

40 Weeks of Purpose

Week 26

Transformed by Temptation

Review from Last Week:

POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT FROM LAST WEEK:

God has a Purpose behind every Problem

- Your Circumstances are **TEMPORARY**
- Your Character will last **FOREVER**

VERSE TO MEMORIZE THIS WEEK:

- Romans 8:28 (NIV)

28) *In all things God works for the good of those who love him*

QUESTION TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK:

What problem in my life has caused the greatest growth in me?

- **God uses Temptation to Transform us...**
- I'm not saying that God wants to Tempt us...
 - God doesn't want to see us fail
- God does allow Temptation into our life in order to cause us to **GROW**
- God doesn't allow Temptation to come into our life simply to torment and torture us
- God wants **GOOD** to come of it!
 - God wants us to tackle it head on, and learn from it
 - God wants us to grow, to change, and to be transformed by our Temptations!
 - To be victorious in our battle against sin and to emerge from that battle stronger people

- Character development always involves a **CHOICE**
 - Temptation is the ultimate expression of **Free Will**
- We always see Temptation as an opportunity to **SIN**
 - But, every temptation is also an opportunity to do **GOOD!**
- Every time you choose to do good instead of sin, you are growing in the character of Christ
- Developing in us the Character of Christ is the real reason behind Temptation
 - It's not to trick us
 - It's not to trip us up
- In order for us then to succeed at this task, it's important that we clearly understand the Character of Christ
- Paul probably gives the best description of the Character of Christ, when he speaks about the gifts of the Spirit...
- Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)
 - 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
 - 23) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
- These nine qualities are a beautiful description of Jesus Christ
 - To have the fruit of the Spirit is to be like Christ
- But, God doesn't give us the fruit of the Spirit instantly
 - It's not like praying at the side of your bed one night, and waking up the next morning a changed person
- Fruit always matures and ripens slowly...
- **God develops the fruit of the Spirit in you by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you are tempted to express the exact opposite quality**
- God teaches us **LOVE**
 - By putting us around some **UNLOVELY** people
 - It doesn't take any character to love people who are lovely and loving to you
 - God wants to stretch you, to cause you to grow

- To do that He is going to put you around some people who are simply nasty, and ask you to love them
- God teaches us **JOY** • By putting us in the midst of **SORROW**
 - Happiness depends on external circumstances, but Joy is based on your relationship to God
 - Not every event or circumstance in your life is going to be pleasant, but that doesn't affect the feelings that you have because of your Father
 - God has forgiven us an incredible debt, and the joy produced by an understanding of that Grace is stronger than any sorrow
- God teaches us **PEACE** • By putting us in times of **CHAOS**
 - By not allowing things to go the way that we planned, and allowing times of confusion into our lives, God calls us to reach out for Peace
 - Anyone can be peaceful sitting on the edge of a beautiful lake watching the sun set while on vacation
 - We learn real Peace by choosing to trust God in circumstances in which we are tempted to worry or be afraid
- God teaches us **PATIENCE** • By putting us in places where we have to **WAIT**
 - I am a very patient person, until I'm forced to do something on someone else's schedule
 - Anyone is patient as long as things are going their own way...
 - I actually find myself yelling at the car ahead of me, knowing full well that they cannot hear,

“Don't you know that I'm running late!?!”

- God teaches us **KINDNESS** • By putting us around people that are **UNDESERVING** of it
 - Being kind to the Sales Clerk that went out of their way, dug through the storage racks in the back, and found you the last yellow one is easy...
 - Being kind to the waitress who was rude, completely ignored you during the entire meal, never brought you the Ketchup, and got your bill wrong is what God wants from you
 - Being kind to kind people is no big deal... Even the Publicans do that!

- God teaches us **GOODNESS** • By putting us where it is **INCONVENIENT** to help
 - I'm always more inclined to hold a door for someone, when I am standing there waiting for someone else to come
 - Being Good when it's convenient, is not what God wants from us
 - God wants us to do good for others even when it hurts
 - God wants us to make ourselves available to help even when it's not really a good time for YOU

- God teaches us **FAITHFULNESS** • By putting us where it's **EASY** to slide
 - Fear of getting caught is not a good motivator to help you avoid unfaithfulness
 - There is an old joke about a man that asks a woman if she will cheat on her Husband, and sleep with him for \$1,000,000. Thinking it over for a while, she eventually agrees. Then the man then asks if she will do it for \$50. *"What kind of woman do you think I am?,"* she replies indignantly. *"We've already determined what kind of woman you are,"* states the man, *"now we are simply haggling over the price."*
 - Faithfulness doesn't have a price
 - Faithful people don't respond differently when others are watching, as they would when they are all alone
 - No matter if no one will get hurt, and no one will ever know...

- God teaches us **GENTLENESS** • By putting us in positions of **POWER**
 - There are a few Gentle souls born into this world...
 - The rest of us need to learn about Meekness and Humility the hard way
 - God puts in positions where it's hard to be humble...
 - Situations where we have succeeded against all odds, where we excel at things that others fear to even attempt
 - Then he asks us to be Humble... To be Meek... To be Gentle with those around us

- God teaches us **SELF-CONTROL** • By putting us in areas of **EXCESS**
 - A poor man takes no pride in that he has resisted the lust of buying a Ferrari

- Self-Control is all about not doing things that you have the ability to do
- The temptation comes when you have more than enough, and you still are able to control yourself
 - There are two ways to live, we always counsel newly married couples:
 - You can spend less than you make
 - Or you can make more than you spend
 - One of these is in your control and the other isn't
 - One teaches you self-control, and the other doesn't
- God uses the opposite of each fruit to allow you a choice
 - You can't claim to be **GOOD** if you have never been tempted to be **BAD**
- Every time you defeat a temptation, you become more like Jesus!