

Life Compass Pt2- The Trap of Temptation (1-15-20)

Last week we talked about the troubles of making life decisions based on emotions which are temporary & easily played upon. This week we're going to look at another factor that leads many people in life decisions & direction: Temptation – *something that attracts, allures or entices a person in to doing something that is bad, unhealthy, immoral or evil*. Temptations can cover a wide range of areas & categories (food, comfort, money, ethics, sex, power, etc.). Everyone is tempted (**1Cor 10:13a**); even Jesus was tempted (**Lk 4:2**). Like emotions, temptations can have a huge impact on decisions & life's direction. But just like emotions, it's how you deal with temptation itself that really matters.

Another thing about temptations that I've observed is that they often involve things in life that are God-given (like food or sex) and meant to be enjoyed in His way. This why some of these things are so tough to resist. But the temptation seeks to get you to use these things outside of God's plan (a.k.a. sin), which always leads to trouble, hurt, pain & disaster. **James 1:14-15** *Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.*

That verse may seem drastic, but it's not. Temptations can lead you towards death or even directly to death. I have many temptations stories that almost led to me being killed or possibly hurting or killing others. My early driving escapades are good bad examples....

A movie that starkly shows the power of temptations & the terribly sad results of falling into them is *Bohemian Rhapsody*. This movie chronicles the life of Freddy Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara), the lead singer for the band *Queen*. The incredibly talented Mercury started the band *Queen* in 1970. He also started a romantic relationship with Mary Austin, whom Mercury dubbed in a famous song as the "Love of My Life". In fact, Freddie & Mary were engaged to be married. With *Queen's* music soaring up the music charts in the mid 1970s, the band became wildly popular. With all the rock-&-roll success, touring and money came many temptations, and for Mercury these temptations were wild parties & homosexual encounters. Eventually, Mercury confessed his wild homosexual life to Mary & they ended their romance in late 1976. But Mercury still loved Mary & bought her a house next to his while he continued with his drug-fueled gay lifestyle. By the mid 1980s, Mercury contracted the deadly disease AIDS which was a direct result of his gay sexual practices. It is reported that he had 100s to 1000s of male sexual partners in his life. The last six years of Mercury's life were marked by rapidly declining health ending with his death of AIDS-related pneumonia at the relatively young age of only 45 in 1991.

The decision Mercury made to follow his homosexual temptations literally ended his life prematurely. But what might have happened if Mercury trust God, resisted & overcome his homosexual temptations & married Mary? It's possible that *Queen* would still be making hits. As the tragic life of Freddie Mercury shows, making life decisions based on temptations has absolutely terrible results, as further illustrated by rock music's infamous "27 Club".

But what about us? Are we tempted? YES, of course! We're all tempted in millions of ways. Do we make decisions base on temptations? Sadly, yes, sometimes we do. Is following temptations ever a good way to make a life decision? NEVER! Unfortunately, temptations lead to terrible decisions every day and these terrible decisions that result from temptations hurt people throughout this world every day. (The *Megan's Law* website proves this point.)

So letting temptations drive your decisions is terrible & can have vast impact on the direction & outcome of your life. So, the big question is again: "Do you want to make the best, godly, healthy, life-bringing decisions for your life?" Do you want to get a hold of temptations before they get a hold on you & lead to sin & death, like God says in **James 1:14-15**? Do you believe God's words in **Jer 29:11** & **1Cor 10:13**?

Here's a simple principle in acronym form that can help if you deal with temptations: **S.T.O.P.** Here are the 4 points of the **S.T.O.P. Principle**:

- 1.) **Seek God First**- Tell God your struggles when you're being tempted & ask Him for help to resist them.
Mt 6:33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.*
- 2.) **Think about where temptations could lead**- **Prov 13:16** *Wise people think before they act; fools don't—and even brag about their foolishness.*
- 3.) **Others can help**-Tell trusted people your struggles, they can hold you accountable, pray for you & help you make healthy, godly decisions
James 5:16a *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*
- 4.) **Pursue God's Plan in Life Decisions**- Take active steps to avoid temptations & follow God's Word & His Way in making life decision.
Mic 6:8 *O people, the Lord has told you what is good & this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, & to walk humbly with your God.*

Folks, life is tough. Temptations are very real & very tough. We all struggle with them in some area. But God has something so much better for us when we simply trust in Him & follow Him. He can help you now & forever if you'll only let Him.

BIBLE VERSES

James 1:14-15 *Temptation comes from our own desires which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions.*

And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

1Cor 10:13 *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

Jer 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you & not to harm you, plans to give you hope & a future."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We talked about *Queen* singer Freddie Mercury tonight. Do we have any *Queen* fans here? If so what your fave *Queen* song?

2a. Read James 1:14-15. According to God, temptations are serious. How did temptations lead Freddie Mercury to his literal death?

2b. Read 1Cor 10:13. How could Freddie's story have been different if he'd been walking with God & seeking God's help?

3a. Let's list some temptations that young people face today. (LIST THEM ON THE SHEET NEXT TO LAST WEEK'S SHEET)

3b. How can temptations impact young people & cause them to make really poor life decisions?

4. What are some areas of temptation that you personally struggle with?

5. Read 1Cor 10:13 (again) & Jer 29:11. God has the best plan for you & He wants to help you overcome temptations. Let's go through the four points of the **S.T.O.P. Principle** (in shaded box above), read the related verses & discuss how living out this principle can help us in our temptations & life decisions. (LEADERS- hand out S.T.O.P. Buttons at this point too.)

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we are tempted in this world by all sorts of things that aren't good or right for us. Help us to recognize these temptations & resist them. Help us to think before we act. Give us good & godly people in our life to share our burdens. Help us to trust in You & walk with You along Your path of goodness all the days of our life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.