

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Temptation

"He who avoids the temptation avoids the sin." – Anonymous

"Better shun the bait than struggle in the snare." – John Dryden

"Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colors that are but skin-deep." – Matthew Henry

"We gain the strength of the temptation we resist." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Every single one of us faces temptation. It is powerful and should not be underestimated. Jesus knew of this and said to His disciples, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). And even in the example prayer, He said, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one..." (Matt. 6:13).

Even Jesus understands what it means to be tempted. "And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan..." (Mark 1:13). But thank God the Hebrew writer gives us some great encouragement: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

Thankfully the Bible helps us understand the process of temptation even going back to when Eve succumbed to it in the Garden of Eden. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate" (Gen. 3:6). Here we see the methodology of Satan, also described for us by the apostle John. "For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). Through the flesh, the eyes, and one's pride, Satan hurls his darts and, if we are not careful, we succumb.

James adds the process of how sin develops. "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 1:14-15).

Remember the words of Paul, "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 Cor. 10:13).