

Do You Deal with Temptations in The Workplace?

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My guess is you probably think other people struggle with temptations in the workplace.

However, as a Christian, you consider yourself pretty well insulated from having to deal with temptations in the workplace. Right?

Well, I want to let you in on a secret. As a Christian, not only are you *not* insulated from temptations, you have a *big* target on your back, and the devil is aiming his temptation arrows right at you!

You see, for the devil to tempt a non-believer into sin is par for the course. The big win, in the devil's game, comes when he can cause one of God's people to fall to temptation! The Bible is full of stories about people who endured a variety of temptations. Some resisted. Some fell to temptation.

- The first example of temptation is Adam and Eve. Satan tempted them to gain knowledge to be more like God (Genesis 3).
- David fell to sexual sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11).
- Samson fell into the deceiving arms of Delilah (Judges 16).
- Achan fell to the sin of covetousness when he hid plundered gold and silver inside his tent (Joshua 7).

I bet none of those involved got up in the morning and thought, "Yep, today is the day I get myself into trouble by giving in to temptation." However, that is why temptation is so sinister because that is precisely what happened. It catches us unaware and often unprepared to ward off the temptation.

Happily, we have a few examples of Bible characters who faced temptation and firmly refused to give in. One of my favorites is the story of Joseph with Potiphar's wife. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is well known, but if you're not familiar with the story, it is recounted in Genesis 39.

As background, Joseph was sold by his jealous brothers to a band of Ishmaelites who took Joseph to Egypt. They then sold Joseph to Potiphar, who was one of Pharaoh's officials (Genesis 37).

God was with Joseph and caused Joseph to prosper. In time, Potiphar promoted Joseph to head of his household and business affairs. That's when Potiphar's wife noticed the handsome young Joseph and set her sights on him.

When Potiphar was away, she propositioned Joseph, saying, "come to bed with me." Joseph refused her advances, saying, "...how could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God" (Genesis 39:9)?

She propositioned Joseph day after day, repeatedly, but Joseph continued to refuse her advances.

Joseph did what he could to avoid contact with her, but eventually, she trapped him and insisted she come to bed with her. Joseph ran away from her. When Potiphar returned, she accused Joseph of attempting to rape her, and Joseph was thrown into prison.

Four Common Traits of Temptation

In Joseph's story, we see some of the most common traits of temptation.

1. Temptation is Corrupting

We are never tempted to do good. Temptation attempts to get us to do evil, to sin. If we have a sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, we can recognize temptation because it is always wrong and evil.

2. Temptation is Often Visual

Often, temptation begins with what we see. Eve saw the apple. David lusted after naked Bathsheba. Samson fell in love with the beautiful Delilah. Achan coveted the gold and silver he found. Temptation begins as we see something forbidden and manifests as we consider acting on what we see.

3. Temptations Vary

If Satan fails with one form of temptation, he will try another. Just because you withstand one form of temptation, don't think for a minute you are safe. Maybe you resisted sexual temptation in the office, but are you ready for the next form of temptation that is sure to come?

4. Temptations are Persistent

Satan is both patient and persistent. He will try to wear you down by persistently tempting you. The Scripture says even though Joseph rejected Potiphar's wife, she propositioned him day after day. Sampson dealt with the same persistent temptation from Delilah. Don't get cocky because you managed to beat temptation for one day. You see, you may have to face the same temptation tomorrow and the next day!

These are just four of the most common ways we can expect to encounter temptation. The next question we should be asking ourselves is, "what do we do when we find ourselves being tempted?"

Facing Down Temptation

By now, I hope I've convinced you that just because you are a Christian, it does not mean you won't have to face temptations in your life. On the contrary, you will, and you best prepare yourself for the battle!

Here are three things you can do to face down the inevitable temptations that will come into your life.

1. Right Attitude

Temptation is a test of loyalty between you, as a Christian, and God. Joseph remained steadfastly loyal to God. As Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, he said. "how could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God." On a worldly level, the temptation is between Joseph and Potiphar's wife, but on a spiritual level, the temptation is a test of your loyalty to God!

2. Be Persistent and Determined

Faced with the persistent and determined temptations, Joseph was equally persistent and determined to say "no" to the temptation. We must recognize that just because we say "no" to temptation once, it doesn't mean we won't be tempted again. It may happen again in just a few minutes. We need to be persistent and determined to reject temptation.

3. Avoid & Flee Temptation

Joseph tried to avoid the temptation from Potiphar's wife by refusing to be with her. Perhaps the best way to defeat temptation is to stay away from areas where we know we might be tempted! Don't put yourself in situations where you will be alone with an attractive co-worker. Have someone else count the money along with you so no one will be tempted to steal.

Then, when all else fails, and you are confronted with temptation, flee! Run like Joseph. Remove yourself from the face of temptation as fast as you can!

Remember

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said,

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13 NASB).

There are four key takeaways in Paul's admonition:

- 1) Whatever temptation you are facing, you are not alone. Every temptation you face is common to man.
- 2) God loves you and will remain faithful to you, even and especially amid temptation.
- 3) God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist temptation.
- 4) Even amid the temptation, God will provide a way for you to endure it.