

Hungering for Righteousness in Our War against Lust (Part 2)

I. REVIEW FROM OUR WAR AGAINST LUST (PART 1)

A. The Christian life is a cooperation with God's grace. ***God will not do our part*** and ***we cannot do His part***. If we do not do our part, then God withholds some of the help and blessing He would have given us. ***Our part*** includes making quality decisions to deny ourselves (saying no to sin and pride), to feed our spirit on the Word, to ask for God's help and intervention through prayer with fasting, and to embrace godly activities (serving) and relationships (fellowshipping, confessing our weakness), etc. ***God's part*** is to release supernatural influences on our heart (power, wisdom, desires), on our body (healing) and on our circumstances (provision, protection, direction) and relationships (favor).

B. God has chosen to give us a dynamic role in determining some of the measure of the "quality of life" that we experience in the natural and in the Spirit (in time and eternity). We make a significant contribution to our quality of life, based on our response to our partnership with Him (particularly in prayer and meekness). There are blessings that God has chosen to give, but ***only*** if His people rise up in the intimate partnership of prayer to ask for them (Isa 30:18-19).

² You do not have because you do not ask. (Jas 4:2)

C. Kingdom principle: ***if we do more*** (prayer with fasting, giving, blessing, serving, confessing, etc.) ***then God gives us more***. We do not earn God's blessings by our prayers. However, prayer is God's chosen way that enables us to better cooperate with Him in releasing more blessing.

D. We are in a spiritual conflict that has two battle fronts which includes both a ***war inside*** our heart (our personal battle with sinful desires for pleasure) and a ***war outside*** our heart (seeking justice in healing the sick, revival, righteousness in government, winning the lost, etc.). While many acknowledge the war on the inside, ***they do not attack it with prayer***. They pray, but usually with a focus on the war raging on the outside.

¹ Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (James 4:1)

²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God...²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against...my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members...? (Rom. 7:21-23)

¹³ For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh...¹⁶ Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Gal. 5:13-17)

- E. We make decisions to abstain from (deny) various types of lust that war against us. Lust has many different expressions including pride, anger, covetousness, thefts, bitterness, immorality, pornography, hatred, slander, jealousies, drunkenness, overindulgence with entertainment or food or, legal and illegal addictions, etc. (Mk. 7:22; Gal. 5:19-20; 1 Jn. 2:16-17). We embrace the difficulty of the tug of war in denying sin. (Tit. 2:11-13; Mt. 16:24-27; Col. 3:5-6).

¹¹ I beg you as...pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... (1 Pet. 2:11)

- F. There is a natural dimension to this war. We wage war by our natural responses as we make quality decisions to deny lust and to take action (in serving and relating to others). We must make decisions to rend or tear our heart (Joel 2:12) as we wage an internal war against lust.

- G. Our war with lust is difficult as we discard “sinful baggage” that we may enter the narrow gate as the only way to experience God’s Kingdom. Only a few persevere in their struggle against lust.

¹⁴ Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way...to life, and there are few who find it. (Mt. 7:14)

- H. Denying our lustful desires is the theatre God chose for us to express our love to Him. Each of us has a different struggle, thus, a different assignment from which we offer our gift of love to God. We have been given the indescribable gift of life plus the gift of redemption. We must respond to these with love that seeks to obey Jesus regardless of its cost in denying ourselves (Mt. 16:24).

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me... (Jn. 14:21)

¹² Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:12)

- I. The difficult side of our struggle is in saying, “no” as we deny desires. The positive side of our struggle is that saying, “no” provides an opportunity to express love to Jesus and receive His reward for making righteous decisions in the midst of temptation. This is one way that we “buy gold from Him” in this life. One person who was struggling with strong desires for something that had to be denied told me, “If this gives us gold then I will really be rich.” The Lord esteems each decision that we make to deny sinful desires. These decisions result in gold and white garments as well as contribute to the journey that “anoints or opens our eyes” to revelation.

