

I. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN REACT WHEN HE IS TEMPTED TO DO WRONG?

When we are tempted to sin...

A. WE SHOULD REALIZE FIRST OF ALL WHAT THE DEVIL'S PURPOSE IS IN TEMPTING US.

1. The devil hates God and he's bent upon destroying all those who would serve God (I Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:11).
2. To accomplish his purpose the devil tempts us to sin so we will lose our testimony and become ineffective as a witness for God. Notice what Nathan the prophet said unto David after he had sinned..." by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (II Sam. 12:14).
3. Keeping a good testimony for the Lord and maintaining a walk which will back up our witness is what the apostle Paul was concerned about and this drove him to live a disciplined life (I Cor. 9:27).

B. WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT PLAGUES US ALL BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO DESTROY US ALL.

1. We all have a sin nature which we acquired through Adam's transgression and we are all tempted at times in one way or another (Ro. 5:12; 7:18,19).

Solomon referred to the sinful desires of our fallen nature as "every man the plague of his own heart" (I Kings 8:38). Everyone of us is plagued and tempted to fulfill sinful desires.

2. Notice while we are all tempted in various ways, the Lord has promised to be faithful to us and to help us in two specific ways (I Cor. 10:13).
 - a. The Lord has promised He won't allow us to be tempted beyond our means to resist. He knows our load-limit.
 - b. Secondly, the Lord has promised to make a way for us to escape when we're tempted to do wrong.

C. WE SHOULD SUBMIT OURSELVES TO GOD AND RESIST THE DEVIL (Jas. 4:7,8)

1. This calls for drawing close to the Lord and depending upon His power and grace. This is a matter of yielding to the Holy Spirit and feeding the new nature (Gal. 5:16).
2. This calls upon us to say "no" to the devil. This is a matter of starving rather than feeding the old sinful nature (Col. 3:5-10; Ro. 13:14). Note the example of Joseph (Gen. 39:1-12).

D. WE SHOULD PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND WHAT TEMPTS US.

1. God's Word exhorts us to flee or run away from certain things (I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22). This should be the rule for Christians to follow concerning the things that tempt them.
2. Notice what is needful is illustrated in a story concerning a converted drunkard. After his conversion someone asked why old Joe never came by the tavern anymore on his way home. Someone replied he had found another way home that didn't take him by the tavern.
3. Failure to put some distance between ourselves and what tempts us is a sure path to sin. People who yield to temptation are usually those who have gotten on an improper diet plan of feeding the old sinful nature, meditating on fleshly desires and keeping too close company with people or things that are potential threats to them because they appeal to some weak area in their old sinful nature.

E. WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT SIN IS NOTHING TO PLAY AROUND WITH.

1. This is evident when we consider the weakness of our flesh and the principle laid down in the Scriptures (Rom. 7:18,19; James 1:14,15).

This means if we play around with sin we will fall prey to it because we all have a propensity to sin and when we do it will hurt us.

2. This is evident when we consider the examples given to us in the Scriptures . Consider what it cost David (II Sam. 12:10), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

Speaking on the prodigal son someone has said, "sin will take you farther than you want to go, sin will keep you longer than you will want to stay, and sin will cost you more than you will ever want to pay."

3. This is evident when we consider the examples of those we know whose lives have been destroyed by sin.

We have witnessed the fact and been taught by the examples of others that God has certain irrevocable principles (Prov. 6:27,28; Gal. 6:7). To violate these by playing around with sin is to throw caution to the wind and court disaster.