

HEAVIEST TEMPTATIONS

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

1 Timothy 4 : 1



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HEAVIEST TEMPTATIONS

Facing temptations are common experiences of God's children. However, we need to be vigilant or alert against any temptations, since they can fail our faith and cause us to fall away. Basically a temptation has two opposite sides, to weaken our spiritual growth or to strengthen it, and this actually depends on how we respond to the temptation we are facing or experiencing, as it is confirmed in James 1:2-4,

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (KJV)

Or *2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops*

perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (NIV)

If our perception or comprehension on temptations is too shallow, we probably live in denial and submit to a poor lifestyle to the detriment of our spiritual life. On the other hand, if our perception on temptations is too narrow, we become discouraged, dispirited, and live a fearful life, not believing that God bestowed us His power and purpose in our lives.

The Lord Jesus declares, *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* (Matthew 26:41). The phrase *"that ye enter not into temptation"* indicates that there is a possibility we fall into temptation, and temptation could be dangerous.

The Danger of Temptation

Never underestimate the salvation we have. When we first received the Lord Jesus and started a new life, we were so overjoyed and eager to worship Him, to read God's word, to meditate on Him and to praise Him. Over time, either because we are too busy or too lazy, or both, we rarely go to church or worship the Lord, and we do not read the Bible anymore nor meditate on Him. We never again nurture our faith with the living water which is the word of God, nor pray to stay close to Him. Hence our faith is not rooted. And when temptation comes, we can easily fall away due to our weak faith and understanding. Luke 8:13 says, *"Those on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while, then **fall away in time of temptation.**"*

When we fall away, either by our self-awareness or by force, we would lose our salvation, we could not enter into the Kingdom of God, but into Hell, the Kingdom of Darkness.

Temptation from the Devil

Temptation may come from the Devil and also from our own desires, but never from God. First of all temptation comes from the Devil as James 1:13 says, ***"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."*** (KJV)

Or ***When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God can not be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.*** (NIV)

So temptation is not from God, but from the Devil, as described in 1 Thessalonians 3:5, ***"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your***

*faith, lest by some means **the tempter have tempted** you, and our labour be in vain.” (KJV)*

Or *“For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.” (NIV)*

Besides tempted by the Devil, we too often, consciously or not, are tempted by the strong desires within ourselves which cause us to be dragged into the vortex or whirl of temptations.

Tempted by Our Own Desires

James 1:14 says, *“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” (KJV)*

Or *“But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desires, he is dragged away and enticed.” (NIV)*

So we can fall into temptation because of our own doing. It could be because we think we are strong enough and just want to try, or we do realize that what we are doing is risking our faith of danger, but we keep doing it. There are children of God who are married but still keep a "ttm" (teman tapi mesra), a "friend but an intimate one", meaning to harbor a relationship with someone of the opposite sex more intimate than just a friend. Oftentimes, at the beginning, their relationship with a "ttm" was only for fun, believing that their faith was strong and that they would not fall into the sin of infidelity or adultery. But many did fall. Likewise, some Christian businessmen who aim at certain projects, because they want to plant some new business or to attain more, get associated with worldly people, even though they know

that they might be contaminated, nevertheless due to their drive at "success", they just do it and go on with it.

Was the Temptation Job Experienced the Heaviest?

We might think that bad things should only hit "evil" people, but that was not always the case. Sometimes God allows inopportune situations beset the lives of those who love and obey God. Why? Because God wants to test their obedience and devotion to Him. Therefore we do not need to regret the trials God allows to occur, because He disciplines His children whom He loves.

Hebrew 12:5,6 *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him: 6 For*

whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Good results would emerge from such trial if we are able to survive and draw some lesson from such experiences as what Job had passed through.

We may assume that the temptation Job experienced was very heavy even the toughest ever experienced by any human being. He lost his wealth, possessions, children, and his health, as we read in Job 1:8-19 and 2:7-8.

But in the midst of his sufferings, Job kept worshiping and praising God (1:20,21) and *"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."* (1:22)
(KJV)

Or *"In all this Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."*
(NIV)

Job's wife even suggested something negative by stating, *"Curse God, and die!"* (2:9b). The firm response of Job was, *"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"* (2:10b, KJV)

Or *"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"* (NIV)

How many of us can respond to difficult situations with the like good attitude as Job's?

