

“SPIRITUAL VALUE OF TEMPTATIONS”

The First Century Gospel Church / Philadelphia

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‘Victory over temptation’ in a Christian’s life is directly involved with their pursuit of eternal Life hereafter (and the devil knows that only too well). That is why he prowls about, and always trying to rob someone of their atonement right to be delivered from temptation and trial. The truth is that all trials are from the devil in the first place, and that is something that we must all come to realize. (James 1:13-14) plainly tells us “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. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.”

It is, however, because of temptations that we go through... (successfully enduring), that our faith grows and develops, and every temptation can be used by God as a ‘stepping-stone’ toward receiving everything we need in this life (and Scriptural desires fulfilled), as well as our preparation for eternity. God uses the temptations and trials we go through (when we meet them in His way), to perfect everything concerning us (our spiritual life, our bodies, our home life), perfecting us in financial matters and in everything else; most importantly to prepare us to meet Jesus and to receive ‘eternal Life’. Being in the real Truth of God, is the only place in the whole universe that trouble (when met right) becomes the richest of all blessings to a believer. The value of eternal results for meeting temptations Scripturally, is too wonderful to comprehend.

All that God instructs us to do to meet temptations according to Scripture, is to have faith in the ‘resurrected Christ’ and on the power of His atonement Blood shed on the Cross. Thomas doubted that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a true fact, and he said (John 20:25), "Unless I see in his hands the wound made by the nails and put my finger into the wound (he was going by sight), and put my hand into his side (going by feeling), I will never believe it."

God in His mercy gave Thomas the opportunity to prove that it was true. (26-29), “Jesus came-(though the doors were locked)-and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas, "Bring your finger here and feel my hands; bring you hand and put it into my side; and do not be ready to disbelieve but to believe." "My Lord and my God!" replied Thomas. "Because you have seen me," replied Jesus, "you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

To confess our sins to God, repent of them, and believe on the power of Jesus’ shed Blood, is the divine order and plan for ‘God’s pathway to victory’ (over temptations from the devil), and it is all part of our preparation for eternal Life.

Satan’s object is to get us to do something un-Scriptural, to trust in some efforts of our own, or in some thing or somebody else besides God. To “Resist steadfast in faith” means we are not to yield to that temptation. (James 1:12) “Blessed is he who patiently endures trials; for when...he has ‘stood the test’, he will gain the victor’s crown-- even the crown of Life--which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” That does not mean that we have no love for God if we make a mistake or have a failure, nor that it is the end of us. Not at all!!!... But it does mean that we will have to go back and meet it right (by faith and trust on God this time) before we can make further progress in the Truth. We must get reconnected to God by faith. We cannot cover it up and let it go without a real surrender at that point. The sooner we do so, the better it will be for us spiritually, because we have not time to waste in getting back to trusting faith on God.

All temptation and wrong desires come from an evil nature of 'self' in our heart (which God wants to remove so He can prepare us to be worthy of eternal Life). It can take a serious temptation (a very hard test) to rid us of the self-trust that we were born with, and to get the last bit of it exposed and entirely gotten rid of, but it 'must' be removed from our heart. God will remove 'self' from our heart if we will make our choice to turn to Him in times of temptation. As soon as we realize that the trial is from the devil and put the blame on him, our battles are half won, because the devil will never work in the open (but only under cover). When we put another name to a problem or an attack (such as, calling it a 'cold' or some type of 'sickness'), we are just giving the devil a 'cover' to work under, or something to hide behind, while he continues to attack. We must resist the devil 'steadfast in faith' in the Name of Jesus truly believe that Satan is defeated in Jesus' Name,.. and the devil will flee (because he has to flee from the power of God). He cannot stand against it. Aside from that, when Jesus was resurrected from the dead, the devil's power was broken and defeated forever (through faith on the death and resurrection power of Christ). (Heb. 2:14 says) "that through death He might render powerless him who had 'authority over death', that is, the Devil,".

Bible characters were tempted in many different ways, and God's object in allowing the temptations, is to deliver us from spiritual blindness, ignorance of the Truth of His Word and all that it stands for, in overcoming our weaknesses, and to bring us to a knowledge of Himself, to make us victorious over every power of the enemy.

God told the Israelites that He led them through that desert wilderness to suffer hunger and do without water for three days, and when they did find some water it was bitter (a further test to see whether or not they would be faithful to trust Him, or to complain against Him). They murmured against Moses, and they would have done him bodily harm if God had not been with him and protected him.

