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Counseling From God's Word – Part 2

Biblically Counseling the Heart and Its Temptations

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INTRODUCTION

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB)¹*

Objectives

1. Give the Biblical Counselor a foundational framework.
2. Apply this framework to different “addiction” issues.
3. Apply it to your own heart first.
4. Help you identify motives and find righteous ways to please God.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” (ESV)*

Jeremiah 17:9 *The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? (NLT)*

I. A Framework from Biblical Truth vs. The World's Best Explanation

- A. This framework is a teaching for everyone's hearts
- B. World's counseling trend today: Blaming a description / diagnosis / environment
- C. Genuinely Biblical view = your sin nature is the cause (**Gal. 5:16; Heb. 4:12**)
- D. All persons struggle with all three temptations of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life (from **1 John 2:16** above)

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- James 1:14-15** *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (ESV)*
- E. **Hebrews 2:17-18** *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (ESV)*
- F. People tend to “give in” to ONE of these three temptations (as a preference over the others) but we all have ALL THREE at work inside of us all the time

II. How our Flesh is Tempted by What the World System Offers and What Satan Offers

- A. Bill Hines’ bank robbery illustration²
- B. Jesus said our heart is the problem (again not externalities but internalities)
Mark 7:20-23 *And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. (ESV)*
- C. Therefore, our biblical counsel must be to start with the truth is in Christ, the put-off, renew your mind, and put-on **(Eph 4:20-24)**
- D. Physical component of addiction does not negate the fact that this is primarily a choice problem – a sinful heart desire
Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

III. Adam and Eve’s Failure and Christ’s Obedience

- A. **Romans 5:18-21** *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- B. **Hebrews 4:14-16** *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with*

² Find Bill Hines, author of *Leaving Yesterday Behind*, and *Curing the Heart*, at Covenant Ministries in Ft Worth, TX, or at www.theaddictionconnection.org



confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

IV. Biblical Counseling Occurs at the Heart Level (not Behavior level)

- A. Choices in three areas: Thoughts, Words, Actions
- B. We counsel at the heart level because Jesus was always teaching at the heart level (Sermon on the Mount) You say external behavior, but I say heart level/desire level
- C. The world's approach to addiction is to address the tools of idolatry rather than the heart of idolatry. **Isaiah 44:9-20**

V. Three Common Temptations in Every One of Us (Gen 3:6, Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)

- A. World will constantly change their words (SUD, AUD, OUD are the latest terms for the "disorders" of addiction) and change their target, but the Word of God never changes!
- B. Chart

WORLD SYSTEM says to your counselee	GOD'S TRUTH says to your counselee
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO (Pleasure) (usually in the form of comfort)	Lust of the flesh
HAVE WHATEVER YOU WANT TO HAVE (Possessions) (usually in the form of covetousness)	Lust of the eyes
BE WHOEVER YOU WANT TO BE (Pride) (usually in the form of control)	Pride of life

- C. Adam and Eve took the bait that Satan uses to **lure** us to sin (**James 1:13-15**)
- D. Biblical Counselors show counselees the following:
 1. How our sin nature is our problem (**Rom 3:23**)
 2. Jesus is our solution (**Rom 5:8; 1 John 1:7-10**)
 3. Suffering is not necessarily our fault
 4. How to draw near to God (**Heb 4:16**)
- E. Chart: **Gen 3:6** and **1 John 2:16**

Genesis 3:6 (ESV)	1 John 2:16 (NASB)
<i>Good for food</i>	<i>Lust of the flesh</i>
<i>Delight to the eyes</i>	<i>Lust of the eyes</i>
<i>Desired to make one wise</i>	<i>Boastful Pride of life</i>



Genesis 3:6-12 (ESV)

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) What was in Eve and Adam’s heart/thoughts	1 John 2:16 (NASB) “All that is in the world”	Temptation Element
<i>Good for food</i>	<i>Lust of the flesh</i>	To do
		<i>They want the fruit because they want to experience the pleasure and comfort of that food</i>
<i>Delight to the eyes</i>	<i>Lust of the eyes</i>	To have
		<i>They want the fruit because it looks good; it is a possession to be gained</i>
<i>Desired to make one wise</i>	<i>Boastful Pride of life</i>	To be
		<i>They want the fruit because they want to be wise and autonomous, in control of their own destiny & how others view them</i>

