

#30 Northside Natter

14 October 2020

Today, I'm taking a look at **Temptation**.

When I think of temptation, I visualise someone slowly waving a plate-sized, fat, juicy, sizzling steak under my nose to lure me away from my diet. A delicious slab of lemon tart with cream follows.

We can be tempted, tempt others and even put ourselves in temptation's way. We can be our own worst enemy. If we are too weak to say no to something, we need to run a mile from it. We cannot afford to put ourselves into a position where we cannot resist.

I was watching a Netflix show the other day about a guy who was in love with a pretty girl but he had jealousy issues. He couldn't bear to see other men chatting to her. Along came a man who decides to sabotage their relationship, just because he can. While privately speaking with the girl, he discovers her boyfriend's jealousy tendency. He maliciously and continually plays on this tendency until he destroys that relationship.

Satan does the same thing to us. We can be tempted to overreact in things that leave us looking bad and losing our testimony. It's hard to resist that kind of tempting, the kind that targets our weaknesses.

How do we deal with that temptation? We don't have to react to things the way we used to. We can use a little emotional intelligence before we act. People will always press our buttons and we need to refrain from making immature responses. The Lord's testimony should be at the forefront of our minds and we must ask ourselves if our action will mar that testimony? We have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts and therefore the Lord's strength is in residence there. We are already equipped to ward off the arrows of the evil one and perhaps we should exercise patience as well.

As always happens in the movies, the guy and girl got back together again and lived happily ever after, but only once the trust and anger issues are resolved.

What issues do we have that need to be resolved? I know someone who has an inner saboteur and when life goes well, the little saboteur kicks in and ruins it. Why? Because the person has self-worth issues. We need to see ourselves as the Lord sees us, not how the little voice inside condemingly causes us to see ourselves.

Emotions are hard to control on our own and when we look at most temptations in the world, they play right to those feelings. The advertising world is adept at tempting people with lavishly layered emotion-based pictures and words. Ad campaigns tell us that buying something that makes us feel special and 'worth it' justifies the purchase. Advertisers care only for the money they can bring in, not the people they leave in debt.

Ephesians 4:19

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The most dangerous temptation is the one we put ourselves in front of. Does a recovering alcoholic spend hours in a pub with old drinking mates? Does a rehabilitated drug addict work in a meth lab? Does a transformed tobacco addict open a cigarette kiosk? Yet there are some who will. Why? Because they forget who they have now become, and feeling comfortable with their current life, put themselves in harm's way without thinking.

This is not what the Lord wants from us. Once we are cleansed and renewed in the spirit, we are under an obligation to maintain this new state of being.

Ephesians 4:22-24

That ye put off concerning the former conversation [of] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

1 Peter 1:16

Because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy.

The struggles we have with the flesh and the 'old man' are real. Reprogramming ourselves is not as easy to do as to say. We battle with spiritual enemies in our own minds against the carnal pleasures and longings of our flesh. We war within ourselves.

2 Corinthians 10:4

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

What is this stronghold that binds us? A stronghold is a fortified place and a place dominated by a particular characteristic. What characteristic has a hold over us that we wish didn't have a hold? Have we already pulled it down with God's help during our walk in the Lord? If not, we need to or it will remain a thorn in our side. We need to determine in our hearts to never give way to that stronghold, and over time, it will weaken and crumble.

Have we tempted another saint to join us in something we readily accept in our lives that we shouldn't? Have we caused another person to compromise their walk because of something we do or say? Sometimes, we can do this unthinkingly, forgetting who we have become.

Ezekiel 33:12

... the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of transgression.

Ezekiel 33:13 *... if he trusts to his own righteousness and commits iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.*

Putting ourselves in temptation's way, or tempting someone else to act wrongly, are things that we really can't justify. They are careless actions that the Lord will not find acceptable.

Ephesian 4:17

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having [their] understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart;

We must be careful not to allow others to tempt us to do things we would not normally accept. We must be careful not to put ourselves in danger where temptation can take us away. We must not tempt others. We must tear down any strongholds in us that act as a portal for temptations to snare us. We must continue our spiritual warfare to fight the good fight.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

We will never be perfect in our mortal condition, but we need to do all we can to be well on that path before the Lord returns. We must be faithful to the Lord's testimony and resist temptation. If we find the temptation too hard to resist, run! Jesus resisted temptation in the wilderness for forty days, without food and water, and having been tempted is now able to comfort, support and rescue them that are also tempted. (Hebrews 2:18). We look to Jesus for our example and help.

We don't have to go through anything alone. No matter what the world, Satan, or our own minds throw at us, we have an intercessor that will surely save us.