Moses turned to God in a prayer of faith, and God showed him a branch of a tree, which he was to throw into that stream of bitter water, and it would become sweet and drinkable. Nothing but blessing followed that answer to prayer, by which Moses had acted in faith on God's word that He would heal that bitter water.

God spoke to the Israelites through Moses (Duet.8:2-3) "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. "So, He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."

Later on fiery serpents came among them and destroyed many lives, but when those people went before God and confessed their sins, they were delivered. In their later years all these trials gone through proved to be good for the growth and development of their faith; therefore, again confirming that temptation met in God's way leads to 'fullness of blessing' in this life.

Jesus' Blood has purchased that fullness of blessing for us in everything; that is, perfect happiness spiritually, physically, and financially; peace in our homes and in Christian work. Everything is to be ideal in Christ Jesus (just as we would like it to be), and by faith on God's written Word we can have it that way. We can have whatever Scriptural desire is in our heart, and be victorious in every part of our life of faith, because it has been purchased for us, and our meeting temptation

successfully in God's way is the road to that deliverance. By our freewill choice we can surrender our 'life of self', be delivered by God from our spiritual ignorance and blindness to the Truth of His Word, and by that knowledge He gives us and faith on His 'promises', enter into 'fullness of blessing' (while at the same time having our Christian characters perfected). That is the value of temptations met according to God's plan.

A point which seems to be generally overlooked in the professed Christian world, (but which is the gateway to fullness of blessing), is to learn full obedience to God's Word as it is taught in the New Testament. Obedience to God's plan for our spiritual progress is by allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us how to meet every circumstance right. Obediently following God's financial plan of trusting Him (and not letting our needs be known to anyone else but Him) is the 'pathway to many blessings'. Also, God's plan of trusting Him for perfect health and the protection of our body, and, going to Him in real faith for healing from illness or any other oppression is most important and necessary.

If we are willing to trust God for perfect health in our body (and for our children), Jesus said, we are to believe God's Word and that He wants to furnish the grace for us to believe and to act in faith on His Word, in order to receive that victory that we want and pray for. (Mark 11:24) "That is why I tell you, as to whatever you pray and make request for, if you believe that you have received it... it shall be yours."

God gives us the power to believe, as well as giving us the deliverance, so we should not tolerate anything short of perfect health. Therefore, we should not lie around, because Jesus died that we might have perfect health. When we settle it in heart and mind to tolerate nothing less than what belongs to us through the power of Jesus' Blood,... God is right there to give us perfect health.

Consider the case of King Ahab who had received an ultimatum from Ben-Hadad the King of Syria to give up his wives, children, gold and silver. Ahab consented to give all those things over to him. Ben-Hadad then said he was going to search the homes of the people of Israel and take anything from them that pleased him.

A prophet of the Lord told King Ahab that God wanted him to do battle with the Syrian army, and that God would deliver Israel from them. When King Ahab decided to follow the prophet's word from God, the Lord gave him spiritual grace to settle it to claim and have his rights according to God's Word. The Syrian army was defeated by the power of God, and Israel had peace restored for awhile.

God gave the same instruction to us (James 4:7-8) "Submit therefore 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 (by faith in Christ), you sinners, and make your hearts pure, you who are half-hearted towards God."

We are also to keep strict obedience to the Word of God, and learn obedience through meeting trials according to God's plan of faith and trust on Him to deliver us, as Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, and temptations that He went through in the 'likeness of man'. (Heb.5:8) "Although He was God's Son, yet He learned obedience from the sufferings which He endured; and so, having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him, the source and giver of eternal salvation." (We should all take notice of God's promise of an 'eternal reward' for our obedience to His Word).

Jesus was protected by God's divine power when He had to go through trials (in all the ways that we do), in order to be an example for each one of us. The Bible says that He was tried in all ways through suffering, and His obedience was unto death. (Phil. 2:5-8) "Let this mind be in you which was

also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

Obedience is like a lost art regarding divine things today. People are being taught (by even worse delusions than 'Christian Science'), that one can get to Heaven and get Eternal Life without being obedient to the Word of God. Such a teaching is totally un-Scriptural. False teachers say we had to obey under the Law, but under the Gospel of Jesus Christ we are given Eternal Life without obedience. Scripture does not support such erroneous doctrine. Those people do not know where to draw the line between the Law and the Gospel. We are told not to add to (nor take from) the 'Word of God'. The difference between the Law and the Gospel is that people had to obey the Law in their own strength, but under the Gospel we are to obey in the strength of God. There is all the difference in the world by what power that obedience is to be accomplished.

