

Words of Truth

Put Your Desires In Check

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Christians are people who are supposed to be converted out of the world into Christ (Romans 12:1-2). As such, we should be able to look back on our lives and realize that the old person you and I used to be served our own desires rather than the Lord. This is what Paul said to those in Ephesus who had obeyed the Gospel of Christ. Notice: “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)*” (Ephesians 2:1-5).

Once you and I [Christians] had left the world through obedience to Christ (Colossians 1:12-14), we were expected by God to become different people (Romans 6:1-22 and Colossians 3:1-17). That does not mean that giving into temptation is no longer possible. Temptation occurs when you or I are drawn away of our own lust and enticed (James 1:14). Don’t think that you are not vulnerable to temptation. That type of thinking, in itself, is an error (I Corinthians 10:12). The truth is, even the spiritually strong could be a victim of his or her carnal desires sparking an area of temptation. Notice what Jesus said: “*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41).

So, how do you combat temptation that occurs from your own carnal desires? What we are about to discuss will help anyone from homosexuals, to thieves, to liars, to fornicators, to drunkards, to brawlers, to the wrathful, to false teachers, to the covetous, to murderers, and on we could go. Frankly, any type of sin can be avoided by taking heed to the things we will discuss in this study. The first area of victory over temptation is simple. It all starts with being honest with oneself.

Be Honest With Yourself

Self-examination is the starting point for preventing and overcoming sin (Psalms 119:59, Lamentations 3:40, and II Corinthians 13:5). What a lot of people struggle with though is being honest with themselves (Galatians 6:3; cf. James 1:21-25). To overcome sin you have to be honest enough to recognize what things draw you into temptation. For example, if you are someone who has a problem with lust after the opposite sex (Matthew 5:28-30). You know that to solve that problem you can get married and fulfill your sexual desires in a Scriptural way (I Corinthians 7:1-5 and Hebrews 13:4). However, let’s say you cannot find that person to marry. Be honest with yourself. Lusting more isn’t going to solve the problem (cf. II Samuel

11:1-4). Be honest with yourself, pornography isn't the answer. In fact, it fuels that sinful behavior of carnal lust. Thus, the solution is going to have to come from some other answer. The Bible shows that the answer is to AVOID that which causes you to have those thoughts.

Steer Clear

For the sake of clarity, let's just allow the word of God to make this point for us: "*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof... Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners... Abstain from all appearance of evil... Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (Romans 13:13-14, I Corinthians 15:33, I Thessalonians 5:22, and I Peter 2:11).

Walk In A Spiritual Manner

God says this: "*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*" (Galatians 5:16-17). Did you notice that walking in a spiritual manner will not take away carnal desires? What it will do though is prevent you from fulfilling those carnal desires. In fact, spiritual thinking will slowly change the way you look at things that can cause you to lust (cf. Psalms 101:3 and Romans 12:9).

Having a spiritual mind is a MUST for Christians (Romans 8:4-8). Once you get past having a mind for your own desires (Matthew 16:24), and convert fully to wanting to fulfill the Lord's desires, sin won't be so easy to accomplish (Psalms 119:1-3, Jeremiah 4:14, Ezekiel 18:31, and Ephesians 4:23-24). The fully converted mind (Galatians 5:24) is able to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:3-5). This will not only help you put your desires in check, but will help you realize how disgusting some of those desires are/were to begin with.

Conclusion

There is a phrase that goes something like this: "It is all in how you look at it". Alcohol, to the converted mind, isn't something that you even want to look at (Proverbs 23:29-35). Dishonesty, to the converted mind, is hated (Proverbs 13:5). The thought of fornication, to the converted mind, is something to run from (I Corinthians 6:18). False teachers and false doctrine, to the converted mind, are despised (Psalms 119:104 and Jude 3-4). If you want to cease from sin, as we all must (John 8:1-11, I Corinthians 15:34, II Corinthians 7:1, I Peter 1:13-16, and I John 3:8-10), it has to come from the way you look at things. If you really change your way of thinking, things that were once tempting will no longer be appealing. While that may be easier said than done, it works. You've read the Scriptures that say such. You can talk to faithful Christians who will tell you the same thing. In conclusion, think about this: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalms 97:10).