VI. Temptation To Do: The “Lust of the Flesh” (NASB)

- A. Comfort
- B. To do whatever I want to do without limits



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- C. People use justifications: (God made plants, they are natural – I can smoke; Jesus drank so why can't I?)
 - D. How Eve was tempted by Satan's question: "*Did God actually say...?*"
 - E. Addiction Biblical Counseling Specifics:
 - 1. Must teach counselees that there ARE put-off's for addiction.
 - 2. There are certainly things that your counselees should treat with "radical amputation." (**Mark 9:43-47, Matt. 18:8-9**)
 - 3. Desire to fulfill a physical craving in the wrong way
 - 4. Am I doing this for my pleasure or for God's glory? And will this help or hinder me in loving God and loving others?
 - 5. Am I doing this thinking it will make me happy? Why do I want to do this?
 - 6. Why can't I trust God and experience pleasure from and with what He has given me already?
 - F. Consuming desire to experience pleasure without limits
 - G. Accusation against God's goodness in **Gen 3:6a** (good for food)
 - 1. World's lies + Satan's lies are challenging the attribute of God's goodness
 - 2. Lie: He is holding back His best for you.
 - 3. His provision is not as good as it could be
 - 4. Lie: He couldn't be good!
 - 5. Lie: You can satisfy that physical desire (lonely, hungry, tired, have fun, celebrate) no matter what God says.
 - H. Jesus overcame this temptation: **Matthew 4:1-4**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (ESV)

- I. How did Jesus enter this temptation?
 - 1. God ordained this event for Jesus, not an accident **(v.1)**
 - 2. This is a passage that verifies the truth of **Hebrews 4:15**
 - 3. Jesus was hungry physically as a real human being **(v.2)**
 - 4. Tempter came to Jesus with an idea:
 - a. In other words, change a stone in an unnatural way into bread. Do a miracle if you are the Son of God.
 - b. It's like saying, "Satisfy your physical craving now. Why limit yourself?"
- J. Addiction Biblical Counseling Specifics
 - 1. Addicted person is truly sad, hurting, depressed, lonely, anger, bitter, all kinds of real experiences and emotions
 - 2. Addicted person is being tempted to satisfy their specific craving or desire
 - 3. Forgetting the goodness of God in suffering



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4. Tempted to go satisfy their state of being with something unnatural
 5. They need to be in the Word of God, meditating and using the Word of God in the moment of temptation. Seeking God Himself.
- K. How Jesus succeeds
1. Man shall not live by bread alone... **v. 4**
 2. Not doing what He COULD do, but doing the will of God, every word that comes from the mouth of God.
- L. Counselees likewise need to:
1. Read and obey the Word of God over and above their own feelings.
 2. Feelings are real but learning to do what is right
 3. Only accomplished by a Christian in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 4. Overcoming, not in their own strength but in the power of God's strength at work in them
 5. God's Word is the "antidote" to help overcome this temptation

VII. Temptation To Have, "The Lust of the Eyes"

- A. Covetousness - To have anything you want to possess without limits
1. God created us finite beings, and He wants us to be restricted but be dependent upon Him
 2. How Eve was tempted: The "you will not surely die," lie.
 3. Living by what we see is not walking by faith.
 4. God calling us to trust Him, living by faith
 5. Not just a physical possession
 6. Desire for something that I think will make me "happy" and make me who I want to be - idolatry
- B. Counseling Specifics:
1. Identity: when I possess these things that I want, I will be who I want to be
 2. Teach that God is your Creator
 3. Teach that you can ask for things
 4. But remember **James 4:1-4**—wrong pursuits and wastes of energy
 5. Your identity if you are a Christian is unchangeable, rest in Jesus Christ
 6. "Sabbath rest"
- C. Accusation against God's wisdom
1. I see it, I want it, I gotta have it... no matter what.
 2. God's omniscience is challenged by thinking we know better than God.
- D. **Luke 4:5-7**
- And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."⁸ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" (ESV)*
- E. How was this temptation presented to Jesus?



1. A visual temptation (v.5)
 2. A conditional temptation (if...)
 3. Satan promises to give what he shows Jesus if you will worship me
- F. How did Jesus overcome this temptation? A wise answer
1. Quoting the Word of God **v.8** ("It is written..")
 2. We teach our counselees that Jesus overcame temptation by quoting the Word of God.
 - a. Teach counselees we must fight the battle like Jesus did.
 - b. Teach counselees that even though cocaine will give what you are seeking right now, fight that battle and instead...
 3. You shall worship God alone
 4. Serve God and Worship Him alone is the "antidote"
 - a. Worship is more than song and dance and enjoyment in God.
 - b. Worship is assigning worth and value to God by giving myself to Him
 - c. Worshipping by serving this Body of Christ, the Local Church, reflecting your glory (showing how great You are, Lord!)

