

Temptation - A Matter of our Will

We are tempted by those things we are **willing** to do and **able** to do. If we are not willing to do something then it is not a temptation for us. Likewise, if we are not able to do something, then it also is not a temptation for us. The implications of this are twofold. With respect to ability, our response to is to flee temptation (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18). By fleeing, we are no longer able, and the temptation is gone. Fleeing removes the ability to commit that sin from our life. And when we flee, we must burn all bridges, close all doors, and leave no way for us to return to that temptation.

With respect to our will, when we are tempted by something, it is a sign that within us there is the will to commit sin in this particular area. We are tempted in areas where we are willing to sin. This willingness must be confessed to God, and we must decide to conform our will to His will, and choose not to sin. We must reach the point where we are no longer willing to commit that sin, where we refuse to even consider it (2 Timothy 2:23), and until we reach that place, we will continue to be tempted in that particular area of our lives. So in this respect, temptation can be seen as a positive thing, in that it reveals to us weaknesses in our soul, cracks through which the enemy may come and go in our life. It reveals to us an area of our life that we have not placed under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

We must immediately confess this, making Christ Lord of our life in this area. By submitting this area of our life to God, we take on His will. We must put on the mind of Christ regarding the area of temptation as well. Then we see the temptation through His eyes rather than our own, and suddenly it is no longer a temptation at all. The evidence that we have done these things is that the temptation will literally appear different to us. We will see it in a completely different way, and it is not tempting at all. Until we reach this point, we must continue to bring this matter to God in prayer. And once we have experienced deliverance, we must remain in that deliverance.

We remain in God's deliverance by putting on the new man (Ephesians 4:22-32) and pursuing "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11) "and peace" (2 Timothy 2:22). We remain by setting our minds on the things above (Colossians 3:1,2) and dwelling on what is good (Philippians 4:8,9) rather than on the thing that is tempting us. We can choose to go back into that area of sin or temptation, or we can choose to walk in the deliverance that God has provided. It is a choice that we must make (Joshua 24:15). We choose to either serve God or the gods who ruled our life before we were born again. We must put on the new man, and walk in newness of life, being renewed in the spirit of our minds. By doing this, we put the final repairs on the hole in our soul through which the temptation came in the first place. Satan being defeated leaves (James 4:7), and we are tempted no more in that area.

May God grant you a stubborn unwillingness to sin in any area that you find yourself tempted in. May the mind of Christ be yours, transforming you by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good acceptable and perfect. May the new man, Christ Jesus be fully formed in you, giving you the staying power of Christ, that you may set your face like flint against all that comes against you. And may God's riches and best be yours, today, tomorrow and for eternity. The new man is in the house. Let him out! Let him shout!