

Berea Goshen Report

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How to resist temptation

There are a lot of reasons why we should resist temptation. One of them is the reward of the **crown of life** which will be given to those who demonstrated how much they loved the Lord and, consequently, how much they resisted temptation.

James 1:12 says

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

You will receive forgiveness for every sin when you confess it, but, did you successfully resist, on average say, 1 out of every 10 temptations or 9 out of every 10 temptations? What faith-effort did you put into resisting temptation? Did you always crumble and fall apart just as soon as temptation reared its ugly head? How much of a faith-fight did you always put up? Why is that important, you ask?

1Corinthians 10:13 says

“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.”

That means that we are never tempted beyond our ability to overcome the temptation. Therefore, whether we yield or not when we are tempted is a real barometer with respect to how much we love the Lord. The following scriptures say exactly that.

John 14:15... if you love me keep my commandments.

John 14: 21... he that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me.

John 15:10... if you keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love even as I have kept my father’s commandments and abide in his love

Revelation 2:10...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

It’s one thing to yield to temptation, confess the sin and be forgiven. It’s another thing entirely to resist and not yield so easily or too often, in the first place! So, how does a Christian successfully resist temptation more often? I am glad you asked! But first, let us define temptation. **Temptation is pressure brought to bear on your being – spirit, soul and body - to do what you know violates God’s Word.**

Why does the Devil tempt you as a Christian? Temptation comes to challenge your love of God and love for God.

Temptation comes to cause us to break fellowship with God. Satan hopes that you will yield to the temptation, and that you will then accept the condemnation that he heaps on you and finally, that you will then quit on God! Satan hopes that you will throw up your hands and say, “I can’t do it, I just can’t live for God. This is for folks like Pastor.”

As if Pastor is not tempted! Actually, the devil dogs Pastor’s tail more because s/he is bigger fish! If he or she caves in and quits, the lives of a whole congregation of people can be messed up compared to if an individual believer quits.

The devil puts pressure on all Christians to go the way of the flesh and the way of the world! The pressure is spiritual but it can be so intense that you feel it in your mind, emotions and even physically. Have you ever felt like if you didn’t say a certain thing that you were inching to say or go a certain direction or do a certain thing that you would just burst? That’s the pressure of temptation, knowing that yielding would violate God’s word.

Even Jesus felt pressure in the garden of Gethsemane! You remember that the pressure was so intense that He sweated blood! **Luke 22:44.** You and I will never be tempted to that degree because Jesus was tempted on our behalf – but pressure comes with every temptation. Note, however, that we are told to be willing to resist to the extent that Jesus did if necessary.

How to resist temptation

How does one resist temptation? **Avoid it. How? Avoid lust. What is lust? Lust is a strong inordinate desire for a vice.** For someone who is not a believer or for the believer that is untaught, the desire is often overwhelming. They feel powerless and it seems like there is no way out but to yield!

It takes the power of God to resist temptation hence unbelievers often resign themselves to sinning and adopt the philosophy “if it feels good, do it.” Indeed, it often feels better at the time of temptation to yield than to resist, although later there is always the agony and pain of regret for the believer. Compared to the fleeting moment of pleasure, the pain might last a lifetime.

So, how does one acquire the strong inordinate desire for a vice? How does desire come about? Any desire. Desire comes about due to inordinate time investments in your thought life or in your imaginations. In other words, **if you spend enough time thinking about it or imagining it, you will develop a desire for it.** Lust is incubated in the womb of time spent

imagining a vice! So, how does one avoid lust? Deny the vice time.

James 1:13-14 says,

“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.

So, “every man is tempted.” Pause. “Every man!” That means woman too! No exemptions or exceptions! We live in a world over which the devil is god (**2Corinthians 4:4**) and he will see to it that you are tempted, especially if you name the name of Jesus. But, I can keep from helping him if I cut out time investments that draw me towards a vice. To entice is to tempt with the promise of pleasure.

The devil says to you or I, **“You know how good it is going to feel to tell them off!** You know they ought to be told off. It’s about time somebody told them off! It would be good to do everyone a favor and tell so and so off...and just think how good it will feel.” That is precisely the enticement...how good it will feel! That is what caused us to fall when we did. We agreed with the devil and said, “Yeah, it will feel really good, so let me do it”

So, you were drawn to tell so and so off because of your lust (strong desire to do so.) You had been thinking about doing this for a while. Then you were enticed, that is, the devil dangled in front of you the pleasure that awaits you should you go for it and you fell for it and did!

The entire passage goes on to say that when lust has conceived, it leads to sin, and when sin is finished, death is the result! **Sin always leads to death!** The Bible says that the soul that sinneth shall die! **The death involved is not always physical, in the short run.**

Free cheese is only available in mouse traps

The immediate “death” that occurs is broken fellowship with Life, that is, with God the Father. He still loves you but you have broken connection, the line has gone dead! But this end is never inevitable.

Matthew 5:28 says,

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

It did not say whosoever looks at a woman, but whosoever looks at a woman **to lust after her**. That means that you can look without lusting! What is the difference between “looking” and “lusting?” Time. **Time spent looking tends to cause “looking” to become “lusting.”**

It usually takes only a second to look and many times you can’t help looking. For example, there you are getting gas at the gas station and a man or woman walks out of the convenience store in your direct line of sight and draws your attention. You naturally look in that direction. It is a handsome man or a beautiful woman. So far so good!

The question then is whether or not your eyes follow them or you “steal” another look because of the size of their biceps or chest etc! If you take more time to examine the anatomy of the individual, you are into lust. Confess it and be rid of the sin.

Job 31:1-12 is very instructive in this light:

[1] I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? [2] For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? ... [7] If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes... [8] ... if I have laid wait at my neighbour’s door; [10] Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. [12] For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

Time spent looking tends to cause “looking” to become “lusting.”

Job says he made a covenant with his eyes not to look too long so that he doesn’t “think” on a maid, that is, enter into lust. This passage then talks about the results of lust.

Your heart will follow your eyes if you look too long! Lust will form in your heart! You will lose your inheritance and increase from God and will also be sowing seeds for a harvest that you do not want!

So, to resist temptation, avoid lust. To avoid lust, deny the vice time investments.

To be continued.

2025!

Still The YEAR OF FLOURISHING!

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