

# BATTLING SEXUAL TEMPTATION

While all believers in Christ have been declared righteous in Jesus and are no longer under God's just condemnation (Romans 8:1-2), the power and influence of all sinful desires are not always removed at the moment of conversion. Christians will be tempted throughout the course of their life as a follower of Christ. Such temptations will include the inclination to abandon and exchange God's good design for sex for the sexual brokenness offered by the world. Yet, God's word promises a means of escaping and resisting temptation, even temptations related to homosexuality.

*Read Matthew 6:9-15*

Discuss: What does it mean to pray daily for help from God against temptation?

## Contemplate God's Good Design for Sex

*Read Genesis 2:15-25, Genesis 3:1-11*

The marriage relationship of a husband and a wife is fundamentally a covenantal relationship. Two become one, both physiologically and emotionally. Sex originates in this covenantal context, consummating the verbal commitment of husband and wife in a complementary physical union. As designed by God, sex was intended to be enjoyed in shameless, heterosexual monogamy. Yet, as sin entered the world, God's good designed was broken and distorted.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how the covenantal nature of marriage provides the only adequate and appropriate context for sexual intimacy.

How are the concepts of nakedness and shame spoken of in this passage?

How are they spoken of after Genesis 3:1-11?

What changed between the two instances of these concepts?

## Consider God's Call to Sexual Purity

*Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8*

Paul points the people to holiness in sexual morality. The first point that he makes is that the believers in Thessalonica ought to “abstain from sexual immorality,” which essentially consists of any sexual thought or action outside of the context of a heterosexual, monogamous marriage. Whether it was pornography, premarital sex, extramarital sex, or any other host of sexual perversion outside of God’s plan in marriage, the Christian was to abstain, to flee from sexual immorality.

**Discuss:** Read the passage again and discuss how Paul considers the actions of those who “do not know God.”

How does sexual purity reflect Paul’s idea of the knowing God?

How does John speak of the relationship between knowing God and obeying God (1 John 4:4-5:4)?

## Count on God's Provision in Temptation

*Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13*

Christians are not exempt serious temptations. Paul is well aware of such temptations in his churches, especially sexual temptations. Paul, however, is confident that God is more than able to aid those who are fighting temptation.

**Discuss:** Read the passage again and discuss how Paul speaks of the need for humility in fighting against temptation.

How does the faithfulness of God strengthen believers in the midst of their temptation?

# Celebrate God's Grace in Christ Jesus

*Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

The gospel of Jesus Christ specializes in taking the sexually immoral, the idolater, the homosexual, the thief, the greedy person, the drunk, the reviler, and the swindler and making them into citizens of the Kingdom of God who have been washed, who have been sanctified, and who have been justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” While it is true that temptation is a common experience for all people, there is real hope in Jesus Christ.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how Paul speaks about the Christian's life before salvation and the Christian's life after salvation.

Do you believe that God can truly change the hearts of the type of people mentioned in this passage?

Do you share the good news of Jesus with such people with regularity?

Do you see your former self in such descriptions?

## Main Point

Temptation is common to all people. Even Jesus himself was tempted, though He never sinned. Being tempted is not necessarily sinful, but it is very dangerous. This is true even for temptations related to same-sex attraction. Sin threatens to distort God's good gift of sex in marriage while leading us away from the knowledge of God. Thankfully, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have not only been forgiven of the penalty of sin, we are also being progressively set free from the power of sin while looking forward to the day when we will be forever freed from its presence. This is true for those who struggle with heterosexual sins and homosexual sins. Christ came to die for all sinners, not simply a particular class or type of sin. Therefore, any who would trust in Him possess an unshakeable hope for the future and a promise of escape from temptation in the present through Jesus Christ.

We, therefore, as Christians, especially in our struggle with sexual temptation, must embrace the goodness of God's design for sex, resolve to pursue holiness as believers who know and love God, trust in God's sure provision against temptation through the Holy Spirit, and praise God for the grace of Jesus Christ that justifies sinners.

## **Personal Application**

How important is the body of Christ in helping Christians fight the temptations of sexual sin?

How are you practically fighting sexual temptation right now?

What is one practical step that you can take this week to begin fighting sexual temptations according to the principles in this lesson?