

“You are on the verge of wrecking your life.”

– Russell Moore, Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ



You Can Resist

For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:1-14)

Remember Your Identity

The Israelites were identified with God through the power of his deliverance of them through the Red Sea as they followed the cloud. They were his and he was theirs. They failed, however, to live out this reality, choosing rather to look behind and often long for the days of slavery. We have been identified publicly with God through water baptism, the sign of our deliverance through the power of the Gospel. In Christ, we are not who we were. We are no longer slaves to sin to do its bidding, but rather are to offer all that we are to God as servants of righteousness. (Romans 6)

Realize the Power of Christ

The power that provided for the Israelites on their journey was Christ, the manna and the water. Jesus Christ is the power in our lives. Jesus conquered sin and death through his death, burial and resurrection. In him, we have died to sin and been raised to walk in newness of life. This is not a matter of our willpower, but what he has accomplished for us.

Recognize the Potential for Failure

The Israelites are used as an example because they doubted God and trusted the flesh. Therefore they committed sexual immorality (Numbers 29), put God to the test (Numbers 21) and grumbled (Numbers 16). The outcome was never good. Therefore we should be humble and always aware of the subtle danger of temptation.

Realign Your Desires

Behavior follows heart. If what we want is to sit and eat and rise up to play that is inevitably what will happen. If our hearts are set on idols (anything other than God), we will worship those idols of whatever nature they are. To change your desires, change what is in your mind. (Colossians 3:1-3) Fill your mind with Scripture, spiritual songs and prayer.

Rest in the Faithfulness of God

You are not alone in temptation. Every person on the planet faces temptation. It is man's common experience. However, as a believer God is with you and watching over you. The devil will never get closer than he allows and he will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. God does not allow testing in your life (where the flip side is temptation to doubt and succumb to fleshly desire) to hurt you, but rather to sanctify and strengthen you. And with every test he has provided the way of escape – endurance through it. Jesus came through the 40 days in the wilderness. You can come through your trial as well.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:4-10)