

12. Victory over Temptation

We live in a world that has become accustomed to violence in the form of terroristic threats. But the Supreme Terrorist is often not acknowledged. His name is Satan, and he has been the author of destruction in many human lives. ***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*** (1 Peter 5:8 NKJV). If we are to walk in the Victory given to us at the cross by Jesus Christ, we must first acknowledge the fact that there is indeed an enemy. One of his greatest tactics is to convince men that he is harmless or doesn't really exist at all. Those of us who have been overcome by cunning, baffling, and powerful strategies in the past must come to grips with the fact that it is truly the master deceiver rather than the substance or behavior that is to blame. Paul writes to believers in Ephesus, ***Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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*** (Ephesians 6:11-12 NKJV).

To the believer in Jesus Christ, temptation is not a sin but a call to battle, and we must accept it as just that. In the past we have attempted all kinds of strategies to overcome temptation with little or no consistent success. We have been told to try harder or call someone when we are tempted. To be perfectly frank, when I want to sin, the last thing that I am going to do is call someone to talk me out of it. There must be a better way.

There is! Jesus Christ said, ***"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."*** He has given us the Victory already and we must learn to walk in it. God allows you to face temptation so that you can see the idols of your heart. Temptation can be overcome when we allow God to change our heart by casting out the idols. The Apostle Paul assures us, ***"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."*** When we learn to do this, we will be "more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

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Meditation passage for the week – James 1:12-25

Temptation is a deception and a terroristic threat to the Victorious Christian Walk

1. Temptation
 - A. Temptation by its very nature is **deception** (James 1:16)
 - B. Temptation is **not** a **sin** in itself (James 1:12)
 1. Jesus was **tempted** but did not **sin** (Matthew 4:1)
 2. We cannot **avoid** temptation
 - a. There is no place to go to **escape** from temptation, for the **devil** and our **flesh** are always with us
 - b. We can't **escape** it, but when it comes, we are to **resist** it, that is, say "no" to it (1 Peter 5:9, James 4:7)
2. Temptation comes from **three sources**
 - A. The **devil** (John 13:2)
 - B. Our own **sinful nature** (James 1:14-15)
 - C. Other **human beings** (Matthew 18:6-7, Matthew 16:21-23)
3. The Goal of temptation is to **separate** people from **God**
4. God directly **tempts** no one (James 1:13), but God **allows** temptations
5. God **limits** our temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13)
6. The Devil is **methodical** in temptation strategy (1 Peter 5:8)
 - A. He often **attacks** us when we are **weakest**
 - B. He often tempts us on the heels of great **spiritual victory**
 - C. The devil often tempts us during a time of **idleness**
 - D. The devil is **tenacious** and **persistent**
 - E. The devil leads us to **doubt**, then **deny** God's **goodness** or **wisdom**
7. Know his **schemes** against us in the **Colony!** (Ephesians 6:10-14 three parts)
 - A. **Trusting** our **reason** more than God and His Word
 - B. Loving the **praise** of **men** more than the praise of God
 - C. **Complaining** instead of thanking and praising God
 - D. **Self-pity**, the neglect of prayer, depression, **despair**
 - E. **Fatalism** (giving up, why bother)
 - F. **Anger** (temper)