

INJOY
LIFE
CLUB.

The Seven Temptations Of A Leader

Dr. John C. Maxwell

Volume 15, Number 10

Adapted from *The Five Temptations of a CEO*, by Patrick Lencioni

Temptation comes when character is challenged. Victory or defeat is in the choice.



Introduction

1. Each of us are more susceptible to certain general temptations than others.

Examples:

1. Power issues control

2. _____ issues _____

3. _____ issues _____

4. _____ issues How we relate and connect.

5. _____ issues _____

2. Christian leaders face these kinds of general temptations too, but must also deal with unique "leadership" temptations.

- a. The challenge of these unique leadership temptations is that the leader is often unaware he/she has given in to it.
- b. Some leaders will deny them when confronted with the possibility.

- c. These leadership temptations are usually subtle in themselves, but the results of giving in to them are significant. My goal is to shed light on these temptations, and offer practical tips to overcome them, so you may become a more effective leader.

As we go through these seven, give the Holy Spirit permission to speak to you.

1. Which one is your greatest temptation?
2. Are you willing to admit and face it?
3. Are you ready to do whatever it takes to overcome and resist it?

The Seven Temptations

1. The temptation to choose _____ over achieving Great Commission productivity.

Image development is the process by which you are more concerned about what happens to you than what happens to the organization. You would never consciously think this way, but your decisions and actions, or lack of actions may give you insight to this temptation in your life.

This temptation is subtle and a somewhat instinctive part of our human desire to survive, and while surviving — to have everything OK.

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”
Acts 20:24 (NIV)



Questions for reflection:

- a. Are you largely at ease if your organization isn’t growing, but your position is secure?
- b. Which do you jump on faster — a personal offense or lack of growth in your organization?
- c. Are you tempted to make excuses for, and over-analyze why your organization isn’t growing? (Invest more time explaining why it’s not growing than causing it to grow.)
- d. Are you ever swayed to make decisions that protect your status and position instead of growing the organization?



Principles and observations:

- a. God expects Results from the talents He has given you.

Why is it that the secular world expects results without blinking an eye, but the church apologizes for it? We serve God! Is He not worth it?

- b. The people of your organization deserve leadership that produces results.
- c. If you forfeit results for image and status, you will forfeit the very thing you cling to. But, if you commit to results, you will receive all you desire and more.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. Make _____ the primary and most important measurement of personal success.

No matter how spiritual you are, and "spiritual" is good, people look to the leader to produce results. Godly is good, Godly plus results is great.

- b. Don't hold the organization hostage to your personal security or desire for recognition.
- c. Be willing to _____ personal rewards and perks for the sake of the church.
- d. Commit the _____ of all your resources (people, time and money) to bottom-line results.
- e. Identify your common time-wasters and activities which have little or no _____.

2. The temptation to choose _____ over _____.

This is perhaps the most common of all the temptations a leader faces. It takes many shapes and forms, but it comes from the same root — trying to make everyone happy so they feel good about you, and you in turn feel good about yourself.

In other words, your desire to be loved and affirmed is greater than your desire and sense of responsibility to lead.

“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

Galatians 1:10 (NIV)



Questions for reflection:

- a. Are you more likely to lay awake at night if someone is mad at you or if the church isn't winning new converts?
- b. Do you give in to “power” people, when you feel they're wrong, just to keep them happy with you?
- c. Do you worry about situations in which people in the organization are unhappy with you?
- d. Do you avoid or procrastinate confrontation with people in your ministry for concern of what might happen?



Principles and observations:

- a. Having people like you is _____, having people respect you is _____.
- b. People will like you if you are a nice guy, but they will follow you if they respect you as a leader.
- c. If your people don't respect you, in time, they will no longer follow you.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. Stand up for your _____ and stop worrying about what people think.

A little boat-rocking never hurt anyone, and can make the trip a whole lot more interesting!

- b. _____ sin and inappropriate behavior with loving conviction.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 4:15

“As Christians, we confront not to embarrass, belittle, tear down, or humiliate. We confront because of our commitment to help others reach their potential, including full-fledged stature in Christ. Paul had to say some very difficult things to the readers of his letters, but it was because of his unwavering bottom-line commitment to the people. ‘And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way — bearing fruit in every good work, growing up in the knowledge of God.’”

*Eugene Habecker and
Colossians 1:10*

Check list for an effective and redemptive confrontation:

- Did I separate the person from the action?
- Did I do my homework, get my facts straight, and pray first?
- Did I confront only what the person can change?
- Were my heart and motives right?
- Was a specific course of action agreed upon, and the person affirmed?

c. Possess the courage to say _____ .