For those OSAS proponents and other groups who want to separate obedience from faith on God, the Bible tells us that when Jesus brought the apostle Paul to conviction, He said to him (Acts 26:18), "I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the obedience to Satan (to obedience) to God, in order to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified through faith in Me."

There is all the difference in the world by what power that obedience is to be accomplished. The Law was given to prove that we could not be obedient in our own strength; the Gospel was given to prove to us that we could be obedient in God's strength. That is the reason for every temptation, every trial, every weakness and infirmity. It is to enthron the life of Christ within us (in all His fullness), and, cause us to grow and develop into the image of Jesus Christ, with a full knowledge of God and His Word, which will bring us fullness of blessing in everything. The gateway to that fullness of blessing, however, is a conscientious, sincere, and full obedience to every command of God. Even the least one (to our finite mind) is to be obeyed if it cost us our life. That is to be the 'standard for our obedience' to God's Word (and faith for the fulfillment of His 'promises').

(As an illustration) during the time of Queen Esther in Media and Persia, Haman was made 'Prime Minister'. The law of the land was that Mordecai (a Jew who had been captured and brought there) was supposed to bow down and reverence the Prime Minister. That would, however, have been a dis-obedience to God's command in an indirect way. It seemed to be a small matter of disobedience then, and today would hardly be considered an act of disobedience in most religious circles (with most professed Christians giving in to most every plan of man and Satan). Haman was a descendent of King Agag of Amalek, and God had said, that the Jews were to have no fellowship with the Amalekites (with whom 'He' would have war with for all generations to come) (Exodus 17:16). That would apply to not doing them honor (and certainly not bowing down to them in worship).

God said we are to worship Him only (which means not to trust in anybody else or any other thing, plan, or policy set up by man). So Mordecai would not bow down to Haman the Amalekite just to obey a law of man. It would have been disobedience of God's Word (our only road-map to Heaven). Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman. Instead, he prayed to God for the Jews to be delivered from the King's un--Scriptural Laws (and decrees which would have annihilated them).

Most are familiar with the rest of the story, where wicked Haman was hanged on the same gallows he had set up to hang Mordecai. A clear example of the results for one who obeys God's plan for obedience to His Word. That's what Jesus meant when He said (Matt.7: 24) "Everyone who hears these my teachings and acts upon them, will be found to resemble a wise man who builds his house upon rock;"

How important it is to read and study the Word of God, to learn just what it means, and how we should meet every circumstance in life. How important to know that we can have our heart cleansed from all sin, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

[After we have surrendered to do God's will in our life (and we are cleansed and filled with the Spirit of God), our obedience to His Word will not be difficult at all. It will just follow our desire to do God's will, and we will learn how valuable it is to meet temptations in God's way (and reap rich spiritual rewards and preparation for Eternal Life). There must be (and will be) continual heart purifying and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our life. Out-side of taking that submissive and obedient position, there is no true obedience. But spiritual rewards are more than we can imagine.

(1 Pet. 5:9) encourages true 'believers' "Resist Satan stead-fast in faith" (which means we are not to yield to his temptation). We can easily see the great importance of it all, because in any circumstance we may be, we can still be taught and trained by God through temptation and trial in our life. (11) "To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."]

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S191R SOME MAIN POINTS OF "VALUE OF TEMPTATION", ARE;

- 1... Victory over temptations is part of a Christian's pursuit of Eternal Life. (James 1:12) "Blessed is he who patiently endures trials; for 'when' he has 'stood the test', he will gain the victor's crown--even the crown of Life-- which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." We show our love for God by not turning our trust to some other person or thing, when tempted.
- 2... God allowed the Israelites to face many kinds of temptation, to test and approve them, (and to prepare them for Eternal Life). Moses reminded them (Duet. 8:2-3) "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."
- 3... All temptation and wrong desires come from the evil nature of 'self' in our heart, which always tempts us to disobey God's Word. However, God wants to remove 'self' so He can prepare us to be worthy of eternal Life. So we must resist the devil stead-fast in faith in the Name of Jesus, and truly believe that he is defeated in Jesus' Name, for God to deliver us from temptation and remove 'self'. It is directly involved with our pursuit of Eternal Life.

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