

## Session 8 - Leadership Temptations



**Introduction:** Fire is a good thing and it also can be very dangerous. One is warmed by fire, but if someone falls into the fire pit serious burns and emotional damage can result. Think about when you learned that fire was helpful. Now, think about when and how you learned of its danger. **Share your observations on the danger of playing with fire.**

Leadership temptations invite you to play with fire. Satan desires to destroy God's people and his Kingdom work by taking the good things created by God and making them idols in the life of the leader. The temptation is to worship and adore them. Doing this is destructive to the individual and others around them. The Gospels illustrate how the devil tempted Jesus to move away from his intended redemptive purposes and serve himself by rejecting the cross. Jesus firmly resisted. He knew who he was, as affirmed by the Father's voice at his baptism. He understood the vicious traps of the evil one and warned his followers that they too are targets of Satan's traps (Mark 8:33). Study the temptations of Jesus, as recorded in Mathew 4, and discover how Jesus resisted the devil and stayed true to His calling. Like Jesus, Christian leaders (and all Christ-followers) must stand with Jesus in resisting temptations.



**Assignment- Watch this video in preparation for your study of Matthew 4:1-11**

<https://youtu.be/Ulz6Zcqn7GY>

**Read Mathew 4:1-11 and answer the following questions for each section listed below.** What was the purpose of the devil's three temptations? How did Satan use each particular geographical setting to tempt Jesus? What was Jesus' response to the temptations? In what ways did Jesus exercise his power and authority when he was tempted?



**Matthew 4:1-4**



*Matthew 4:5-7*



*Matthew 4:8-11*

*In these verses, what clear lesson does Jesus teach us about resisting temptation?*

### ***Three Significant Temptations for Christian Leaders Today!***

**MONEY** – No one can deny that individuals need money in order to live. Money buys food, building materials, and is needed for transportation, school fees, medical expenses, clothes, and so much more. But money can become an idol if



one thinks that it will solve every problem one faces. We may dream about getting more money and think about money as our savior. Is money evil? No. God requires his people to work for it and handle it honestly as good stewards of our Father's gifts.

Church leaders are responsible for good stewardship too. The resources entrusted to the church and its leaders are not for their own use, nor for their private improvement. God gives resources to be used for his glory and the building of his Kingdom. Money decisions are an important indication of the leader's heart and trust in the Lord. Handling money is a spiritual matter, so no wonder leaders will be tempted to misuse money for their own gain.

- In what ways can money become an idol for a leader in ministry?
- How should church leaders handle their personal finances? (Proverbs 22:7; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5,6)
- How should church leaders handle money in ministry? (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:6-15; Philippians 4:14-20; Galatians 6:9-10)

***Application*** - How are you tempted to improperly use money personally and in the ministry where God has called you to serve? What safeguards must you put in place to keep from worshipping money as an idol?

***SEXUAL TEMPTATION*** - Think about it. God established the intimacy of the sexual act for a specific purpose. It affirms a covenant commitment between husband and wife, established before God, and is designed to be enjoyed only in a sacred marriage relationship. Genesis 2 pictures God's creative genius in the marriage covenant (*bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*), as well as the pure intimacy of the relationship (*they were naked and not ashamed*). The sexual act is beautiful and restorative in its proper relationship. It is destructive when improperly pursued.

Scripture compares the worship of idols to adultery. Old Testament Prophets described the broken intimacy between God and his people in adulterous terms. The pursuit of other gods damages our covenant relationship and leads to disastrous results for God's people. (*Hosea*

*tells this story in clear terms*). So, it is no surprise to see how illicit and improper sexual activity is sin, breaking God's covenant relationship, and damaging God's people.

Jesus speaks to the personal consequences of adultery and the Apostle Paul writes of the destructive effects of sinful sexual activity in the Corinthian church. Other Scripture repeats the essential nature of marriage purity and the destruction found in the lust of the flesh. **Read the following texts. Write a summary of the warnings and instructions found in them.**

**Matthew 5:27-30**

**1 Cor.5:1, 6:9-11, 6:18-20; 10:13**

**Hebrews 13:4-**

**1 John 2:15-17-**

**Revelation 2:20-22-**

***Application*** - In what ways are you tempted to misuse God's gift of sexuality in your life? Suggest ways that a leader can stay clear from the sex traps that the enemy and other people might lay for them.



Author Wayne Oates believes that “the integrity of a Christian leader is measured by his or her sense and use of **power** in relation to others.” In his opinion, there is a proper use of power that serves and builds up people instead of tearing them down to serve one’s identity and wealth. **Thinking about Jesus in the Gospels, how did he use his power to do the will of the Father? Jot down some thoughts here:**

The major problem with improper use of power is what it does to relationships. Richard Foster observed that “power puts us in our relationships. When ministers use the power they possess in a destructive manner or to gain power over others, it destroys relationships and hurts people profoundly impacting our interpersonal relationships, our social relationships, and our relationships with God.”

***Assignment:* In the large group, the leader will draw a line in the middle of the room developing two sides - an agree and disagree side. In response to the statement “Absolute power corrupts absolutely” students identify with one side and try to have other side join them by giving good reasons for their choice of sides.**

**After the discussion, reflect on the following verses and their meaning for a servant leader’s role in church ministry.**

Matthew 10:24:

Heb.13:17:

2 Peter 1:3-11:

2 Timothy 3:1-10

***Main Point - Transforming leaders are those who are able to divest themselves of their power and invest it in their followers in such a way that others are empowered. (Leighton Ford, Transforming Leadership, IVP. p.15-16)***

***Application*** - In what ways are you tempted to misuse power in your life and ministry?  
How can leaders properly exercise power and authority over those they lead?

**What other temptations do leaders face?**

**With another person, list several steps to overcoming these temptations through the use of biblical principles (see 1 Corinthians 10:13 as a guide)**

**End the Session by praying for one another as you lead God's people. Confess any sinful ways that are patterns in your life and commit to hold one another accountable for pursuing godliness in your life and ministry.**