

Sermon Discussion Questions: "Lead Us Not Into Temptation"

Based on Matthew 6:13

1. The Invisibility of Temptation

The sermon compared temptation to Wi-Fi—invisible but saturated throughout our world. John Owen defined temptation as "anything that has influence or effectiveness to draw a person's heart from obedience to God into any sin, in any degree whatsoever."

Discussion: How does this broader definition of temptation challenge our typical understanding? What are some subtle, "invisible" temptations in our educated, Christian context that we might not immediately recognize as such?

2. The Packaging of Temptation

The sermon highlighted how temptation often comes "packaged" with biblical truth or seemingly noble justifications—like engaging with culture, avoiding legalism, or resting in God's forgiveness.

Discussion: Can you think of times when you've used biblical concepts to justify questionable decisions? How can we discern between genuine Christian liberty and rationalization? What safeguards can help us in moments of moral ambiguity?

3. The Timing of Temptation

The sermon noted that temptation often strikes after we've been faithful, when we feel we've "earned" some moral credits, or when God has given us our desires and life feels stable.

Discussion: Why might we be particularly vulnerable to temptation during seasons of spiritual success or material blessing? How does this insight change how we approach times of prosperity versus times of struggle?

4. The Limits of Self-Deliverance

John Owen identified three inadequate ways we try to deliver ourselves: personal reputation, fear of shame, and relying on our conscience. The sermon argues that none of these prove sufficient in the moment of real temptation.

Discussion: Which of these three "self-deliverance" strategies do you find yourself relying on most? Why do you think even strong Christians with good reputations, like King David or Judas Iscariot, can still fall into serious sin? What does this teach us about human nature and our need for divine help?

5. The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

Drawing from Thomas Chalmers, the sermon concluded that we can't simply stop loving something harmful—we need a greater love to expel the lesser one. The ultimate goal isn't just behavior modification but deeper satisfaction in God.

Discussion: The sermon asked, "What is up underneath" various sins and behaviors—what deeper longings or loves are driving them? How do we cultivate such a deep love for God that other attractions lose their power? What practical steps can help us move from mere rule-following to heart transformation?