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (Rev. 3:18)

II. PRAY THAT YOU DO NOT “ENTER INTO TEMPTATION”

⁴⁰ He (Jesus) said to them to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Lk. 22:40)

- A. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus urged them to pray that they would not enter into temptation. To “enter temptation” speaks of something far more intense than the general temptations that we face in a sinful culture. It is a specific “storm” attacking our soul as the battle goes to a higher level when three components come together. First, our lust is aroused. Second, demonic activity is heightened. (I think of Satan’s hosts breathing evil fire on our spirit, like a dragon, causing temptation to go to the next level). Third, the circumstances are optimum for sin to occur.
- ⁹ *The great dragon was cast out (of heaven), that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...and his angels were cast out with him (Rev. 12:9)*
- B. There are opportune times when demonically energized temptations hit us suddenly like a storm.
- ¹³ *The devil ended every temptation...he departed from Him until an opportune time. (Lk. 4:13)*
- C. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for them to be kept from the evil one. Jesus was praying for them in their struggle in the garden of Gethsemane and then for the rest of their lives.
- ¹⁵ *I...pray that You...should keep them from the evil one... (Jn. 17:15)*
- D. In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus exhorted us to pray two things related to “entering into temptation.” First, that God would direct our steps and thus lead us away from circumstances that would bring added temptation. Second, that God would deliver us from the heightened activity of Satan’s fiery missiles. One part of our battle is related to wrong circumstances and the other part to evil supernatural forces. God will help us more in this battle as we actively ask Him to. God wants to convince us that it matters for our good if we pray and it hurts us, if we neglect to.
- ¹³ *Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Mt. 6:13)*
- ²³ *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD... (Ps. 37:23)*
- ¹⁰ *Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! (Ps. 119:10)*
- E. Praying after we yield to sin in “the storm of temptation” expresses humility that depends on God’s forgiveness as we acknowledge our failure. (Many religions do not humble themselves to receive God’s forgiveness, but continue in condemnation). Praying before we “enter the storm of temptation” expresses humility that depends on God’s strength as we acknowledge our weakness and propensity to sin. **Pre-emptive prayer**: our pre-temptation prayers for help are as a pre-emptive strike against Satan’s attack against us. We reduce our temptation by prayer, fasting and confession. To pray ahead of time is to “take heed” to our great need in the fierce battle within.
- ⁹ *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations... (2 Pet. 2:9)*

III. THE NECESSITY OF USING SPIRITUAL WEAPONS IN OUR BATTLE WITH SIN

- A. We must use spiritual weapons because our lusts are energized by spiritual (demonic) powers.
- ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities ...against spiritual hosts (demonic armies) of wickedness...¹³ Take up the whole armor of God (spiritual weapons), that you may be able to withstand in the evil day (day of temptation)...¹⁶ you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one...¹⁸ praying always... (Eph. 6:12-18)*

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, (2 Cor. 10:4)

- B. We must resist the supernatural dimension (fiery darts of lust) of Satan’s attack against us in our war on both the inside and outside battle fronts.

⁸ *Your adversary the devil...⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. 5:8-9)*

⁷ *Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas 4:7)*

- C. The two battle fronts (the war on the inside and the war on the outside), each have a natural and supernatural dimension to them. In our war on the inside, we war in the natural by making quality decisions to deny sin and to take appropriate actions. In the spiritual, we actively resist the supernatural demonic influences by prayer, fasting, and declaring the Word.

- D. Both battle fronts require, the spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting and declaring God’s Word. In our “war against sin in our heart” we must not neglect to use these spiritual weapons.

²¹ *However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. (Mt. 17:21)*

- E. Many seek to simply reason their way out of spiritual attacks instead of resisting demons. They simply think through why they are feeling oppressed or heavy instead of praying against the demons. The attack usually passes in a short time, but rebuking it will speed up the process and minimize getting bruised. When we fight it, we feel victorious whereas, if we “simply ride out the storm” we feel more bruised.

- F. It is a real battle with real demons and not just a sleepless night or difficult hour of temptation. In the battle we feel an irrational heightened fear or oppression or anxiety. We feel a hopeless despairing sense of vanity in our life. This is a demonic lie. Elijah felt despair and depression. He was a man with a nature like ours (Jas 5:17). We must understand that the battle is winnable. Receiving teaching on it gives us courage to war against it.

IV. OUR SPIRITUAL WEAPONS: PRAYER, FASTING, DECLARATION, CONFESSION

- A. We war by praying that we do not enter into temptation, by declaring the Word over our hearts and to resist Satan, and by confessing our weakness to a trusted friend (1 Jn. 1:7).

- B. Pre-emptive prayer: our pre-temptation prayers for help are as a pre-emptive strike against Satan’s attack against us. We can reduce our temptation by prayer, fasting, declaration and confession.

