

Why Does a Loving God Allow Me to be Tempted?

(Adapted from lessons developed by Ethan Longhenry)

Introduction:

- A. Last lesson in series of “Why Does a Loving God...?”
 - 1. How Can a Loving God Allow Evil to Exist?
 - 2. How Can a Loving God Send Anyone to Hell?
 - 3. Why Did a Loving God Make Me This Way?
- B. Three legitimate Bible questions to be considered:
 - 1. Does a loving God allow me to be tempted?
 - 2. Why does God allow me to be tempted?
 - 3. How does my loving God limit the temptations He allows?

I. DOES A LOVING GOD ALLOW ME TO BE TEMPTED?

- A. Reconciling James 1:13 with Matt. 6:13
 - 1. Is there a difference between deliberately tempting someone and leading someone into temptation?
 - a. A woman wears a revealing dress: is she actually tempting a guy or merely leading him to temptation?
 - b. Accompanying someone to an eating establishment that happens to serve liquor or provide gambling, both of which are legal according to the civil authorities: is this tempting someone?
 - c. What differentiates between tempting and not tempting?
 - d. Rom. 14:21 - “...anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak” Our actions move a brother to falter in his service, to actually sin, or to be weakened in his spirit
 - e. Vs 14-15; 1Cor. 8:13
 - f. How can we cause a brother to stumble? If simply presenting the opportunity to sin is only providing him with the opportunity to be tempted, then how is the one presenting such an opportunity at fault? Can God be held responsible for permitting the opportunity to sin to exist?
 - 2. What constitutes temptation?
 - a. Inordinate desire + opportunity = temptation; in the absence of either factor, temptation does not exist
 - b. Temptation is not: noting that someone else is doing something you believe to be wrong; hearing someone else say something wrong; going some place where wrong occurs
 - c. Only when they occur at a time when you have both desire and opportunity to commit the sin can it be considered temptation
 - 3. James 1:13 - God does not tempt people to sin
 - a. For God cannot be tempted with evil. Temptation is a subject which does not pertain to him. He stands aloof from it altogether.
 - 1) There is no evil passion to be gratified.
 - 2) There is no desire for power; He has all power
 - 3) There is no desire for wealth; He has infinite resources
 - 4) There is need for happiness; He is in heaven

- b. God does not tempt any man. He places nothing before any human being with a view to pressure him to do wrong.
 - 1) We are perpetually thinking that God does place before us inducements to lead us to sin.
 - a) Men think His doctrines put them in positions where they have no choice but to sin.
 - b) Since all things are under his control, when we sin, it is because He chose for us to sin.
 - c) Since he has created us with human dispositions, He expects us to sin.
 - d) Since God in His Providence places trials in our path that tempt us to sin, and since He has the power to remove things that tempt us, He must want us to sin; otherwise, He would prevent us from sinning
 - e) Since He permits some to tempt others when He might easily prevent it if He chose, this is the same as tempting them Himself.
 - 2) God does not place inducements before us with a view that we should sin. The source of temptation - James 1:14

4. How does that fit with what Jesus said? - Matt. 6:13

- a. Similar to David's prayer - Psalm 141:3-4 - A prayer for whatever he needs to withstand temptation and sin
- b. Pleading God's promise - 1Cor. 10:13
- c. Two different words:
 - 1) James 1:13 - "peirazo: to test, scrutinize, entice, discipline, assay, examine, prove, tempt, try" (Strong's)
 - 2) Matt. 6:13 - "peirasmon: sore trial; comes from peiro - to pierce through as with a spear or spit"
 - 3) That is: "do not bring us into sore trials"
 - 4) The Vulgate renders it "quam ferre non possimus" or "that which we cannot bear."
 - 5) "Lead us not in" - This is a mere Hebraism: God is said to do a thing which he only permits to be done.
- d. This phrase must be used in the sense of permitting. If we choose to think when we succumb to temptation that God is responsible because He permitted the trial to take place, the problem lies with our reasoning and not with reality.
- e. Like praying for "daily bread" when we know God has promised to provide for us -- we know God has promised to protect us from overwhelming trials; Jesus teaches us to ask Him for it anyway.

5. Temptations are to be prayed against because of:

- a. The discomfort and trouble they cause
- b. The danger we are in of being overcome
- c. The guilt and grief that follow giving in to them

B. Be certain to understand the question

1. It is: Why does a loving God allow me to be tempted?
2. It is not the fallacious syllogism: 1) God allows me to be tempted, 2) When I am tempted, I fall into sin, 3) God is therefore responsible for my sin and cannot be considered loving

II. WHY DOES GOD PERMIT ME TO BE TEMPTED?

- A. Not all trials are the result of external malice; they can result from temptation
 1. Jesus' temptations - Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15
 2. Our temptations can be external burdens or internal conflict
- B. All things God purposes for man are good - James 1:17
 1. Including difficult things - Heb. 12:9-11
- C. We choose whether or not we will see the good and be refined by the hardship, or focus on the difficulty and pain and allow the test to overwhelm us and give into the temptation
 1. James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3
 2. In fact, we can choose to be happy about it - Matt. 5:10-12; Acts 5:41
- D. What good purposes are served by temptation?
 1. Abraham: proves us to ourselves - Gen. 18:19, 22:1, 16-18
 2. Paul: builds confidence in others - Phil. 1:12-14
 3. Job: establishes a model of perseverance for others
 - a. Job 2:3, 10; James 5:11
 4. Hope - Rom. 5:3-4; 1Peter 1:6-9
 5. Validation - James 1:12; 1Peter 4:14
 6. Fellowship with Jesus - Peter 4:12-13; Rom. 8:16-17
 7. Corrective discipline - Heb. 12:6-8, 12-13; Deut. 8:3-5
 8. Build us up - Psalm 66:10-12; Zech. 13:9
 9. To save others - Isa. 53:5-6; Gen. 50:20
 10. To keep us from other sins - 2Cor. 12:7; 1Cor. 11:32
 11. To illuminate sins we have committed - Ex. 9:27; Num. 21:7
 12. To manifest the love of God - Psalm 119:75; Prov. 3:12; Rev. 3:19
- E. Do we need these things?
 1. Then when God gives us these things by allowing us to be tried and tempted, is He not showing Himself to be a loving God?

III. HOW DOES MY LOVING GOD LIMIT THE TEMPTATIONS HE ALLOWS?

- A. They are foretold - 2Tim. 3:12; John 16:33; Acts 14:22
- B. They are comparatively light - Rom. 8:18; 2Cor. 4:17
- C. They are temporary - Psalm 30:5; Isa. 54:8; 1Peter 5:10
- D. They end in joy - Psalm 126:5; Isa. 61:3; Matt. 5:4

Conclusion:

- A. In the admonition of Jesus, plead the promise of God for strength to overcome
- B. In the admonition of James, thank God for the trial that makes you stronger
- C. In the admonition of Peter, view the temptation as fellowship with Jesus
- D. In the admonition of Paul, see the temptation as proof of salvation
- E. In the admonition of David, regard the temptation as evidence of God's love