



The Good News

July 23rd, 2017

Volume 17, Issue 30

Dealing with Temptation

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For thousands of years, man has been at the mercy of his own impulses and deepest desires. As far back as Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit, man has always known what temptation is and how difficult it can be to overcome. Two thousand years ago, the Word came and delivered to man not only the means of obtaining forgiveness for the countless falls to temptation, but also the knowledge to conquer temptation. Temptations come in many shapes and sizes, different flavors and smells, yet God's Word has equipped us with the knowledge and ability to see past the temptation and root out the strength of temptation – our own sinful desires. In purifying our heart and seeking God's righteousness we negate the strength of temptation – a gullible and disloyal heart. Let us consider the following points about temptation that Paul considered important and take from them the knowledge that will always help us to overcome temptation.

Never become overconfident – I Cor. 10:11-12 – Our context is communicating the sins and mistakes of the Israelites as they often tested God by worshipping idols and falling to sexual immorality. Paul says that "...*these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition...*" The term "*admonition*" literally means "*instruction*" but carries with it a serious undertone more properly defined as "*warning*". Paul then extends the warning by saying, "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" It is important to never become over-confident by thinking temptation cannot find root in our hearts and minds. The moment that we think we are impervious is the moment the devil will find a foothold in our heart. Yet we must be confident that temptation can be overcome with God's help.

There is nothing new under the sun – I Cor. 10:13 – "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man...*" These words from Paul carry a double application: 1) We will never face a tempta-

tion that has never been faced before – this carries its own encouragement as we consider all the ways in which we are tempted every day. While our situations and personal lives are all different, we will never encounter a "new" temptation, which leads to our second application, 2) All temptation can and has been overcome; at some point in Christian history our spiritual ancestors faced and conquered every temptation that we face today. Whether the temptation is sexual, prideful, or hateful in nature, some Christian has some point has conquered it. Obviously, Christ, who was in all points tempted such as we are, is the ultimate example and motivator of this fact.

God cares! – I Cor. 10:13 – Paul goes on to tell us that God is faithful, and will always provide a way of escape out of every temptation that we may be able to bear it. First, it is important to note that God tempts no man (Jas. 1) but does allow us to be tested that our faith will be made stronger. When we are tested we are promised that God will provide some avenue to defeat it. It can be very difficult to define what this "way of escape" is in the moment, as God's providence, among other means, can be at work without us realizing. But one thing is certain: we will never escape the temptation if we are not looking for a way out. We must seek out the means of escaping that God provides; otherwise we will fall victim to our own desires and lust will bring forth sin.

Let us always seek to overcome temptation by using the knowledge God has given us to think through temptations and overcome them, rather than simply falling to them.