- C. God promises to reward us when we fast. This reward includes God filling our heart with insight, power and joy as we hunger (fasting and pray) for a breakthrough of righteousness.

¹⁷ When you fast...¹⁸ do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:17-18)

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt. 5:6)

V. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- A. The principle is that the Holy Spirit hovers and waits to move in power wherever the Word is spoken by those in covenant with the Father.

² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good... (Gen. 1:2-4)

- B. Jesus creates, sustains and governs everything under the Father's authority by speaking God's Word (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17). Jesus was the One who spoke God's Word to create in Gen. 1. We find the phrase "And God said" 10 times (vv 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29) along with "Let there be..." 8 times (vv 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). We see the Spirit's work in the phrase, "It was so" 7 times (vv 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30) and "God made" 7 times (vv 4, 7, 12, 16, 21, 25, 27).

- C. Jesus gave us a model of how to do spiritual warfare as He spoke the Word in power to drive Satan back. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He used the Word to strike like a sword cutting into Satan's domain. This was a clash of powers that sent Satan reeling into retreat. Satan had never confronted a Man saturated in God's Word and moving in such authority (Mt. 4:3-11). When we speak the Word to Satan, then it strikes him as a sharp sword that injures his kingdom.

¹³ Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day....¹⁷ take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God... (Eph. 6:13-17)

- D. We must fill our hearts with the Word as a lifestyle as well as use the Word in an intentional way during a time of temptation and/or oppression. We fill our heart for strength and then use the Word like bullets in a gun.

VI. DAVID'S PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND TEMPTATION

¹² Who can understand (subtle processes that lead to stumbling) his errors? Cleanse me from secret (unperceived) faults. ¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless...¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. (Ps. 19:12-14)

- A. David understood that a primary way in which we open the door of lust to our soul is our speech.

³ Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Ps. 141:3)

¹ I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth... (Ps. 39:1)

² *If one does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body...⁶ The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. (Jas 3:2, 6)*

B. David understood that a second way in which we open the door of lust to our soul is our eyes.

³ *I (David) will set nothing wicked before my eyes... (Ps. 101:3)*

¹ *I (Job) have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a woman? (Job 31:1)*

¹⁴ *having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin... (2 Pet. 2:14)*

C. Solomon emphasized the place of our speech and eyes in establishing our life.

²³ *Keep your heart with all diligence, out of it spring the issues of life. ²⁴ Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. ²⁵ Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you...²⁶ let all your ways be established. (Prov. 4:23-26)*

VII. THE PRAYER OF THE APOSTLES TO BE BLAMELESS (OVERCOME TEMPTATION)

¹¹ *We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy (by living blameless) of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness... (2 Thes. 1:11)*

²⁴ *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless (blameless in our character) before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Jude 24)*

²⁶ *That He (Jesus) might cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:26-27)*

⁹ *I pray that your love may abound...¹⁰ that you may be sincere and without offense (not offended at God nor offending God by sin) till the day of Christ ... (Phil. 1:9-10)*

VIII. GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE FOR THOSE WHO “TAKE HEED BEFORE HAND”

¹² *Let him who thinks he stands (against four sins of 1 Cor. 10 without pre-emptive prayer) take heed lest he fall...¹³God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:12-13)*

³⁴ *Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare (escalating lusts) on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy (considered prepared) to escape all these things (not be swept away by escalating temptations and fall away) that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Lk. 21:34-36)*

³³ *Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is... ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming...³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to all: Watch! (Mk. 13:33-37)*

