

# The Allure Of Temptation

God is our Lord; Satan is our enemy. Righteousness is of God; lawlessness is of Satan. Perseverance is of God; falling to temptation is of Satan. It seems like a very simple, easy equation. *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above"* (Colossians 3:1). Sounds even simpler. If we want to be right with God, the path is very, very simple: stay away from sin, and embrace God's way. If it's so simple then, why do we fail so often?

Solomon advises all who would listen with these words in Proverbs 23:31: *"Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly."* He understood the deceptive beauty that sin puts forth to both the trained and the untrained eye; that it can appeal to the senses in such a way that will put all your inhibitions on the sideline. With eyes as big as rubies, men flock to the cup that swirls, hoping for a taste of that immortality that comes with the passing pleasures of sin. The pursuit of glory that only God alone possesses is part of what drove Eve to the forbidden fruit, making it *"good for the eyes"* (Genesis 3:6).

The story of the foolish youth in Proverbs 7 is often used as an illustration of this thought, and we often ask ourselves how anyone could place themselves in that sort of position. However, if we look closer, we will see the mirror turned on our own lives, showing us that the youth is not too different from ourselves. Note the ease with which he allows his soul to be taken. The seductress pulls no punches in telling him of what he is about to do, but with the *"swirl of the cup,"* the details seem no longer to matter. It becomes an easy choice for him: he will indulge himself now, and pretend the consequences will never come. He is a prisoner of his emotions, *"going to the stocks"* (vs. 22), ready to accept his instruction at the cost of this great pleasure. What he does not know is the pleasure will be short-lived; his lesson eternal.

It has been said before that nothing in this world is quite as exciting as the "thrill of the hunt." The problem with the end of the hunt is that the captured now seems so uninteresting, and it's only a matter of time before the eyes of the predator gaze upon its next prey. In a sense, this is what we as humans do. Looking upon the elusive temptations that surround us, we give chase, always drawing closer and closer to that final catch -- the line where temptation draws us into sin (James 1:15). After catching our prey, we look at what we have done in passion and excitement, only to discover that the result is not satisfying but horribly unfulfilling, even sickening to the stomach. And it is here that we discover the sad reality of our pursuits: while

we believed it would be us glorying in the end, the only one smiling is Satan, leaving us with a broken heart and a torn spirit.

There is a similarity between our attachment to faith and to temptations. The results of our faith are something that we see "*afar off*" (Hebrews 11:13), and what we do with that knowledge that they will come is the deciding factor in our faith: accept and live, deny and perish. The knowledge of the consequences of our sin is not so different. We understand the results of drunk driving, adultery, and lies as nothing glamorous, yet it does not phase us as it lies past the pleasure. But just as glory awaits past persecution for the righteous, so punishment stands patiently after pleasure for the sinner, and it's judgment is just as sure.

What is it that drives man to pursue just one more drink, just one more woman, just one more gambling ticket? While the answer is different for every person, but it can nonetheless be traced right back to the beginning of sin as we know it, and the desire to "*be like God*" (Genesis 3:5). This is perhaps the carnal spirit in us all; that hunger that thirsts for immortality, but immortality cannot be obtained by indulging in mortality. We must look higher than that for our glory, to the One to whom "*belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen*" (1 Peter 4:11).

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