This is one of the greatest signs of personal security and positive mental health. I say mental health, because if you don't learn how to say “no”, you will eventually end up an emotional basket case. Being a team player is important, but on occasion, you must say “no” to the good things to say “yes” to the best things.

d. Think for yourself and be willing to stand _____ if necessary.

e. Hold your leaders _____ to accomplish their responsibilities.

3. The temptation to choose _____ over _____ .

“All worthwhile men have good thoughts, good ideas, and good intentions; but a precious few of them ever translate those into action.” *Jon Hancock Field*

“It is better to be 80% correct and make things happen than to be 100% correct after the opportunity has passed.” *The Executive Speechwriter
Volume 12 Number 2*

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” *Joshua 1:9 (NIV)*



Questions for reflection:

- a. Do you pride yourself in having the answers?
- b. Do you delay decisions because you aren't sure about what to do?
- c. Do you occasionally get caught up in unnecessary detail?
- d. Are you too fearful about being wrong or making a mistake?
- e. Once you have all the information, is it still difficult for you to decide what to do?



Principles and observations:

- a. Leaders cause _____ — they make things happen.
- b. As a leader, you don't have the luxury of _____ over _____.
- c. Your people will learn more and benefit from a wrong decision in pursuit of the right things, than no action, in fear of the wrong things.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. You need to be willing to make _____.
- b. Learn to discern what you need for a _____.

For example, on *simple things*, when someone presents you with all the information and asks you if you want or need to think about it, say no. Decide right then. Thinking about it isn't going to change anything. You are not going to get smarter real quick, take a class or suddenly get a bolt of information. Trust your intuition.

For the more difficult and weighty decisions, give yourself a time limit and announce that time limit. Tell the person or committee, you want (for example,) a week to pray and seek wise counsel about it. In one week you will give your decision. By announcing the one week time line, you have made a decision on the spot. And rarely, do you need more than a week or two to pray and seek counsel.

One more thought — when the outcome isn't important don't invest time in the process.

- c. Think through what prevents you from action; _____ or _____ .
- d. Remember, _____ !

4. The temptation to bend _____ over building _____ .

"Lead your life so you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip!"

Questions for reflection:

- a. Are you tempted to go for the quick "get" even if it risks damaging integrity in the future?
- b. Do you rationalize that it's "all for the Lord" so you can do what you want?
- c. When faced with the possibility of losing the deal, will you bend things to get "creative" to make sure it happens?
- d. If this issue is relatively small, do you rationalize away its importance so you can "fudge" a little?
- e. Do you get defensive or even forceful with subordinates if they question your integrity?

Principles and observations:

"The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out."
Proverbs 10:9 (NIV)

"And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."
Psalms 78:72 (NIV)

- a. Short-term Results are never worth long-term character flaws.
- b. People's Trust in you is more important than your short term success.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. Make a commitment to God that you will always put character Before achievement.
 - b. Identify the weak areas of your character and make yourself accountable to trusted friends.
 - c. Intentionally build your character by making right and Godly choices even (and especially) when it may delay or deny the human win.
 - d. Promise God that you will be faithful to a life of integrity no matter how small the issue may be.
5. The temptation to choose Peace over Productive Conflict.

No muss, no fuss, that may be your leadership code. You want to keep things clean, unruffled, free from disagreement, relatively tranquil and absent of conflict.

The problem is that things don't work that way. Life is messy and progress requires conflict.

As a leader you must not only be comfortable with this idea, you need to cultivate it as long as it produces the right results and doesn't damage relationships.



Questions for reflection:

- a. Do you migrate toward what is pleasant over what is productive?
- b. Do you prefer to have everyone in harmony with each other even if it means the potential sacrifice of progress?
- c. When mediating conflict between two people, do you go for "everyone's happy" or confrontation, conviction and repentance of sin?
- d. Are you more comfortable with things organized and in order or ambiguous and unresolved?
- e. Do you tend to bring leaders around you who follow you easily or occasionally challenge you strongly?



Principles and observations:

- a. Motion causes friction and leaders cause motion . . .

- b. Comfort produces status-quo which leads to decline.

Whenever progress is being made, things are guaranteed to be ambiguous and unresolved. That is the nature of progress.

Status quo can never hold its own, its merely the step before losing ground and falling backward.

- c. People like that "peaceful, easy feeling" but tell their grandchildren stories about the "tough times" and how they came through them.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. Tolerate _____ in the moment if it contributes to the long-term mission.
- b. Give _____ for people to disagree and challenge one another as long as relationships are not damaged.

Including challenging and disagreeing with you.

- c. Select leaders who _____ and _____ you, not pamper and praise you.
- d. Value _____ over _____.

6. The temptation to choose self over Trust.

As a leader, you may prefer to remain slightly detached, safe from hurts, rejection and betrayal. Unfortunately, that same distance greatly reduces your leadership effectiveness.