Temptations and trials will continue to follow us our entire life, but the important thing is how we react or respond to them. Therefore we need to study the ins and outs of temptations and trials, especially we who are living at the end times.

Temptations and Trials at the End Times

At the end of times we would enter into an era of more terrifying temptations and trials that would shake our faith by threats of tortures even losing our lives, as is stated in Matthew 24:9-13, ***”Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.***

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

When persecutions as described above take place, the Lord Jesus tells us to run from one city to another as it is written in Matthew 10:23, ***”But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.”*** (KJV)

Or *“When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”* (NIV)

Those Christians chased by ISIS force in Syria might be in such condition, running without taking their precious belongings, even without adequate supplies, because what they possessed had been deprived by other people.

In this period of persecutions or tribulation at the end times, all of us might experience similar afflictions, even worse.

Unseen Temptations and Trials

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus explained that at the end times many false prophets would appear, *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”* (Matthew 24:11). And people would prefer listening to them rather than listening to the

word of God delivered by His servants, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

What the false teachers convey seems attractive, but actually they convey just myths since those are not based on the word of God. Their tales unwittingly will make their followers overwhelmed or overpowered and perhaps even unwittingly utter words of blasphemy, or violate the word of God, which will cause them to fall away.

Perhaps at the end of time or even at this moment we are also being tempted or tried by the same temptation, unseen or not visible (invisible) temptation, the teachings of heresies.

At a glance we might think that the temptations Job experienced were heavier than what Jesus experienced, while in reality the temptations Jesus experienced were by far more severe. The temptations of Job were relatively physical, could be sensed or tasted, touched or tangible and seen or visible, while the temptations of Jesus, could not be seen or not visible. If we should experience them we might not sense them until we had fallen.

The Temptations of Jesus

Temptation is indiscriminative; temptation is not only experienced by those who have the tendency to sin just like us, human beings, but also by innocent creatures. Evidently Adam and Eve, even Jesus Christ Himself, were permitted by God to be tempted.

Our Lord can not be tempted by persecutions or sinful arrogant desires, ambition, envy, evil plans, hatred, anger, jealousy, appetite, lust, drunkenness. In a nutshell, by all those evil desires in any form as is common to man, but He was tempted by even much heavier temptations.

Three Temptations of Christ

In Matthew 4:1-11 we read the events of Jesus being tempted three times by Satan, as follows:

Matthew 4:1 "Then when Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God!"

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve!"

4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Temptations in the Context of the End Times

In the context of the end times, similar temptations Jesus experienced could afflict us and perhaps are afflicting us today. These types of temptations are unseen or not visible (invisible) and if we do not understand, nor study deeper the word of God, nor anticipate the realization or embodiment which is barely perceptible, we can be easily dragged by the course of time and fall into sin, be drifted away into apostasy, namely denying our faith.

The First Temptation

We know that there are three temptations experienced by the Lord Jesus. The first temptation is recorded in Matthew 4:2-4;

4:2 "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

In the context of the end times, it could be that when we run either from the pursuit of the persecutors or the anti-Christian rulers, we would starve. Then the tempter would come and seduce us, *"Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* People around us might add by

saying, *“The way how it is done is not important, most important is that we can eat.”* But the Lord Jesus reminds us, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

What does it mean? To sustain life, even if we are hungry, we still have to obtain our food in accordance with the teachings of the Word of God. It is not right or not allowed, if due to being hungry, we justify any means as to steal, loot, rob, cheat, lie, deceive others and the like, because these attitudes contradict or violate the Word. So the way we obtain our food must conform to the Word, and should not against it, even though within some given communities this way might be allowed. For example, some time ago there was an incident in Italy, where a man was caught stealing food because he was hungry. Then he was acquitted by the judge, since the judge

considered that when someone steals from starvation, then his deed is not a crime. If such regulation is applicable, for example in Indonesia, still we as God's children should not steal, still we need to earn our living or obtain our food honestly, in accordance with the Word.

We know that in Exodus 20:15 it is said, "*Thou shalt not steal.*" And also in Acts 15:29a, "*That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.*" Our lives may be difficult, but still we have to keep our lifestyle and our diet in accordance with the Word. Although at present we have not entered into the end times yet, the same rules still apply.

