**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Myths About Sin and Temptation (Part 1)**

There are some people who become Christians, but they have allowed sin to rule in their lives. Their conduct is not worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27). They do not walk by the Spirit, but rather they fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). In the battle with Satan they are losing. And the question is why? Why don’t they exercise the self-control and do what is right? Several reasons could be given, but I think some Christians fall into sin because they have come to believe some myths about sin and temptation. These are myths, they are not true, but coming to believe them has made their struggle with temptation more difficult.

And so this morning I want to talk about some myths about sin and temptation.

Myth number 1: “There are some Christians who do not struggle with temptation.”

There are two aspects of this myth. First of all, one may think he does not struggle with temptation. That is a myth. He has deceived himself. As we will see, the Bible teaches that all of us struggle with temptation to sin.

The second aspect of this myth is probably more common than the one just mentioned, and that is “others do not struggle with temptation like I do.” These are ones who wallow in self-pity, having convinced themselves that they are the only ones who struggle with temptation, “other Christians just do not struggle with temptation like I do.” Believing this they become discouraged and give up the fight.

 Well, it is not true that some Christians do not struggle with temptation. This is a myth. All struggle with temptation. Peter says in 1 Peter 5:8, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* The devil is not only seeking to devour me, he is also seeking to devour you. In 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 the apostle Paul says, *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 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.”* We all can identify with one another in that we all are being tempted to commit sin.

I think there is a need for all of us within the church to unmask ourselves, to some extent, to reveal some areas in which we are vulnerable to temptation. If we are going to get to the place of being helped with our struggles, and of helping one another, we need to do some unmasking. What we see when we come into the assemblies of the church sometimes can be deceiving. We all dress up. We put on our nice faces and good behavior. We sit quietly and orderly. And here is a brother who comes in and inside of him there is a struggle that is boiling and raging. This struggle may have been within him for weeks, or months. He sees all the others in the congregation who seem to have everything under control, and he says to himself, “No one here struggles like I do. They can’t understand what I am going through.” He may get discouraged and leave the Lord. Well, the fact is they do know. All of us are real people. All of us struggle with problems and temptation. To be helped I need to let my brethren know that I am hurting and I need them. Paul says, *“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Gal. 6:2) 1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”* We are to be there for one another. If I do not let you know that I am struggling, then you cannot be the kind of support God intended for you to be. Also to be of help to others I need to let my brethren know that I am struggling as they do, that I know how they feel, and that I care. I need to let them know that I can empathize with them, and I am here to help them. It is comforting to know that others know how we feel and are there to help. The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus, our Savior has been through what we are going through and He understands our struggle. Hebrews 4:14-15 says, *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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.”* There is a story of a man who worked for a company in a responsible position where he was entrusted with large sums of money. One day he was tempted to put some of the cash into his own account. He knew that it would be a long time before his theft could be discovered. He resisted the temptation but felt that he needed to tell somebody the struggle through which he had passed. He went therefore to the man who had occupied the position before him and told him all about the temptation and how he had almost fallen. To his surprise, the man didn’t rebuke him, but put his hand on his shoulder in a fatherly sort of way and said, “I know exactly how you felt. I went through it all myself when I occupied your position.” It is always encouraging to know that we are not alone in our struggles. Jesus can sympathize with us because He has been tempted just like we are now being tempted. He knows how we feel. The only difference between us and the Lord is that He never once gave in to temptation. But He knows what it’s like to be tempted. Does Jesus care when we are tempted? Yes, He does. And He is there to give us help. If you are thinking no one struggles with temptation as you do, you need to know that is a myth.

Myth number 2: “Sin really isn’t any fun.”

Sometimes, to discourage young people, parents or Bible class teachers may say, “Sin is not fun. There is no pleasure in sin. Sin only hurts.” The fact is there is pleasure in sin. Hebrews 11:24-25 says, *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”* This passage says there is pleasure in sin. But someone may be saying, “But the pleasure is only for a season.” This is true, but what I am saying is, don’t discount the season. The season may be a few years, may be a life time. There is pleasure in sin. If not, why are so many people doing it?

It is a mistake to tell our young people, “Sin is not fun.” If they have been told by their parents “sin is no fun,” and then find out this not so, what will they do with all else they have been told by their parents? When young people learn that we have been dishonest about one thing, generally they do not just throw out the one thing, but they throw out the whole package.

The truth of the matter is there is no LASTING or ENDURING pleasure in sin. You may have pleasure for a time, but payday is coming. There are some long term consequences to a life of sin. When you commit sin there is a price to be paid. Proverbs 13:15 says, *“Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard.”* In Numbers 32:23 Moses said to the children of Ruben and Gad that if they did not meet their responsibility to fight with their brethren for the land on the western side of the Jordan River, he said, *“be sure your sin will find you out.”* Paul said in Galatians 6:7-8, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”* We will reap what we sow. A person who thinks he can enjoy the pleasures of sin in this life and then God will welcome him into heaven in the end is only kidding himself. Paul is saying that will not happen. Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death.”* Paul says in Romans 2:9-10, *“tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* Yes, there is pleasure in sin, but it is only for a season. Payday is coming.

Myth number 3: “I fell into that sin before I realized what I was doing.”

I suggest this is an attempt to rationalize one’s sin. It is an attempt to excuse the sin.

You see, temptation may catch us by surprise, but rarely does the sin catch us by surprise.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between temptation and sin. Temptation is not sin, but the occasion for sin. Jesus was tempted, but He never committed sin (Heb. 4:15). In James 1:14-15 we read, *“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.”* I mentioned earlier a man, who was entrusted with large sums of money, was tempted to put some of that money into his own account. He was drawn away by his own desires and enticed, but he did not give in to the temptation and commit sin. We are tempted, but sin occurs when we yield to the temptation.

What I am saying is that temptation may catch us by surprise, but rarely does the sin catch us by surprise. You remember the story of David committing adultery with Bathsheba. In 2 Samuel 11 beginning with verse 2, *“Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her…”* Probably the temptation caught David by surprise. There is no indication that he went on the roof that night for the purpose of lusting after Bathsheba. He saw her bathing and he was tempted. He could have overcome the temptation, but rather he thought about it, sent and enquired about the woman, he sent messengers, he took her, she came to him, and he lay with her. Though the temptation may have caught him by surprise, the sin did not catch him by surprise. When he committed the sin he knew exactly what he was doing.

The real problem is not that we fall into sin before we realize what we are doing, but it is our propensity to rationalize what we have already decided we are going to do. Rationalizing is the attempt to make evil look good, or not look so bad. Isaiah said, *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* (Isa. 5:20). Sometimes we try to convince ourselves that the reason we ended up sinning is because somebody did a real good job deceiving us in doing something we didn’t realize what we were doing. No, the problem is we deceived ourselves because we WANTED to do what we did.

If you are thinking that you fell into a sin before you realized what you were doing, you need to know that is a myth.

Our time is gone for today. Next week, the Lord willing, we will continue our study and look at some other myths about sin and temptation.

Before we close, we want to invite you to check out our web site. You are able to hear sermons on a variety of topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com.