Trust, on the other hand, empowers your team to speak the truth, make mistakes, challenge you and each other, try new ideas etc., without fear of repercussions. If you appear invincible, flawless and above life's petty troubles, they will not perform as they could because of the unrealistic (unnatural and unhealthy) environment created by you modeling a "superman/woman" persona.



Questions for reflection:

- a. Do you prefer being right over being real?
- b. Have you experienced past hurts that make it difficult for you to trust?

- c. Are you more comfortable keeping your weaknesses to yourself?
- d. When coaching your closest and most influential leaders, are you more likely to use stories about your successes or flaws and failures?
- e. Do you relate to your key influencers more as trusted friends, or qualified associates?



Principles and observations:

- a. You can _____ people from a distance, but you only impact them close up.
- b. People connect more with your _____, than with your _____.

They follow you because of your strengths, but they connect with your weakness, your humanity, the ways in which you are real to them.

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

- c. The greatest risk of all, is risking _____, and it will produce the greatest results.

When you put yourself on the line, your heart exposed and your ministry on the table. . . people respond.



Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

- a. Reflect on your own personal trust in _____.

Leaders who have trouble trusting God, often have trouble trusting people. The more you trust in Him, the more you can extend trust to others.

- b. Be honest, open and authentic with _____.

Let them get to know the real you.
You are at your best when you are yourself.

- c. _____ where people have permission to challenge you without fear of negative consequences.

- d. _____ to a person or small group who knows everything there is to know about you as a person.

There is a freedom in being known, fully known, the good with the bad. This will serve you as a model for modeling vulnerability and trust on a larger scale.

- e. Make a list of your _____ and _____, celebrate them both, and give them back to God.

7. The temptation to choose _____ over _____.

I can't be certain, but my hunch is that every leader has been tempted here.

God gives you gifts and talents to be a leader, but you take off and lead largely on your own — your own power, your own ideas, your own agenda. This is potentially very dangerous, and guarantees nothing more than your own human potential. How you handle the temptation is the issue.



Questions for reflection:

- a. When things go wrong, do you tend to “power up” to fix it or “center down” to see what God wants?
- b. Do you tend to make your plans first, then ask God to bless them?
- c. Do you find yourself going to God when you are in a “really big mess” but otherwise handle things on your own?
- d. Can you quickly discern the difference between operating on your own power and operating on God's power?
- e. What does being dependent upon God mean to you?



Principles and observations:

- a. It is Impossible for you to do as much without God as you can with Him.
- b. Dependence upon God calls for an Interdependance with others.

c. Jesus, Himself, teaches us that we can do nothing apart from the Father.

⁴“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” **John 15:4-5 (NIV)**



“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.” **John 12:49 (NIV)**

Practical advice for leaders who are tempted in this area:

Confess your sin on a regular basis and admit your (need) dependence upon God.

- a. Dream your dreams and make your plans in quiet times of prayer with God.
- b. Make sure your dreams are so big you need God to help you achieve them.
- c. Make sure your plans are designed so that you need other people to help you achieve them.
- d. Reflect on the scripture passage John 15:4-5.
- e. Express gratitude to God on a daily basis, both personally and publically — in recognition of all that He has done.



Growth Resources

Failing Forward — Dr. John C. Maxwell

Learn how to fail forward instead of backward. The difference between average people and achieving people is their perspective of failure and how they respond to it.

Regular Price	\$ 20.00
Club Member Price	\$ 18.00

For more information on ***Failing Forward*** or any INJOY resource that John mentions in this lesson, visit our web site at www.injoy.com or call 1-800-333-6506.

Answers: Power; Control; Purity; Thought Life; Pride; Ego; People; Pressure; Short-cuts; Image Development; Results; Results; Sacrifice; Vast Majority; Productive Value; Popularity; Respect; Wonderful; Essential; Convictions; Confront; No; Alone; Accountable; Certainty; Action; Motion; Personal Assurance; Risk Taking; Mistakes; Decision; Fear; Focus; God Is With You; Integrity; Character; Results; Character; Trust; Short-Term; Before; Accountable; Intentionally; Peace; Productive Conflict; Discord; Permission; Challenge; Sharpen Trust; Tranquility; Self-Protection; Trust; Impress; Weakness; Strengths; Yourself; God; Your People; Create An Environment; Make Yourself Accountable; Strengths; Weaknesses; Self-Reliance; God-Dependence; Impossible; Interdependence.

© 2000, The INJOY Group™, Inc.

INJOY™ P.O. BOX 7700 . ATLANTA, GA 30357-0700 . 800-333-6506 . FAX: 800-446-0454 . www.injoy.com