⁴⁰ *He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Lk. 22:40)*

- A. In 1 Cor. 10:12-13, Paul makes direct reference to Jesus' warning in Lk. 21. Paul uses the same terms, in exhorting the saints to take heed as the requirement to being prepared to escape being overcome by temptation so as to stand before God without falling. Paul was referring to standing against the four specific lusts of 1 Cor. 10:6-11. He warned them to resist idolatry (v. 7), immorality (v. 8), testing God (v. 9) and complaining against Him (v. 10).
- B. Jesus spoke of standing, where as Paul spoke of bearing the temptation instead of falling before it, taking heed as the requirement to escaping. Jesus added the idea that the snare of escalating temptation was to come upon the whole world. Jesus defined how to take heed as watching and praying always as the way to be counted worthy or to be considered prepared to escape the End-Time temptation. This is done in order to not be swept away by escalating lusts and fall away and so that they would stand boldly before the Son of Man at the Second Coming.
- C. The snare on the whole earth speaks of the End-Times when whole nations will "enter temptation". It is a specific "storm" attacking nations when three components come together. First, is when lust is aroused. Second, is when demonic activity is heightened. Third, is when the circumstances are optimum for sin to occur. There are opportune times when demonically energized temptations hit us suddenly like a storm.
- D. Nazi Germany was an example of a nation that entered into temptation. Many dignified and cultured people yielded to the pressures of the times as they joined the Nazi regime, and actively betrayed their neighbors and committed atrocities against one another for personal gain. Truly a time of temptation came as a snare on Germany as a nation. A time of temptation will come as a snare on the whole earth.
- E. The promise that God would make a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13) is often quoted out of its context. This promise is for believers who "take heed" so that they do not fall. The reason so many believers fall is not because God is unfaithful in allowing them to stumble, but because they are not "taking heed" in a Biblical way.
- F. Peter spoke of increased temptation (snare) in a future day (his day and in End-Times; 2 Pet. 2-3)
¹ Even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord...² And many will follow their destructive ways...³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words...⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell...⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly...⁹ Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations...¹² But these, like natural brute beasts...will utterly perish in their own corruption...¹³ as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and

are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray...18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption...20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. (2 Pet. 2:1-20)

IX. UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF TEMPTATION

12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (Jas 1:12-16)

A. James spoke of receiving the “crown of life” as the reward of enduring or persevering in obedience in our war with lust. This is a crown of authority in the age-to-come that God gives to those who overcome. It is called the crown of life because we reigned in righteousness in this life (Rom. 5:17), and thus, will reign in authority in the age-to-come. Some of those who are saved are “approved” on the Last Day to rule in the age to come. God approves or declares that we were consistently faithful to respond in obedience under the pressure of temptation.

8 There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and...also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)

10 When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints...11 Therefore we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling...12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him... (2 Thes. 1:12)

B. David asked God, who can really understand the processes that lead to stumbling in sin. James provides great insight into this process.

12 Who can understand (subtle processes that lead to stumbling) his errors? Cleanse me from secret (unperceived) faults. 13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless... (Ps. 19:12-13)

C. **Stage #1:** Being drawn away by lustful desire is the early stage just before “entering temptation.” Our imagination is stirred up as we begin to casually think on the possibility of walking out lustful actions (pride, anger, covetousness, thefts, immorality, pornography, bitterness, hatred, slander, jealousies, drunkenness, over-indulgence with food or entertainment, legal and illegal addictions, etc.; Mk. 7:22; Gal. 5:19-20).

1. Satan wants our fleeting thoughts of lust to become sustained thoughts (fantasy). There is a big difference between a momentary wrong thought and being captured by that thought. This difference has been likened to the difference between a bird flying over someone's head and a bird building a nest on it. This is the critical time to act decisively.
- D. What we say or look at are primary sources that feed lust in our imagination.
1. We can open a door of lust by our speech (Jas 3:2) and eyes that help draw us away.
¹ I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a woman? (Job 31:1)
³ I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. (Ps. 101:3)
 2. At this time, we must pray (not to enter into temptation) and speak the Word (against Satan's flaming missiles) and confess (our weakness to God and a trusted friend).
 3. It is necessary to identify when we are being drawn away by lust. We cannot heal nor war against darkness (bondage, compromise, confusion) that we can't identify (acknowledge).
³² You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)
 4. Stage one is the easiest stage to resist the power of lust. This is when lust has its least power over our hearts. It gets much more difficult and painful as the stages progress.
- E. **Stage #2:** Being enticed with lust occurs when we become set or entrenched in lustful thinking. We are captured in fantasy as we set our mind on the flesh. We have further opened the door (through our speech or eyes), digressing from being drawn away by lust to be enticed or captured by it. At this point, we are in the "storm of temptation." Our imagination and desires are being energized by demonic power. Our momentary fleeting lustful thoughts have escalated to sustained thoughts. The disciples in the garden became enticed (entrenched) in fear as they "entered into temptation."
⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:5-6)
- F. **Stage #3:** Lustful desire is conceived as it becomes settled in our heart when we have decided to walk out sinful actions. The decision to act out our lust is now "alive" within us. As a baby is alive in the womb at conception, yet is not seen by others, so, a newly conceived act of sin is "alive" in a person (yet unseen because it is not yet acted out). In this, the temptation process goes to the next level as we yield to its lure.
¹⁸ They (false teachers) allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness... (2 Pet. 2:18)

G. **Stage #4:** Lustful desire gives birth to sin when we act out our lustful desires. At the time of birth, a baby comes forth so that its features can clearly be seen. So also, when lust gives birth to action, the specific features of our lust are now openly manifest.

