

“TEMPTATION IS NOT SIN”

We know Jesus in his human body did not sin. If he had he would not have qualified to die for, and take the punishment for our sins. But we know while here on earth he was tempted. Speaking of Jesus Hebrews 4:15 says, “Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus was tempted just like us but he always resisted the temptation and so did not sin. This experience of Jesus proves to us that temptation itself is not sin, giving in to it is sin. It is true that all Jesus’ temptations came from without because he did not have a sinful nature. Whereas we have the extra complication of a sinful nature yet the same way Jesus got the victory we can get both the outward and inward victory because Christ lives in us by the Holy Spirit. We also know that Adam and Eve did not have a sinful nature but their natural appetites were tempted and they gave into temptation and broke God’s command.

Probably the best illustration of temptation and sin is the story of the first human temptation and the first human sin and best illustration of victory over temptation is the story of Jesus being tempted in the desert by the devil. Let’s look at first the first human temptation.

Genesis 3:1-7. “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “ You must not eat fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her , and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened-----“ That is, they suddenly realized that they had sinned, they had broken God’s command, they now knew from experience the difference between good and evil.

The serpent or snake was being used by the devil, it was really the devil, God’s enemy, that was speaking. As it says in Revelation 12:9 “----that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.” Notice he questions the Word of God, “Did God really say.” Then he denies the Word of God, “You will not surely die.” Then he appeals to the feelings, “You will be like God.” Then the woman instead of remaining true to the Word of God gave into her feelings, “Pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom.” “She took some and ate it.” “Gave some to her husband, he ate it.”

They had both been deceived and had given in to the temptation and as a result had sinned. Up to the moment before they had given in to their feelings they had not sinned, they were only being tempted. Ephesians 6:17 tells us that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit.

Adam and Eve should have used the sword of the Spirit against the serpent instead of giving into their feelings. Both Adam and Eve should have said, "Serpent! God's Word says, "You must not eat fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden!" "You won't die! You will be like God!" says the serpent, "Serpent! God's Word says, "You must not eat fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden!" If they had kept prodding the serpent with the sword of the Spirit they would have driven him out of the garden. This is what we should do when the devil comes to tempt us, don't give into our feelings but drive him away by using the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. This is what Jesus did when the devil tempted him in the desert, he drove him back using the sword of the Spirit.

It is interesting to see the temptations the devil gave to Jesus are similar to the ones he gave to Adam and Eve, the difference being they failed and Jesus won the victory. In Matthew 4:3 we read the devil said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus was hungry but he didn't give into his feelings instead he poked the devil with the sword of the Spirit. Eve was tempted also with food and gave in to her feelings.

Matthew 4:5,6 We read how the devil took Jesus to the highest point of the temple and said, "If you are the Son of God throw yourself down." Then he said angels would catch him in other words, "You won't die" Sounds similar to what he said to Eve. But again Jesus poked him with the sword of the Spirit.

Matthew 4:9. The devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world then he said to him, "All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me." What a joke, Jesus already owned everything, it was and is his world. It was a bit like a cunning Real estate salesman trying to sell you your own home. You would have to be very dumb to fall for that one. Yet time and time again the devil can deceive us into doing dumb things. This time Jesus gave him a big poke with the sword of the Spirit and the devil went for his life.

But how similar it was to Eve's temptation, "You will be like God." Sadly Her and her husband gave into the temptation and sin came into the world. Let us not forget, everyone is tempted, even Jesus when he was on earth, but we haven't sinned unless we give into it.

MR. TEMPTATION COMES



YOU CAN FIGHT HIM OFF WITH THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT
OR GIVE INTO YOUR FEELINGS AND LOSE FELLOWSHIP
WITH GOD,

IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

FRANK HUTCHINSON