

**Biblical Eating**  
**By Doug Hamilton**

Lesson Four: Understanding Temptation Through the Eyes of God

We are now in the fourth week of the class and hopefully you now fully realize how addicted you are to a blessing of food rather than to God Himself. We must be willing to surrender our whole being to God in order to break the emotional attachment to food. Yes, the food is good for God declared it to be so, but our love affair with it has positioned itself in the way of the One who blesses us. When we offer God our hips, thighs and bellies apart from our hearts, souls and minds, our focus is off. We must be careful not to allow the blessings of God to come before the God of blessings. When we do that, our focus is completely wrong. *Rom 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

By now, you have had many ups and downs in trying to break this addiction to food, which is eating when not hungry and not stopping when satisfied. In the past, your coping mechanisms have been trying to make the food behave through diets or extreme exercise in order to cover-up the evidence of gluttony. The result has been enslavement to the rules of man rather than obedience to the Father. The Bible teaches in *2 Pet 2:19 "...for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved."* When we try to cope with gluttony through man-made mechanisms, we become slaves to man. Paul addresses this topic on the following passage.

Col 2:20-23 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all {refer to} things destined to perish with the using)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, {but are} of no value against fleshly indulgence.



Christ frees us from the rules of man in order to be a servant to Him. The last thing in this world that Jesus would want for us is to be a slave of the world. God wants us to serve Him, not the food. *Gal 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

You have been trying to submit to God in this area of your life, wanting to do the right thing, but the temptation is great. You find yourself in a dilemma that Paul described in *Rom 7:19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.* We weigh up (no pun intended) the options, obedience or gluttony, then take on the ensuing struggle. Nobody said it was easy, but God said it is rewarding. It is in the intellectual capacity of temptation that we gain strength and insight to do that which is right. Therefore, the focus of the next two lessons will be a two-fold perspective concerning temptation in the area of gluttony. These perspectives will be God's and the devil's respectively. Keep in mind that these principles apply to every area of sin in our lives.

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### God's Perspective on Temptation?

James offers an interesting thought on temptation in *James 1:2-3* *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.* The word that James uses for trial is *pirasmos* and means to test, tempt or try, to put something through a test. James is telling us that when we have a test put before us, we are to have joy. This seems to go against what we would ordinarily think of when facing a struggle.



As you have seen through this course, it can be difficult to turn down the free donuts at the office or the extended eating session at the buffet or potluck. Sometimes when reaching the end of the meal we may have even had some disappointment that our stomachs weren't bigger so we could shovel more in. When we are contemplating stuffing that last delicious morsel into our mouth after knowing our appetite has been satisfied, it is anything but joy. We want that last bite of forbidden fruit or cake, making it ever so difficult. What in the world is James talking about when he says to "*count it all joy*" when facing a test? Is he crazy? James is presenting the struggle through the eyes of God rather than the eyes of man.

There is a spiritual war going on around us. It may seem like a couple of candy bars and an extra hamburger in this life, but through the eyes of God, it was an opportunity to bring Him glory through the spiritual realm. We are in a spiritual war with weapons, looking for spiritual results.

- Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.}
- 2 Cor 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

In the book of Job we find an interesting scenario taking place. It is here we see a perspective concerning temptation through the eyes of God.

Job 1:6-12 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." 8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 "But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face." 12 Then the LORD

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said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

The devil sought someone to tempt and God volunteered Job for the test. God said that Job would bring Him glory when tested and that is exactly what happened. *Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."* 22 *Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.* God allowed the test to take place to bring Him the glory in the end. Job is retested in 2:1-10 and passes again, bringing God the glory for the second time.

We must understand that through the eyes of God, *Rom 8:37 we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* God believes the test that is handed out to us is an opportunity to bring Him glory. He knows *1 Cor 10:13 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, that you may be able to endure it.* We can make it through the test because God always provides an escape to give Him the glory. When those cookies are calling us through head hunger, God is testing us to see if we are obedient through the word. When our food passion is calling for us to empty the entire bag of chips, the door is wide open to be obedient to God. We are to be *1 Pet 2:2-3 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

### God believes in us more than we believe in Him!

That may sound strange, but it is true. With every test that God allows in our lives, He sees the way to escape that was included in it. This is why He is confident that *Phil 1:6 He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.* He believes in us because we believe in the Son, the One that He is *well pleased* with. Through the testing process, God will always attain the glory. *1 Pet 1:7 that the proof of your faith, {being} more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;* In the eyes of the Father, we are winners ready to make the right decision concerning His glory. We are seeking to please God and not ourselves. When we put Him first in our lives, there will be a level of satisfaction met. *Matt 6:33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."* The difficulty is remembering that God is testing us to succeed in this area of our life. Once again, we must remind ourselves what the tests are.

