Temptations To Sin

(Kevin Heaton)

Temptations have been a part of this world from the very beginning. Eve was tempted in the garden which led to her and Adam giving in to temptation and sinning against God. All men face temptation in some form or another. John wrote in 1 John 2:16 that the world consists ***of "the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions."*** The world we live in is troubled by temptation and sin.

James 1:13-15 tells where temptations come from: ***"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."*** The one behind temptation is the "tempter," Satan. He is always seeking opportunity to tempt us with something (cf. Luke 4:13).

But we can overcome temptation by choosing to follow God and seeking His help. Paul tells us ***that "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it"*** (1 Corinthians 10:13). We will be tempted. But when we are tempted, we can overcome it if we are looking to God. There is absolutely no temptation that we cannot overcome. There is no "I couldn't help it" or "the devil made me do it." Giving in to temptation is a choice. And if we want to please God and not sin, then we will choose not to give in to temptation. ***"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"*** (Philippians 4:13).

In our battle against temptation and sin, Jesus gives us two serious warnings that we need to be mindful of at all times.

1) ***"Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!"*** (Matthew 18:7).

We need to make sure that we are not in any way causing others to be tempted to sin. Yes temptations will come, but we need to be absolutely certain that they won't come from our own conduct.

Because of such, we need to be very mindful of how we dress (This is especially important for the females to be mindful of due to the fact that males struggle with visual temptations.). We need to be careful in our speech. We need to be self-controlled in our conduct. May we all strive to make sure that in no way will we cause others to stumble, for Jesus said ***"whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea"*** (Matthew 18:6).

2) ***"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire"*** (Matthew 18:8-9).

What was Jesus emphasizing by using such a strong illustration? I believe He was stressing the fact that we need to do whatever it takes to remove anything from our lives that is a temptation for us and will cause us to sin. Each of us has to fill in the blank for ourselves of what it is that we need to get rid of seeing that we all have different temptations. Maybe it's certain shows that are on TV. Maybe it's the time you spend online which lures you in to viewing things you shouldn't. Maybe it's the people you are currently spending time with. The list could go on. The answer is this: find out what tempts you and then do everything you can to keep it away from you.

Remember the words of 1 John 2:17 - ***"the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."*** If we continue to give in to temptations, then we will be destroyed like the world. But if we follow God and reject the temptations of this world, then we will live on in eternity with God in Heaven. We have to ask ourselves which is worth more: the fleeting pleasures of sin or the eternal blessings of God. When in doubt, look to the example of Moses who ***"refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward"*** (Hebrews 11:24-26).