



Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

Rethinking Temptation

1. Read Galatians 5:16, 17 and Romans 7:14-20. According to these passages, why do Christians still sin after they have accepted Christ as Savior? Is it possible for a Christian to get to the point where he never sins? (Hint: Read 1 John 1:8-10).
2. Read James 1:13-15. This passage gives us the pathology of temptation, or in other words, the pathway that temptation always follows every time. From beginning to end list the steps that temptation follows and what each one means.
3. Now read Genesis 3:1-5. Can you identify the five stages of the pathology of temptation in this passage? If we are to defeat temptation in our lives, at what point in this pathology do you think would be the easiest to put a halt to this process. Hint: read Psalm 119:11 for the answer.
4. Pastor Rick read Proverbs 4:23 which says to guard your heart (in scripture, they did not know about the brain and they thought the seat of our emotions and thinking was in the heart) for it determines the course of your life. What do you think it means when it says that what is in your heart determines the course of your life? What is the best thing we can do to guard our heart?
5. Pastor Rick said that in order to help us to overcome the struggles with sin that we have, we need to ask a friend to help us with our struggle. This is known as accountability. Read Proverbs 28:13. What does this verse say we typically do with our sin? What is the result of doing this? Is there anyone in your life that you would feel comfortable sharing your struggles with? What could you do as a group to make your group a safe place that people could share their struggles?

ANSWERS

1. The passages in Galatians and Romans speak of the fact that all humans have a part of them that is sinful: Scripture calls it the sinful nature or the flesh. We inherit it all the way back to Adam and Eve, it is one of the consequences of their original sin that we suffer for to this day. Because God does not take this sinful nature away when we accept Christ, we can never get to the point where we never sin anymore. The passage in 1 John tells us that if we claim to be sinless, we are deceived, we are believing a lie.
2. The pathway that temptation follows is : Step 1—A thought or desire comes into our minds that is sinful, many times based on something we have taken in through one of our five senses. Step 2—We are dragged away in our thoughts from what God says is the truth about this thought or desire. Step 3—We are lured into believing a lie: The lie is always that in some way acting on this thought or desire will in some way be good for us. Step 4—Once we accept this lie as the truth, we act on the thought or desire. Step 5—Lastly is that we have to suffer the consequences of our sin which is always the destruction of something in our lives. Sin always destroys; it destroys our emotional health, our physical health, our relationships with God and others, our goals and dreams. The the ultimate destruction is in hell for those who do not accept Christ as Savior.
3. Here is the same pathology of temptation that we saw in James 1: Step 1—The thought that God was keeping something good away from them was put into Eve's mind when Satan asked if God allowed them to eat of all of the trees in the garden. Step 2—Satan dragged Eve away from the truth that they would die when they ate the truth by directly contradicting what God has said by telling her, "you won't die". Step 3—Eve was lured into believing the lie by telling her that the truth is that they themselves would become like God if they ate the fruit, it would actually be a good thing. Step 4—Eve acted on the desire and ate the fruit and so did Adam. Step 5—As a result of their sin they died spiritually—their relationship with God was broken and God kicked them out of the garden and did not personally interact with them anymore and God cursed the earth so that they would have to labor to survive. In Psalm 119:11, David says that he hid God's Word in his heart (memorized scripture) so that he would not sin against God. The easiest time to defeat temptation is when it is still only a thought. If we quote to ourselves what God actually says about what we are being tempted with at the time we start thinking about it, we will not be dragged away from the truth and tricked by the temptation.
4. To guard your heart means to guard your thinking. The reason why your heart determines the course of your life is because before we do anything, we think about it first. The first step of temptation is always a thought, so if I can prevent the thoughts from being there, I can prevent the temptation. Our minds are like a super complex computer, so there are some things that are true about computers that are also true about our minds. The main one being a computer term: "Garbage in, Garbage out". This refers to the fact that a computer can only put out that which was first put into it by a person. If we allow "garbage" into our minds through our five senses, then that is what is going to come out. Jesus said in Matthew 15:18 that what comes out of the human heart is what defiles a person. The best way to protect your heart is to protect what you allow into your mind. What you allow into your mind will eventually come out.
5. Proverbs 28:13 says that people who try to hide their sins will not prosper but those who confess them receive mercy. You can make your group a safe place for people to share their struggles by the people in your group committing to each other not to be judgmental of each other and promising that what is said at your group stays within your group, no gossiping!