem with pleasure is when what?

V 17 When we "love" it, more than God. When the pursuit of pleasure becomes our god... Illust:

7. Food (23:1-3; 28:7)

23:1-3 "When you sit to eat..."

28:7 "...a companion of the gluttonous..."

Illust:

Here's where we must begin. We must identify temptation. It comes in all shapes and sizes--the temptation of godless friends, illicit sex, alcohol, materialism, laziness, pleasure, food, just to mention a few.

Discuss: Why do we need to identify the sources of temptation?

Tran: Then what? Prov addresses a second area. First Identifying temptation. Next..

II. Overcoming Temptation

Q: How can we overcome temptation?

A: To see the answer, turn to Prov 4.

We can overcome temptation! That is, if we are a child of God. A person who does not have Christ does not have the capacity to overcome sin.

Objection: You say, "Well I know unsaved people who've straightened out their lives, and without Christ. I know a fellow who was an alcoholic, and he's been dry for 10 years."

Q: Did that person really overcome sin? He may have reformed his life in the area of alcohol, temporarily, but now he's a slave to another sin: self-sufficiency. Try to talk to him about his need for Christ, and he doesn't see the need. He's merely traded in one sin for another.

The Bible teaches clearly that all of us are slaves to sin until Jesus Christ sets us free (Rom 6). But listen. When Christ sets us free, He gives us His power to enable us to live a victorious life. We don't have to succumb to temptation. We can be overcomers! In Christ we have the ability!

Q: How do we overcome?

Overcoming temptation involves practical choices. These choices involve specific aspects of your person. Look at Prov 4

Overcoming temptation involves a choice regarding your...

1. Heart (23)
2. Mouth (24)
3. Eyes (25)
4. Feet (26-27)

1. A Choice regarding your Heart (23)

4:23 "Keep your heart with all diligence..."

Your heart. What's that? Meant something different for the Hebrew mindset than for us.

I Sam 16:7 "Man looks on the outward appearance, but God the HEART."

Your heart is the inner you. It includes your intellect, your emotions, and your will. A man's heart is the source of his real problems. The battle for temptation starts in your heart, then effects your body.

Jesus said, "Out of the heart..." (see Mark 7:15-23)

So what must we do?

Prov 4:23 says, "Keep your heart!" That involves your thought life.
15:26 "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord."
Take charge of your thoughts, your feelings, your heart!
Illust:

2. A Choice regarding your Mouth (24)

4:24 "Put away a crooked mouth..."
Make a decision to yield your mouth to God.

3. A Choice regarding your Eyes (25)

4:25 "Let thine eyes look right on..."
What do you allow your eyes to see? We ought not let some things come in through our eyes into our hearts.
Be protective with what you place before your eyes!
eg--TV, reading

4. A Choice regarding your Feet (26-27)

4:26-27 "Ponder the path of your feet..."

Practical Counsel: Proverbs 4:15

A: What should be my attitude when I see the temptation and invitation to sin?

A: I must do 4 things {Say them out loud with me!}

1. Avoid it.
2. Pass not by it.
3. Turn from it.
4. Pass away.

Listen. When I see temptation, I must take whatever steps are necessary to stay clear of it!

Illust: TV show Hee Haw--Doc Campbell confronted by a patient who says he broke his arm in 2 places. The doc replied, "Well then, stay out of them places!"

That may involve running (eg--Joseph and Potiphar's wife--Get out of there!).

That may involve taking a different route to work.

Illust: Sensuous billboard on Rt. 52... Look away!

Illust: Horse and buggy days... Drunk who hitched his horse by the tavern, and wondered why he kept falling to temptation!

Summary: Proverbs helps us to Identify Temptation, and then shows us how to Overcome Temptation. Now let's apply this...

Role Plays:

#1