VIII. Temptation To Be, "The Pride of Life"

- A. About my reputation, my autonomy, I want people to praise me.
- B. Satan tempted Eve that she could become like God! (**Gen 3:5**)
- C. This is like saying, "You don't have to put up with this. You can be your own god."
- D. She is made in God's image so she is already like God in His image but there are lies mixed in (humans do have some autonomy but are creatures, dependent upon Him)
- E. **Gen 3:6c** (desired to make one wise and she takes and eats)
- F. Desire to receive the praise / attention of other people.
- G. Desire to be in control, control of image (beautiful, handsome, wise, talented, smart, funny)
- H. Rather than reflecting the greatness and the glory to God, wanting it for self
- I. Competitiveness to achieve—trusting in self's power
- J. Accusation against God's sovereignty
- K. Satan is tempting Jesus in the same way that Eve was being tempted.

Luke 4:9-13

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' ¹¹ and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.' ¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (ESV)



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- L. Jesus models how to battle this temptation: Doing the WILL of GOD rather than one's own will (submission and humility required)
 - M. What does it mean to put the Lord your God to the test?³
 - 1. Israelites put the Lord God to the test at Massah

Exodus 17:1-7

Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" ³ But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" ⁴ So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." ⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (NASB ®)

- 2. The Israelites are thirsty: a real physical ailment
- 3. Just like Jesus was hungry in the wilderness temptation: a real physical ailment
- 4. Not satisfied with what God is giving us, not satisfied with the current state we are in
- 5. Testing God – we want to take care of this problem in our own way
- 6. What does Deuteronomy say about this testing?

Deuteronomy 6:16-19

"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah. ¹⁷ You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. ¹⁸ You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give your fathers, ¹⁹ by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken. (NASB ®)

- a. God was not slacking in His promise of giving them the land.
- b. Israelites focused on their thirst not on the promises of God

³ *Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart* by Mark E. Shaw, pp17-20 teaches and applies these passages as well. This booklet is available at Focus Publishing, Bemidji, MN.



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- c. Give me what will satisfy me right now IN the MOMENT not trusting what God has said
 - d. Failure to trust the character and promises of God
 - e. One evidence of idolatry is when we are saying in our hearts, “I will take care of this my way right now.”
7. In the booklet *Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart*, Shaw writes:⁴

“Psalm 95 refers to this Exodus 17 moment when the Israelites tested the Lord God in the unrighteous anger. Psalm 95:6-11 contrasts the heart fueled by the pride of life in a willful, rebellious sinner with the heart submitted to the will of the Father:

*Come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

⁷ *For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.*

Today, if you would hear His voice,

⁸ *Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,*

⁹ *“When your fathers tested Me,
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.*

¹⁰ *“For forty years I loathed that generation,
And said they are a people who err in their heart,
And they do not know My ways.*

¹¹ *“Therefore I swore in My anger,
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”*

- N. TO BE – the pride of life. TO BE IN CONTROL. Forgetting about glorifying God
- O. So the only answer to the pride of life is submission / humility
- P. Doing the will of God is the “antidote”

IX. Overcoming Addiction Must Be Empowered by Christ

- A. The goal of clean and sober is not the primary goal for Christians.
- B. Clean and sober can be achieved without the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. It’s only a “self-works” program (self-help + works righteousness)
 - 2. If they don’t understand the Gospel with faith in Jesus Christ alone, Hell is their end result.
- C. Temptations are not easy. **Hebrews 2:18** *For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

⁴ Shaw, Mark E., *Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart*. Focus Publishing, Bemidji, MN, 2014, pp17-19.



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- D. All of these temptations have been overcome by Jesus. **Hebrews 4:14-16** *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- E. Holy Spirit gives counselees power to repent and change-**Phil 2:13**
- F. Help your counselee identify their own preference to sin
- G. Trading one sin for another.
- H. How the world gets it wrong: groups everyone by their activity
1. The Bible categorizes by heart desire
 2. The “antidote” is different based on the heart temptation

X. Review and Conclusion

- A. Temptations
- Comfort OR - Pleasure
 - Covetousness - Possession
 - Control - Pride
- B. SOLUTIONS
- Word
 - Worship
 - Will of God
- C. The three desires of the heart can be redeemed for Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God
1. The lust of the flesh - the desire for pleasure can be redeemed in Christ Jesus and for the glory of God the Father
 2. The lust of the eyes - the desire to possess things can be redeemed
 3. The pride of life - the desire for striving for order, control, reputation, and excellence

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (NASB)*

Recommended Resources

- [Understanding Temptation: The War Within Your Heart](#) by Mark E. Shaw