**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rolla, Missouri**

**5/2/2021**

**Myths About Sin and Temptation (Part 2)**

Last week we began looking at some myths about sin and temptation. We mentioned that 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 we asked the question, “Why?” Why do some Christians fall back into sin? One reason is 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. As a matter of fact as a result of believing some of these myths they have become discouraged and have given up the fight.

First let us review what we talked about last week.

We mentioned that some have come to believe the myth, “Other Christians do not struggle with temptations like I do. They can’t understand what I am going through.” But we emphasized the fact that they do know. All of us are real people. All of us struggle with problems and temptation. Our brethren do know what it means to be tempted and they can help us in our struggle. If you are thinking no one struggles with temptation as you do, you need to know that is a myth.

We also mentioned last week that sometimes to discourage young people, parents or Bible class teachers may say, “Sin is no fun. There is no pleasure in sin. Sin only hurts.” This is a myth. The Bible acknowledges that sin is pleasurable (Heb. 11:25). The truth of the matter is there is no LASTING or ENDURING pleasure in sin. The pleasure of sin is only for a season as stated in Hebrews 11:25. We emphasized last week that 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.

And thirdly some have come to believe the myth that they fell into a sin before they realized what they were doing. We mentioned that this is an attempt to rationalize one’s sin. It is an attempt to excuse the sin. We emphasized last week that temptation may catch us by surprise, but rarely does the sin catch us by surprise. 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.

Today we want to look at two other myths about sin and temptation.

Myth number 4: “When I become a strong or mature Christian, then I will no longer have to struggle with temptation.” One of the shocks that come to some Christians who have made considerable progress in their growth as Christians, is when they fall head first into sin. The reason for the shock is they had it in their minds that when they became a mature Christian they couldn’t be tempted by sin like before. Some of us live for this fantasy day when we will no longer be tempted again. The fact is, as far as our life here under the sun, that day never comes. Satan continues to be active throughout our lives. 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.”* Paul said in Ephesians 6:12-13, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* These instructions were not given to just young, weak Christians. These are given to all of us. Even the mature Christian continues to battle with the rulers of the darkness of this age. All of us are tempted. If we begin to measure our spiritual maturity by the day when we are no longer tempted to sin, then we will constantly be suffering from low self-esteem spiritually. Spiritual maturity is not measured by the absence of temptation. Spiritual maturity is measured by one’s ability to recognize and overcome the temptation when it presents itself.

I would say Paul was spiritually mature when he wrote the first Corinthian letter, but even he continued to struggle with temptation. He said to the Corinthians, *“Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”* (1 Cor. 9:26-27). Notice, Paul continued to struggle with temptation. He knew that if he did not exercise self-control he would fall into sin. Even after he had preached for many years and continued to preach, it was still possible for him to be tempted and to give in to the temptation and commit sin and be disqualified, that means to be rejected by God. Therefore, he disciplined his body and brought it into subjection.

Now it is true that as we resist temptation and as we grow in the Lord we become stronger, and some temptations that were at one time very strong are not a problem for us any longer. James says in James 4:7, *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* If you will resist the devil by overcoming the temptation he hurls at you, then he will flee from you. But he will be back. He may not come at you with the same temptation, but he will come at you from an angle you may have not thought about before. He continues to walk about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Spiritual maturity does mean we are stronger, but it does not mean we will not have to battle. If you are thinking that when you become a mature Christian, you will then no longer have to struggle with temptation, you need to know that is a myth.

Myth number 5: “Just one time. It won’t hurt to commit sin this once.” Some seem to think that committing sin, just this one time, is not a problem. “What’s the big deal? I’m not going to make it a habit.”

For one thing, whenever we commit sin, even one sin, we sin against God. Every sin we choose to commit is against God and it grieves God. Joseph understood that when he was tempted to commit fornication with Potiphar’s wife. He said, *“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”* (Gen. 39:9) The primary reason he chose not to commit this one sin was because it was against God. Every sin is against God. For the one who loves God, and does not want to grieve God, he will do all he can to keep from committing even one sin. 1 John 5:3 says, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”* Loving God means to keep His commandments. If we love God we will not decide that it is alright, even once, to sin against Him. God hates sin. God does not want us to commit sin. When we choose to commit sin we are doing what we want rather than what God wants. We are not showing a love for God when we choose to commit even one sin. Let me illustrate: Here is a man who says he loves his wife, but he decides, just this once to cheat on her. Does he love his wife? No! And when we choose to commit even one sin we are saying to God, “what I want is more important than what You want.” It is showing a lack of love for God.

Secondly, when I choose to commit that one sin I become guilty of all of God’s law. Look with me in James 2:10, *“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”* Someone may be asking, “How does one become guilty of all the law by just disobeying one command?” The answer is he stands condemned by all the law when he violates any portion of it. We understand this concerning the laws of our nation. We call certain people criminals. What makes them criminals? – their infraction of the law. How much of the law? Only one infraction will do it. A bank robber is no less a criminal because his only crime is stealing. He doesn’t have to violate other laws in order to acquire this classification. He is a criminal and worthy of punishment. One may keep much of the law with great consistency, but if he violates the law in one point he then stands condemned by the law as a law breaker.

In the same way one sin (one transgression of God’s law) makes one a sinner, and a sinner is under the condemnation of all the law. Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death….”* The death he is talking about here is separation from God in hell. One sin will send me to hell. One day we are going to stand before Christ in judgment and He will take every act into account in His judging of our lives. No decision is too small to be insignificant. Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 *“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”* Eccl. 12:13-14 says, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.”* We maybe would like to think that one sin won’t hurt, but when God judges our lives, every decision to commit sin will be taken into account. God will not inadvertently or mistakenly consign anyone to eternal punishment. Only those will be there who demanded to be there by the choices they made. We need to be serious about our lives and about every decision we make.

And thirdly, one sin today will affect the choices we make tomorrow. The choices we have made in days gone by have influenced where we are right now. We make our choices one at a time. Our choices become habits, our habits form our character, and our character is the ultimate expression of who and what we really are. Each decision we make has an effect on what we will become. The point I am making is that each decision we make has an effect upon the next decision. The decisions I make tomorrow will be determined by the decisions I am making today. Another way of saying it, future choices have to be made by a person who has been shaped by the choices already made. None of us are standing still. With every choice we are either becoming more like God, or more like Satan. In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 19, Paul describes certain ones *“who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”* Notice, these people were past feeling. They did evil and had no twinge of conscience. How did they get to this point in their life? It is because of the decisions they made in the past to do evil and disregard their conscience. Each decision to do wrong made it easier to do wrong the next time. Eventually their conscience was seared and they were past feeling.

If you are thinking that it won’t hurt to commit sin this once, just one time, you need to know that is a myth.

Our time is gone for today. We thank you for listening.

If you would like a free audio CD copy of today’s program or of any of our Bible Talk broadcasts, just give us your name and address, along with the title of the program you would like a copy of and we will be glad to send it to you, absolutely free of charge.

There are three ways you may send in your requests.

You may email it in: Our email address is: sjchurch@sjchurchofchrist.com.

You may call it in: Our phone number is 573-265-8628.

Or you may mail it in through the US postal service: The address is Bible Talk, PO Box 308, St. James, MO 65559