The Difference between "to Make a living" and "to Make Money"

Some Chinese people run different principles when they seek money or earn a living. They distinguish between "to make a living" (seeking food) and "to make money" (seeking money). "To make a living" means to strive, work, or earn money so we can eat, whereas "to make money" means to earn money to save, since there is already enough for food, thus the rest is called "to make money". They say, if we make money, we should not do anything by violation, because there is no assurance that we would be given time to consume the money. But, if we "make a living", any way is permitted (by hook or by crook), lest we will die starving! Although some people around us adopt this principle, as

children of God we are still not allowed to do so, because it is not in accordance with God's Word!

At present we might not steal in an obvious or a direct way. Yet perhaps the ways we apply to do business are dishonest, for example, half deceiving, as the Bible says, by using two differing weights (scales) or measures, or we run our business in a way that is not absolutely right. Maybe at this very moment we are occupied in a business that is not in accordance with the Christian principles, or we work dishonestly and insincerely. Even when He was very hungry, Jesus refused to obtain food by inappropriate ways, because He knew that our food should be earned by our efforts or employment in accordance with God's Word. So too the way we manage or carry them out

should be according to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Second Temptation

Then the second temptation, as recorded in Matthew 4:5-7,

4:5 *“Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

4:6 *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

4:7 *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.!**”*

In the context of the end times, it is most possible that during the period of persecution (tribulation), we would be beaten, tortured

and even burned. And in these conditions we might choose to commit suicide by way of dropping ourselves off a cliff into the ravine, or jump off a tall building, or by doing any similar ways. If we commit suicide, then basically we do not believe in God's plans and protection for our lives, and that is a sin.

Or it could also be that in the period of persecution (tribulation) we would blaspheme God to get food, just as what the people of Israel had done (while they were wandering in the wilderness). They had tempted within their hearts by asking food according to their desires. When the Israelites were hungry and thirsty, they tempted God, even murmured against Moses, saying, *"Why do you bring us out into this place, where there is no food to eat and no water to drink?"* Or it could be

that in such condition we would covet food and things belonging to other people. Or we complain, *"Why does God allow me in this mayhem, while I've let go of all my possessions to follow Him. Where is God's promise of His provisions? Are His promises true, is God truly there? If God is there, why does He not help me?"*

Why do we behave like that? There are at least three reasons why a child of God recklessly commits suicide and tempts God:

First: because he does not understand that in the last days (the end times) God's children would indeed suffer persecutions, but we have to be strong and hold firm to our conviction in Christ. Rev 13:10 *"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."*

Second: it might be that he does not understand nor believe that God's plans for His children are the best, even if those would cause our death, since our main happiness is not just to live in this world, but to live eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”*

Third: he does not understand that suicide is a sin, either committed by a child of God or by others. Why is it a sin? Because committing suicide means killing oneself! The Word of God clearly says, *“Thou shall not kill.”* (Exodus 20:13)

Therefore we must remain steadfast, because only those who persevere or stand firm until the end would be saved!

Matthew 10:22 *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”*

Hence, in whatever condition we are we must remain faithful, even if it would cause our death, as we believe that it is God's best plan for us, and we are also convinced that we will be raised to glory with Him. Thus we need not try to run, or jump off from a multi-storeys building and tempt God when we are thirsty and hungry. We must believe that God has arranged everything, and His design is the best for us - we can read about this in the author's book ***"The Value of Salvation"*** and ***"The Fruit of the Spirit"***.

The Third Temptation

In the third temptation, according to Matthew 4:8-10, it was told,

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve!"

In the context of the end times, besides facing starvation, we would enter the period of persecutions, then there would be an offer to worship the Devil, to deny our faith in the Lord Jesus and to move to another belief so we could be released from suffering. And if we were willing, the evil ruler would say, "*Abandon your beliefs and I will return all your possessions even provide you other pleasures of this world.*" However, we must remain

steadfast and faithful, because we should worship and serve the Lord only and not relinquish our conviction in any condition. Revelation 2:10 says, *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou **faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*

In general, human beings tend to find a comfortable life, own great wealth in all its glory, while in fact our highest priority should be how we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, as discussed in the author's book "**Human Life Priority** "

Perhaps we feel that we love God more than we love this world, so that we would never be willing to let go of our faith for wealth. This conviction would of course be very good, but one powerful way to test the truth is to check whether we offer our tithes or not!

