

RESISTING TEMPTATION

ANDY SNOKE

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NKJV).

Temptation comes to all us in a variety of forms. It can come in ways that are simply unwise choices such as unhealthy eating habits. Or it may come in ways that are devastating, that leave broken families in the wake, as in the case of immoral choices.

One of the attributes of the “fruit of the Spirit” is “self-control,” or the ability to resist temptation and walk a path of temperance.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**. Against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23, NKJV).*

Let’s begin by discussing the categories of sin and temptation:

It appears that all temptation and sin tends to fall into three categories:

1. The lust of the flesh, which may include:
 - Eating addictions
 - Sexual addictions
 - Drug addictions
 - Alcohol addictions
2. The lust of the eyes, which may include:
 - Greed, covetousness (desire for possessions)
 - Stinginess and hoarding
 - Selfishness (unwillingness to share)
 - Envy (desiring what others have)
 - Laziness (slothfulness, the world owes me)

3. The pride of life, which may include:
 - Craving for attention
 - Craving for position
 - Craving for authority
 - Craving for identity
 - Craving for appreciation

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life** - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever”* (1 John 2:15-17, NKJV).

Adam and Eve were tempted in these three areas.

*“And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat”*** (Genesis 3:6, KJV).

1. Lust of the Flesh.

“... the tree was good for food ...”

2. Lust of the Eyes.

“... that it was pleasant to the eyes ...”

3. The Pride of Life.

“... a tree to be desired to make one wise ... “ (as gods)

JESUS WAS TEMPTED IN ALL THREE AREAS, YET NEVER FAILED

1. Lust of the Flesh. *“And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread”* (Matthew 4:2-3, KJV).

Jesus responded: *“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4, KJV). Jesus had just spent forty days fasting and fellowshiping with the father.

2. Lust of the Eyes. *“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me”* (Matthew 4:8-9, KJV).

Jesus responded: *“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”* (Matthew 4:10, KJV). Note: When one gives in to greed, he becomes a servant to that greed.

3. The Pride of Life. *“Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone”* (Matthew 4:5-6, KJV).

Jesus responded: *“Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God”* (Matthew 4:7, KJV).

How to we resist temptation? What is the “way of escape?” The way of escape is by learning to “avoid,” “resist” and “flee.”

AVOID

The first step would be to “avoid” sin and temptation. Avoid situations and environments that promote temptation and sin. As one example, if a young person is invited to a “party” where you know that alcohol will be available, you simply “avoid” going. It would not be wise to attend this environment believing that you have the willpower to not participate in addictive behaviors. It is much easier to simply and completely “avoid” this environment.

RESIST

“Therefore submit 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” (James 4:7 & 8, NKJV).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9, NKJV).

FLEE

At the first time of temptation, a believer would do well to flee as quickly as possible. Lingering, and flirting with temptation can have devastating consequences.

God had blessed Joseph and made him successful in all that he did. Joseph was placed as chief administrator over Potiphar’s household (an influential, powerful Egyptian). In time, Potiphar’s wife made continued sexual advances towards Joseph. Joseph did not linger or entertain any temptation with Potiphar’s wife. I can almost see him doing everything he could to avoid being alone with her. (Avoidance is the first step in resisting temptation). But Potiphar’s wife’s desire for an adulterous relationship along with her situational influence as the wife of Potiphar, made it difficult to completely avoid her.

When she was finally alone with Joseph and made her last sexual advance, Joseph fled as quickly as he could! He did not try and reason with temptation or with Potiphar's wife; he simply ran away from temptation as quickly as he could. "...Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.'

But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

*There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, **and sin against God?**'*

So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

*But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.' But he left his garment in her hand, **and fled and ran outside.***

*And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand **and fled outside** ... " (Gen 39: 6-13, NKJV).*

Joseph would go to prison for this false charge from Potiphar's wife, but ultimately God would promote him as almost an equal to Pharaoh.

Joseph followed the pattern of avoidance, resistance, and he fled from sin and temptation.

The next sad story is of King David, who did just the opposite. He did not avoid, resist, or flee, which ultimately led to very tragic consequences.

When King David should have been off to war with his military men, he decided to spend a little too much leisure time at home. In the midst of restlessness, David paced the floor and observed Bathsheba on the roof top, bathing. I don't believe that David just casually saw the nakedness of Bathsheba. He most likely was with purpose watching. David could have avoided, resisted, and even fled from the rooftop to avoid temptation.

But David did not. He watched. He lingered. He plotted. He planned. And he fell greatly.

