

GOD ALLOWS VALUABLE TEMPTATIONS (TO PERFECT OUR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER)

The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

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To get our victory over temptation is a very important matter in a true Christian life. Everything we need and desire in this life depends upon that, and our eternal Life is directly involved. God allows and uses the temptations we go through successfully to perfect our faith, to increase and perfect our knowledge of Him, to bring us to a place of being perfectly contented to trust Him for everything in this life, and toward our preparation for eternal life (via perfecting our Christian character). 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 our financial matters and everything else; most importantly to prepare us to meet Jesus and receive Eternal Life.

With a true Christian, any kind of trouble that Satan brings against them should be considered a temptation, not as a sorrow or calamity that ends in defeat (as with the world). It is a wonderful thing that being in the real Truth of God is the only place in the whole universe that trouble (when met right) is the richest of blessing to a believer. It is because of temptations that we go through (successfully enduring) that our faith grows and develops, and they will be used by God as a stepping stone toward receiving everything we need (and all Scriptural desires fulfilled) in this life, and our preparation for Eternity.

We will notice that New Testament teaching regarding temptations is always connected with Eternal Life. God tells us in His Word all that we need to know about temptation, how to meet it right and get victory over it, and to also receive the great blessings that will follow our meeting it right.

(1 Pet.5:8-10) God warns us of the devil's presence on this earth, also gives His encouragement to resist temptation from the devil, and God's blessing that will follow our faithful endurance of them. (8) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." That means the devil prowls about stealthily (under cover like a thief in the night), always trying to rob someone of their Atonement rights of divine peace and protection). But, as soon as we discover or realize that the problem is from the devil, put the blame on him, resist him in the Name of Jesus, and truly believe that he is defeated in Jesus' Name...the devil will flee because he has to flee. He can't stand against the power of God, and besides 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) "that through death He might render powerless him who had authority over death, that is, the Devil."

When we realize that the problem is from the devil and put the blame on him, our battles are half won (the late Pastor said). That is because the devil will never work in the open (never work anywhere except under cover). When we put another name to a problem or an oppression (such as, to call it a cold or some type of sickness or virus), we are just giving the devil a cover to work under or a signpost to hide behind while he continues to attack us (or our family). We are to resist the devil in the Name of Jesus, truly believe that he is defeated in Jesus' Name, (and the devil will flee (because he has to flee from the power of God).

(Vs.9) encourages the true believer, "Resist him (devil), steadfast in the faith". The devil's object is to get us to do something unscriptural, or to trust in some efforts of our own or in some thing or somebody else besides God. "Resist steadfast in faith" means we are not to yield to that temptation.

(Vs. continues), "knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." In other words, the same evils of every kind are being experienced by every true child of God in the world. (10) "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus," (that means to share in all the riches of Heaven throughout Eternity)" after you have

suffered a while perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” That means God will perfect us in everything that concerns us in this present life, and includes a real preparation for Eternal Life. We can easily see the great importance of it all because in any circumstance we may be, we can 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.”

God told us (Heb.12:11) “Now no chastening (temptation) seems to be joyful for the present, but painful;” (in any kind of trial or trouble whether the devil tries to rob us via thoughts to our mind, attacks in our body, attacks in our family, or via financial trials (or through what somebody else does of says to us) it is all directly from Satan, and being used by God to spiritually train us in right-ousness.(continues) “Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

God assures us in His Word, of His presence always being there with us, to protect and lead us through trial to victory (1 Cor.10: 13) “No temptation has you in its power, but such as is common to human nature; and God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. But, when the temptation comes, He will also provide the way of escape; so that you may be able to bear it.” (or) “that you may be able to endure”, and receive the crown of Life at the end).

The Apostle James was inspired to say (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.”

Carnally-minded people think that means when a person suffers with a disease and would then die from it, they would receive the crown of Life (the Pastor said), but it does not mean that at all. What stood the test really means is, happy, very happy is the person, who goes through trials in this life successfully, by meeting them right (not giving up their faith, and who refuses to surrender their Atonement rights in Christ Jesus). For when they have been tested on all points (and have stood the tests of their faith), they will receive the crown of Eternal Life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

It also does not mean that if we make mistakes or have failures (which in Christ Jesus there is no excuse for), 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 before we can make further progress in the Truth. We have to get reconnected to God. We can’t cover it up and let it go without a real surrender at that point. The sooner we do it, the better it will be, because we have not time to waste in getting back to trusting God in faith. The whole reason for tests that God allows us to go through, is to test our faith on the Word of God whether we are going to meet a test Scripturally (holding on to the Scriptures and not disobey that Word), or whether we are going to disobey the Word (and do as Satan is trying to persuade everyone to do in their life). It really means, are we going to trust God alone or go back to actions of the self-life, or to seeking help from some other person or plan instead of help from God when our faith is tested? (James 1:13-14) reminds us, “Let no one say when passing through trial, "My temptation is from God;" for God is incapable of being tempted to do evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But when a man is tempted, it is his own passions that carry him away and serve as a bait.”