Basically many people do not give their tithes, because they love wealth and the world more than they love God. God established tithing, the offering of ten percent of our income, not because He wants our wealth, but because He wants to bless us, as it is written in Malachi 3:10, *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of host, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

If even in normal circumstances we are not willing to give our tithes, is it possible that we will believe this promise of God when we are suffering? This is a question and an issue to reflect on, for all of us. If to be blessed, we do not want to meet the requirements because we do not believe, can we

still claim that we truly believe in the Lord Jesus?

James 2:26 *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

Likewise, can we say that we love the Lord Jesus?

John 14:15, *“If you love me, keep my commandments.”*

Tips for Dealing with Temptations

As it has been described previously, the heaviest temptations are the unseen or not visible temptations, in which Satan through some false prophets and teachers convey heretical teachings. If we do not understand the word of God, it would be impossible for us to know that the doctrines conveyed are misleading. Thereby we then would follow what

is instructed by those false teachers that ultimately lead us into heresy. Unconsciously we would leave our faith. In so doing we would lose the salvation promised by the Lord Jesus and enter into Hell.

Therefore, as God's children, we must seek to understand the word of God, so as not to be easily misled, particularly since the Lord Jesus had explained that at the end of the age many false prophets would rise, even a very influential false prophet, supporter of the antichrist:

Revelation 13:11 *“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”*

This false prophet would appear as a person who is very kind and gentle *"like a lamb"*, but what

he conveys are merely lies and deceptions, thus he "*spake as a dragon*".

We may only have time to listen to a sermon once or twice per week, therefore we should add to our comprehension of God's Word by reading the Bible daily, meditate on His Word and do the Word in our lives so as to become God's people who are able to hold firmly our salvation as described in the author's book "***Victorious People***".

Pray

Jesus gave a very clear example of what we should do when we are in trouble, distress and other afflictions. As described in Luke 22:39-42, on the night before Jesus was betrayed to be crucified, He and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives, a quiet place, *And he came out, and*

went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. Then the Lord Jesus told His disciples to pray. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." Then the Lord Jesus Himself prayed too asking for the grace of God, and yet He surrendered everything to the will of God, And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done".

Although the LORD God remained in His decision that Jesus had to die on the cross to bear the sins of the world, He sent Him an angel from heaven to strengthen Him, And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And when His agonies increased, Jesus prayed even more earnestly, And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

In the context of the end times, we all might be persecuted as recorded in Matius 24:9, *“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake”*, being confirmed in Revelation 13:10, *“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killed with the sword must be killed with the sword.”* To face such difficult times we must pray earnestly to be given the strength to deal with the situations. And as the Lord Jesus had exemplified, He prayed earnestly not only while he was being mistreated or thereafter, but before it occurred, even long before, when yet in good conditions. Therefore, if we believe that in this time we are already at the end of the end times and are soon to enter the period of persecutions (the tribulation), then we all should already have set a special time daily to meditate on God and His word, a

quiet time with God, to pray regularly and earnestly.

Conclusion

The presence of the trials and temptations are inevitable in our daily lives, and there are times we fail or succeed in facing them. Nevertheless, as growing children of God, the quality of our faith should grow better and deepen, so that by and by the frequency of our failures to prevail over trials and temptations should diminish, since we are getting stronger in the Lord.

The temptation of the Lord Jesus when He was hungry, after fasting 40 days and nights, was a form of Satan's wiles which was very sneaky and unseen or not visible. The similar unseen temptation, can happen in our lives too

as it had happened to Adam and Eve, a heavy and sophisticated temptation barely perceptible. To deal with it, we need to have the knowledge and understanding of the Word so that we can distinguish the correct from the incorrect, namely which is in accordance with the word of God, and which is not.

Daniel 11:32, *"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."* (KJV)

Or *"With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him."* (NIV)

We must always be alert, keep on guard against any attack of the Evil One.

1 Peter 5:7 *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*

In addition, we should set a special time for a quiet time with the Lord so that we can pray earnestly to God for wisdom and help to avoid being trapped, tricked, and defeated by the wiles of the devil.

1 Peter 4:7 *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*