"In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They

destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, 'She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.' Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, 'I am pregnant.'

So David sent this word to Joab: 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house and wash your feet.' So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house" (2 Samuel 11:1-9, NIV).

From God's perspective David's years of suffering began with his fall into sin with Bathsheba. Everything in David's life, from 2 Samuel 11 (Bathsheba) to 1 Kings 2 (David's death), was negatively touched, affected, and colored by that event.

Although God forgives sins and forgets iniquities, it doesn't wipe out the consequences. As a result of David's sin with Bathsheba, he would now reap many great pains, among them, the murder of Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) by the plan of David, a son's betrayal, the verbal abuse by Shimei, and then the physical abuse and death threats of, his son, Absalom.

Over two decades of negative consequences may have been avoided if David had just "avoided, resisted, and fled" the temptation of Bathsheba on the rooftop that fateful night.

The effects of temptation and sin, can be summed up in the following statement: "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay."

Let the believer have faith in Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth. God provides a way of escape from temptation. It takes our effort, and a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, NKJV). †



Foreword: Haley Gray (14 at the time of this article) and her mother, Heather, are members of the Church at Grand Junction, Colorado. Haley was given an assignment at her public school to write a personal essay about something important in her life. Haley chose to write about the life-changing experience of water baptism and of being a part of the local church. We are thankful for the boldness of our young people!

Haley does not mention her father by name in this article as he, sadly, passed away when Haley was 3.

The following is Haley's school essay and testimony. Enjoy!

~ Andy Snoke

I have gone to church my whole life. I was born and raised in a Christian family where God was the most important thing. One day when I was five years old, my mom dropped me off at the summer camp. At camp during our recess time, I decided I wanted to surrender and give my life to the Lord. So I quietly prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart.

In the beginning of my life our family went to the Vineyard, a church close to my school. When I was around four years old a dramatic change affected my family, and we felt like the Vineyard was not where God wanted us. After talking to my Aunt Lenore Snoke, who had been going to a small congregation that met in a hotel, she invited us to church. While there, we felt such a spiritual awakening that we decided we needed to go to that church. Some of our family went to the new church, so we felt very welcomed and loved.

After I asked Jesus into my heart, I told my mom that I wanted to be baptized, as baptism is a very important part in our walk with God. Although I was only five years old I knew what I wanted to do. Our new church was actually more than one small congregation; it was many small congregations spread all over the world.

We meet together multiple times a year for a week-long church camp. That year we decided to go to the summer camp in Spokane, Washington. When we went, I had just turned six years old. After we had arrived at camp, I asked the elders and deacons in the church if I could be baptized, and of course they said "yes." The baptism ceremony was at the end of the week, and upon its arrival I talked with my uncle Nick Snoke and my grandpa Andy Snoke to make sure I was ready, and sure enough I was.

The baptism ceremony was around two hours long in Deer Lake. As I walked out into the lake I was scared but reassured at the same time. I felt peace in my heart. The elders and deacons said a long prayer that ended with, "We baptize you in the name of the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit." At that moment, I said goodbye to the old me and hello to my new self. I had known I would not be the same person as I used to be. As I came out of the water with a smile on my face, every one clapped and cheered and the congregation began to sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (a popular baptism song).

Everyone hugged me and congratulated me for making this decision. My cousin (Carson Snoke) and I, and several other people made a very important decision that day that I will never forget. Many people, Christian people, get baptized during their walk, and baptism is very important to me because it shows my dedication to God. I had dedicated myself to God and cleansed myself. I had decided to get baptized because in my heart I knew it was the right thing to do.

Even though I was only six years old, this event still affects me today. It helps me to know that God is always with me and will help me, and protect me. The Bible verse that always helps me get through any difficult time is Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and uphold you with my righteous right hand." This Bible verse shows God's love for me and everyone else. God will never leave me, nor will he harbor any resentment towards me.

God helps me in everyday events like school and friendships. He directs my future, guides me by His Spirit, and helps me make good decisions. After my baptism I felt closer to God than ever before. I know if I am ever struggling or hurt he will help me, and he will pick me up if I were to fall. I felt reassured that I was not alone.

After that first church camp, we have gone back every year and we have been faithful members of our church ever since. My baptism washed away my original sin and made me new. I am forgiven and saved. My baptism has given me a firm foundation for the rest of my walk with God, and I hope he will use me for great things. †

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Headquarters:
802 Airport Road
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 934
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:
(306) 445-2733

Email:
info@globalmissionsinc.org

Online:
www.globalmissionsinc.org

Traveling Ministry Contact List:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/about

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