

Temptation

By Ron Boatwright

As free moral agents, we all face temptation to sin. We have all been tempted and have been guilty of sin. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We will die spiritually if we continually give in to temptation and sin. We will be eternally lost in Hell if we continue in our sin. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are the one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). If we are not careful we can "be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). But "Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life" (James 1:12).

Satan is referred to as the tempter, the one who does the tempting (Matthew 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:5). But God does not tempt anyone. "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:13-15). Spiritual death occurs when one is eternally separated from God in Hell.

God will not allow us to be tempted with more than we can bear. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). But "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the Day of Judgment" (2 Peter 2:9).

But how do we protect ourselves from temptation? Jesus tells us to "Watch and pray, lest you enter temptation" (Matthew 26:41). We are to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the truth" (1 Peter 5:8-9). Studying God's word and making it a part of our lives will help to protect us when we are tempted. David said, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalms 119:11).

When others "in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13), we must try to help gently restore them. "Brethren, if any man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

Sin is very deceitful and as we continue to be tempted, if we are not careful, we can gradually give in to it and become comfortable in sin. We must be watchful and overcome temptation and live a godly life so we can go to Heaven when this life is over.