

# "Temptation and Orientation"

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Within the community of those aiding homosexuals in their struggles to come to Christ and come out of homosexuality there are divergent views on the issue of Sexual Orientation and Temptation and the relationship between the two. Some hold the position that one's orientation is defined by the nature of his/her temptations. I personally disagree with that position and would like to explore this subject in this study.

**First of all**, it is helpful to look at some of the many authentic definitions of the word "orientation". From the WordReference.com Dictionary we see the following definitions: "the act of orienting; an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs; position or alignment relative to points of the compass or other specific directions; predilection – a predisposition in favor of something; for example, 'a predilection for expensive cars'; 'his sexual *preferences*'; he 'showed a Marxist orientation', etc.;

Continuing on with definitions: "a person's awareness of self with regard to position and time and place and personal relationships; *An adjustment or adaptation to a new environment, situation, custom, or set of ideas.*"

From "thefreedictionary.com", "*The adjustment or alignment of oneself or one's ideas to surroundings or circumstances. Basic beliefs or preferences*" (the privilege or opportunity of choosing), "as in sexual orientation."

From Merriam-Webster: "a usually general or lasting direction of thought, inclination, or interest; a person's *self*-identification as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual."

From Wikipedia: "**Sexual orientation** is a pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, both genders, neither gender, or another gender. According to the American Psychological Association sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of "personal and social identity based on those attractions, behaviors expressing them, and membership in a community of others who share them." [1] Sexual orientation is usually classified relative to the gender of the people who are found sexually attractive.

Though people may use other labels, or none at all [2], sexual orientation is usually discussed in terms of three categories: heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual. These orientations exist along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexual to exclusive homosexual, including various forms of bisexuality in-between.”

In the above definitions it appears that adjustment, adaptation, alignment, and choice are dynamics that should not be excluded in our understanding of orientation, but should, rather, be factored in. The idea that one’s sexual orientation is identified by the nature of his/her temptations does not allow for the broader range of definitions regarding the issue as quoted above.

**Secondly**, we need to consider the definition, source and/or sources of temptation. Where does it come from? Who is the originator of suggestive, impure, tempting thoughts?

Definition: **Tempt** – “To attempt to persuade (a person) to do something evil or unwise, as by promising pleasure or gain. To be attractive to; invite. To test; prove.” (Standard College Dictionary)

Matthew 4:1,3 – “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” “And when the tempter came to him...”

Luke 4:13, “And when the devil had ended all the temptation , he departed from him [Jesus] for a season.”

Luke 10:25, “...A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him...”

James 1:13-15, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

In these above texts are revealed **three sources of temptation**: Satan himself, other people, and the lusts of the flesh – our own tendencies and propensities. Therefore, to say that our orientation is defined by the nature of our temptations is not an accurate statement. It can be correct, but temptations can also come from outside ourselves as well as from inside. This is why I contend that temptation may be a revelation of Satan’s plan for my life rather than a revelation of my own orientation. Is it necessary that we allow Satan’s

customized plan for our lives to define who we are and the nature of our orientation?

In years past I was a private pilot for awhile. During that time I flew in various weather conditions, sometimes fighting a head wind or a cross wind, sometimes being pushed along by a tail wind, and once (on my first solo cross country flight) even struggling to make my way through a violent storm. But in every case, I refused to let the wind and weather conditions determine my orientation or alter my destination.

Likewise, in my walk with the Lord, I have charted a course for myself and oriented myself to successfully reach my spiritual destination. Satan may blow at me his cross winds, tail winds, and head winds of temptation and may even embroil me in a violent storm as he battles for my soul, but he cannot alter my orientation. He cannot force me to yield to his devices. Contrary to conventional thinking, perhaps, I do not allow Satan's customized plan for my life to define who I am or define my orientation. I believe that temptation reveals Satan's orientation for my life, not my own orientation. Only if I give in to his plan can I be identified with it.

"Why is this so important?" you may be asking. "What difference does it make anyway?"

To me it is a very important issue, as I have spent the past 18 years using the method of positive reinforcement to live victoriously in this area and to maintain that victory. Upon my conversion, I chose a new orientation for myself by God's grace and have practiced replacing old thoughts and old ways with new ones. When asked to use a pen name for my protection in the publishing of my story I chose the name "Victor J. Adamson", a name with a message of positive reinforcement. I don't want to live the rest of my life wearing a label reflecting Satan's plan for my life. Nor does it seem logical to me that the life and orientation of my preference that I live today should be discounted and discredited by a fleeting suggestion, thought, or temptation hurled my way by Satan. My practice for the past 18 years has been to hurl it back with a "No thank you! Nice try! Not interested!" And I don't find a Biblical basis for this opposing view of sexual orientation either, as I will continue to show in this study.

For example, **another point to consider** is revealed in the text of Hebrews 4:15 which states that Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Therefore, if one's orientation is defined by the nature of his temptations, what would we say was Jesus' orientation...?