H. **Stage #5:** Sin becomes full-grown (sin grows up) in us as we become addicted to various lusts. Our lust never just stops with one act or conversation, but continues to grow up until it is full-grown. Whatever lust we walk out today, we enlarge our capacity to walk it out tomorrow in greater measures (addictions). Each area of lust has extreme expressions of addictive thinking or behavior that will inevitably come forth over time, if we continue to walk them out. Full grown sin is less and less satisfying as it is more and more depressing. It also leaves us with worse consequences that bring shame and pain to us and those we love.

² *...having their own conscience seared with a hot iron... (1 Tim. 4:2)*

²² *Put off...the old man which grows corrupt... (Eph. 4:22)*

I. **Stage #6:** When sin is full-grown, it brings forth full death. The fruit of sin is always death. It progressively destroys life in our souls as it quenches and dulls our spirit. It injures our family, ministry, relationships, finances and a part of our destiny in God. We rejoice in the assurance of being forgiven, however, the years wasted in sin are truly lost and cannot be made up for.

²³ *For the wages of sin is death (loss)... (Rom. 6:23)*

²¹ *As sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness... (Rom. 5:21)*

J. Sin always leads to death. We have two choices, either we die voluntarily to its lustful lure in righteousness or we die involuntary because we yielded to it and now reap its shame and painful consequences. To walk in liberty we must eventually go back anyway and obey God at the first stage of temptation. Why make it more difficult by allowing several stages of temptation to grow in us, only to have to go back and confront all the work of death and darkness that was worked into our souls during that time?

⁶ *God will render to each one according to his deeds...⁸ to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth...indignation and wrath, ⁹ tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil...¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. (Rom. 2:6-11)*

K. Sin also brings death to those we lure down the path with us. Most people do not like to sin alone, but want others to go with them in agreement. False doctrines of grace are given by those wanting others to sin with them (Jude 4).

⁴ *For certain men have crept in unnoticed... who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)*

¹ *Even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord...² And many will follow their destructive ways...³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words... (2 Pet. 2:1-3)*

- L. **Warning:** Do not be deceived by the subtle process of sin. Lust is deceitful in that it promises not to hurt or entrap us. Insanity is repeatedly doing the same thing, while expecting different results.

¹⁶ *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (Jas 1:16)*

²² *The old man...grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts... (Eph. 4:22)*

¹³ *...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13)*

¹⁹ *The deceitfulness of riches...choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mk. 4:19)*

X. BEING SAVED OR DELIVERED FROM TEMPTATION

- A. God's Word implanted in us, is the means He uses to save (deliver) our heart from sin.

²¹ *Therefore lay aside (deny ourselves) all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (Jas 1:21)*

1. We deny all the early stages of lust (filthiness) and the progressive stages of addictions (overflow of wickedness). It is far easier to deal ruthlessly with all the early stages of sin

2. The Word is implanted in our hearts through long and loving meditation on it.

²⁰ *He who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (Mt. 13:20-22)*

3. All approaches to freedom from sin and addictions must include receiving God's word in meekness until it is implanted in our soul through meditation and prayer with fasting.

- B. James spoke of receiving the crown of life as the reward of enduring our war with lust. Jesus also spoke of rewarding those who overcome Jezebel's lust with leadership over the nations. We are approved when we consistently respond in obedience under the pressure of temptation.

¹² *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:12)*

¹⁸ *²⁰ You allow...Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality...²³ I will kill her children with death...I will give to each one of you according to your works...²⁶ He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations...²⁷ He shall rule them with a rod... (Rev. 2:18-27)*

XI. THE POWER OF THE WORD IN TEMPTATION

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18 of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. 19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (Jas 1:16-22)

- A. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren (v. 16)
- B. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights (v. 17)
- C. The Father with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (v. 17)
- D. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures (v. 18)
- E. So then, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (v. 19)
- F. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God (v. 20)
- G. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness (v. 21)
- H. Receive with meekness the implanted word (v. 21)
- I. Which is able to save your souls (v. 21)
- J. Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (v. 22)