



The Tackle of Temptation

James Morris

Focus The enemy is like a fisherman who tries to lure us into temptation. He uses fake bait, attempts to get us to act solely on instinct, attacks us when we are stressed, and tries to get us to compromise. When we are aware of the lures of temptation he uses, we can recognize them when they come and avoid them!

Fun Do you like fishing? If so, what is your best fishing story? If not, what don't you like about it?

Review Key Scriptures: Habakkuk 1:15; Ephesians 6:10–11; Matthew 4:1–9; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:4–5; Hebrews 4:15–16

1. Fake

One way to catch fish is to use bait that seems real: the fish thinks the bait is food and goes after it. The enemy also uses this strategy to hook us. He will use something that may seem real or logical to us, but it's his way of tempting us into sin. Satan even tempted Jesus by using Scripture (Matthew 4). Scripture is good, but Satan twisted it to entice Jesus to go after something fake. But Jesus, who *is* God's Word made flesh (John 1), responded to Satan with the truth of His Word.

2. Instinct

Another way the enemy will try to lure us into sin is by using instinct as a temptation. A fisherman will use a lure that sparkles and flashes, and as the fish glances at it, it bites it out of instinct. Instead of acting impulsively, we should take time to carefully pray about every decision.

3. Stressed

A fisherman will present a lure or bait to a fish multiple times, even if the fish

refuses it. The continual stress put on the fish can cause the fish to bite, even out of anger. When we are under stress, or tired, or worn down, we can be susceptible to temptation as well.

4. Hidden

One lure a fisherman will use is a fish that seems like a wounded, easy target. If the fish thinks it will be an easy meal and goes for it, the fish is caught. There are things in our lives that we may think are easy areas of compromise, however, it is never worth sacrificing our integrity.

Group Dynamics Idea Plan a dessert game night where the house rule is “No Serious Conversations.” Give everyone a safe place to have fun, connect, and know there will be no “serious talk” happening. This is a great way to create a lighthearted atmosphere. Also, invite new people to the game night to help grow your group.

Discuss

1. In the past, how did you view temptation. Did you think there was a certain type of person who was tempted over another? Did you think temptation was based more on age? Explain.
2. Does it surprise you to know that anyone can be tempted by the enemy? Why do you think the enemy came to tempt Jesus after forty days of fasting and prayer?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 2:11. What are some of the areas in which Satan tries to tempt us?
4. How do we resist the temptation of the enemy?
5. Read Ephesians 6:10–11. What does it practically look like in our lives when we are wearing the full armor of God?
6. Read Hebrews 4:16. How can we help each other overcome temptation?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- The enemy lures us into temptation like a fisherman lures a fish.
- Satan tempts us with things that are fake, preys on our instincts, gets us when we're stressed, or presents opportunities hidden in compromise.

- If we recognize Satan's tactics, God will take what the enemy meant for evil and turn it into good.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please help us to be aware of the ways the enemy tries to lure us into temptation. Help us recognize things that are fake and not make decisions based on our instincts. When we are stressed, help us find time with You to refresh. Help us to recognize hidden compromise and walk in integrity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip As a new leader, you may sometimes feel like you have to be strong in every area or have all the answers, but that's not the case. Even shepherds (pastors, leaders, teachers) need a shepherd. We all grow better in a community where we can be honest and vulnerable. Make sure that you have one or two people in your life who are further along than you in their walk with the Lord and are safe people of godly character who you can share your weaknesses and strengths with. Ask them to pray with you a few times a month. Honestly share with them the areas where you need prayer and encouragement. This helps you to grow while also training you how to shepherd and care for others.