"Oh! But", some would say, "Jesus was God. He did not have the same fallen nature that we have. He was the second Adam and had the sinless nature of Adam before the fall... You cannot apply this same test to Jesus."

And I believe that herein lies the crux of the whole matter. But is this true according to the Word of God? Is this a Biblical point of view?

Romans 8:3, "...God sending His own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh..."

Philippians 2:7, "...and [Christ Jesus] was made in the likeness of men..."

Hebrews 2:14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same..." (Notice the literary highlighting and underscoring used in this verse to emphasize the point of Jesus' human nature being like yours and mine... "Forasmuch", "he also himself likewise")

Now, this definition of orientation being determined by the nature of one's temptations might be in harmony with conventional thinking, logic, reasoning, and understanding. But I'm not sure that such sources of our definitions are always in harmony with the Word of God. Especially do I think this to be true in light of so many texts of Scripture that teach us of the transforming power of our Creator and Re-Creator God. For example:

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God concerning you." (Romans 12:2)

As we consider the subject of "orientation" in light of the gospel of salvation from sin, **we must also consider the possibility of "reorientation"**: "A fresh orientation; a changed set of attitudes and beliefs; Change of direction – the act of changing the direction in which something is oriented; Setting or arranging in a new or different determinate position." As the Free Online Dictionary says it, "To adjust or align something in a new or different way."

Once a person goes through the reorientation process he is now able to self-identify with a new and different orientation. This fact is imbedded in the very definition of the word "reorientation", is it not?

By the way, is this not what the gospel, the plan of salvation, is all about? Change? Newness of life? From all walks of life to newness of life? For example: Does acceptance of God's health message not require a "reorientation...?" How about the Christian counsel on standards of dress and adornment...? Does not this counsel also initiate a "reorientation...?" Does the truth regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath not initiate a reorientation in one's thinking and life practice resulting in a drastically altered lifestyle? Yes, of course the gospel is all about "reorientation".

What is the natural orientation of every man, woman, and child anyway? Is it not an inward orientation? A self-focused, self-centered, self-pleasing orientation? Is not this true of the carnal nature of every one? And what does God's word say about the "natural man"?

1Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Ephesians 2:3, "Among whom also we all had our conversation *in times past* in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

In contrast we read on in verses 4-10, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are *his* workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Wow!! This sounds like a major reorientation process to me! A "reorientation" from self-ish-ness to self-less-ness, loving God supremely, (totally unnatural), and loving others as our selves, (also totally unnatural), a re-creation, now as partakers of His divine nature, being born again.

Some other texts of Scripture that support the principle of reorientation and how to get there are as follows:

2 Corinthians 10:5, "Casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself above the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."

Matthew 12:34, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh..."

Philippians 4:8, "Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely..., if there be any virtue...think on these things."

In being born again, we are counseled that "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) According to our inspired counsel, this means that "The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies." It means that "A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong." It means that orientation can be changed, converted, by a reorientation. To believe otherwise is to believe "once gay, always gay", a myth akin to that converse presumption of "Once saved, always saved", both of which I believe to be easily dispelled by a proper understanding of the Word of God.

This is also why the apostle Paul could say of the Corinthian believers and converts from fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, alcoholism, etc., "Such *were* some of you, but ye *are* washed, ye *are* sanctified, ye *are* justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

When asked by the jailor of Philippi, "What shall I do to be saved?" Paul answered by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If we insert the definitions for the words "Lord" (used so often in place of Jehovah, the great I AM, the self-existent One), and "Jesus" (Deliverer, from sin, Matthew 1:21), and "Christ" (Messiah, or Anointed), we can translate Paul's statement to say, "Believe on the Eternal Self-Existent One Who was anointed to be your personal Savior from sin, and you shall be saved, from your sins."

"Through all ages and in every nation those that believe that Jesus can and will save them personally from sin, are the elect and chosen of God; they are His peculiar treasure. They obey His call, and come out of the world and

separate themselves from every unclean thought and unholy practice.” (RH, 08/01/1893)

**In conclusion:** “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...” (Isaiah 53:6) “...All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) We all, by nature, are the children of wrath, carnal, fallen human beings. But our hope is in Jesus, who took upon Himself our fallen nature and, therefore, was also tempted in all points like as we are, yet demonstrated that we, too, can reach the point of living without sin. Temptation is not sin, and we need not be discouraged by it or allow it to define who we are. It matters not that we are of a fallen nature, but that we can be partakers of the divine nature, that we can be reoriented, with the mind of Christ, with new motives, new tastes, and new tendencies, to lives of obedience to Christ rather than rebels against God. In obeying Him, we will be but carrying out our own impulses. (DA 668) The plan of salvation is all about new beginnings, reconciliation, restoration, re-creation, reorientation, that we might be honorable sons and daughters of God.

**Take Heart:** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Amen! (2 Peter 1:2-4)