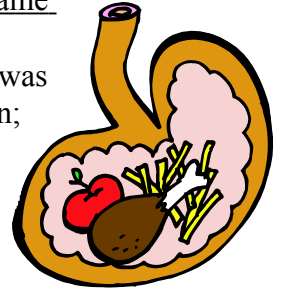
### Test #1 Waiting for hunger

The first test from God is to wait for the hunger. It is God's natural design for the body and we have a tendency to want to shovel it in before it is time.

- Matt 12:1 At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grainfields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads {of grain} and eat.

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- Matt 12:3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions;
- Matt 21:18 Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry.
- Matt 25:35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me {something} to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;
- Luke 6:21 "Blessed {are} you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed {are} you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
- Acts 10:10 And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;



God has handed out the test to wait for the hunger. He believes that you will do the right thing concerning the stomach, for He has seen the end. It is not too big a test that we would fail, simply wait for the hunger and give God the glory.

### Test #2 Stopping when satisfied

Not only is it a test to wait for hunger, but to stop eating when satisfied. We want to keep eating past the natural design of the stomach because we love the food very much. The Bible teaches moderation concerning our food. We are to stop eating when satisfied, for that is the accepted practice of the Bible.

- Matt 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."
- Matt 15:37 And they all ate, and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.
- Mark 6:42 And they all ate and were satisfied.
- Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to {find enough to} satisfy these men with bread here in a desolate place?"
- Luke 6:21 "Blessed {are} you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed {are} you who weep now, for you shall laugh."

God believes that you are able to make the right decision concerning this struggle. Yes the leftovers are tasty, but are called leftovers for a reason, for they are left over. God knows that you can walk away from the food when the physiological pull is over because He made every cell of our bodies. He knows that you can bring Him glory if you only focus and take the right path.

Somewhere between the two principles we find the testing ground. It may be a struggle through our eyes, but through the eyes of the Father, it is a test to show Him glory and honor. It isn't that God does not want us to have the blessing, but that He does not want the blessing to have us.

### COUNT IT ALL JOY!!!

Back to what James was telling us to do concerning the temptation, count it all joy. Do not be sad about the test, for God did not allow the test to break us, but to lift us. He is

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trying to develop endurance in our souls. He is anticipating our attention to be on Him, not the food. As strange as it may sound, this is how God improves our life.

2 Pet 1:5-7 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in {your} moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in {your} knowledge, self-control, and in {your} self-control, perseverance, and in {your} perseverance, godliness; 7 and in {your} godliness, brotherly kindness, and in {your} brotherly kindness, love.

We become complete in every area of our lives when we are being tested. We would not know the strength of the teabag until it is placed in hot water. It is through the testing process that we find out the level of our spiritual resolve and dependency on God.

In the next lesson, we will examine the viewpoint of the devil concerning this struggle. In doing so, we will better understand what God does not want accomplished in temptation.

This week's pointers

- When tempted to eat too early or overeat, thank God for taking the time to provide an opportunity to glorify Him. God already knows that we can pass the test of gluttony, but we keep forgetting it. This should help you continue the proper focus.
- Celebrate when you resisted the temptation knowing that you brought God great glory in obedience to Him. Be excited knowing that God is pleased with you concerning this matter. *Luke 15:10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*
- Keep a couple of snacks in the car for those times when a meal may not be available. As you have already learned, true hunger really calls in a loud way. This will help to better manage if needed. Some may say that this will tempt them too much to have the food around them, but that is trying to make the food to behave and not the person.
- Remember to do the questions throughout the week rather than waiting until the last moment. We are in a daily battle, not a weekly or weakly one. The questions are designed to give reflection and focus.
- Try to determine why you are having certain cravings, for there are many reasons. By identifying the reason, you will be able to better deal with it when it is before you.

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Questions for Lesson Four

1) What is the biblical definition of temptation?

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2) How are we slaves to food?

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3) What is the perception of God concerning temptation?

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4) What is there to “count all joy” concerning a trial?

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5) In your words, what is the toughest part of temptation?

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6) Explain what is meant by “God believes in us more than we believe in Him.”

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7) Explain how success in one area of temptation in life can lead to other areas of temptation.

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8) When you were tempted with gluttony this week, did you count it all joy? If so, then explain.

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9) Which of the pointers thus far have proved to be the most help against gluttony?

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10) What other techniques have helped you in your struggle against gluttony?

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11) Recently, has anyone mentioned that they have seen a difference in you? If so, explain?

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12) Have you been satisfied with the daily records that have been kept throughout this class? If not, then why not?

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Daily Records:

Sunday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Monday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Tuesday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Wednesday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Thursday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Friday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?

Saturday

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you feel true hunger today?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you stop eating when you were satisfied?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you eat what you wanted to eat?