When we read (James 1:12) we can conclude without question that temptation is the pathway to victory here and eternal Life hereafter. “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved (stood the test), he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

Meeting temptation according to God’s Word is directly connected to a person receiving Eternal Life, so (James 1:2-4) encourages us, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

It can take a serious temptation (or 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. That is why Abraham, Joseph, David, Mordecai, Daniel, Paul, and many others, had to go through some terrible trials in their life. But it was so, that they might become fully

Scriptural, perfected by God in their Christian character, and prepared for Eternal Life.

Job was filled to the brim with self-efforts and depending on his self-merit and self-help righteousness to justify himself, and he was not willing to give that up until severely tried and tested (almost unto his death). Job learned from God that he had really had no true spirituality in and of himself.

Even apart from Bible examples, we can see from this life on earth, that fallen man has to go through test and trials to learn and to be taught something. If a person intends to succeed in any trade, business, or profession, they are compelled to study and endure some type of hardship to attain their goal. The greater the goal, the more they are called upon to study, endure, and learn. The highest goal anyone could have, is to attain a true knowledge of God, and since we are spiritually deaf and dumb at first (in our Christian life), we are compelled to go through hard lessons for us to get a full knowledge of God. Jesus said (Matt. 7:14), "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Our poor spiritual condition is to be changed by the work of the Holy Spirit, and we are to come to the knowledge of God and to being full-grown men and women in Christ Jesus. We are to be brought to the place where no thing nor person will ever sever us from obeying God's Word in meeting things in God's way (no matter what the cost, or the temptation to take an easier or cheaper way out) even in the least things; things we might call insignificant (fine points) when we are faced with a problem or situation. When we are willing to put God's Word (and His will) first in our life (even the fine points of obedience), He will be faithful to provide as needed. Many people think that if they meet the big points right (so to speak), that is what is necessary (the late Pastor said). However, it is the fine points of obedience which count; because the self-life will never fully die out right, unless the fine points of obedience to God's Word are followed. If we do not, it permits the self-life to maintain a foot-hold, and Jesus Christ will never develop fully within us, our Christian character will not be perfected, nor will we come to a full knowledge of God nor enjoy fullness of blessing which Jesus Christ provided by His shed Blood, for us to enjoy.

As we have concluded from Scripture, meeting of temptation according to God's Word is directly connected to a person receiving Eternal Life. It can take a serious temptation or very hard test to rid us of the self-trust that we were born with, but it must be removed entirely from our heart. However, no matter what Satan and his agents can (or would do) to oppress, annoy, or try to harm us, we always have the great God of Heaven right at our side with all power and authority in Heaven and earth. We may not be able to realize that any more than Elisha's servant did when Elisha was at Dothan, surrounded by the Syrian army who came to capture him. (2 Kings 6:15) "And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

He meant, we are hopeless and helpless because the Syrian king had sent an army to capture and kill Elisha. It looked very serious from a human point of view (as a trial or test in our life might seem hopeless to the human mind if we doubt God's power to deliver us). However, the king had left out one person from his well laid plans, and that was God!

Elisha, however, knew something about what God was able to do because Elisha had been tried, tested, and taught by God. He knew that God was more powerful than Satan and all of his agents, so he said to the servant, (16) "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

That proved to be true indeed, but those words did not mean much to the servant because God did not count very much in his way of evaluating the situation. Elisha then took the servant over to a window and prayed, (17) "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." "Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and

‘chariots of fire’ all around Elisha.” (to protect him from an army that came to kill him).

(18) “So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha (who had been tried, tested, and taught by God), prayed to the Lord”, and said, “Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.” And He struck them with blindness according to the word (prayer) of Elisha.”

This plainly teaches us that God was right there with Elisha when he prayed and believed. The God of Elisha and all of His power is just as much with us as it was with Elisha, Jehoshaphat, Joshua, and everyone else who turned to Him when they were faced with what seemed like severe and dreadful circumstances, humanly speaking. All these Bible examples were recorded to encourage us to never doubt God’s power to deliver us, just as they testified. (Psalm 118:6) “So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (8)” Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

If we will put uncompromising trust on God, we need not be afraid of what Satan or man would threaten to do, because Satan’s power was defeated by Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection to Life. God has an object in view in allowing these temptations to confront us, that is, to deliver us from being spiritually deaf, dumb, and weak. His object is to bring us to a knowledge of Him and to His almighty power, so we will choose to turn to Him in faith, and He will make us victorious over every power of the enemy (Satan and self).

It may seem at times that God leaves us at the mercy of our enemies for a while, but that is designed to bring us to greater victory later. He told Israel that He led them through the wilderness to suffer hunger, and to do without water for three days, but when Moses (in a prayer of real faith) acknowledged God’s power before their eyes, nothing but blessing followed that victory and answer to prayer on the part of Moses. God used that wilderness journey to teach that newer generation of Israelites, that they should turn to Him in every situation they would face. (Deut.8:3) “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.”

We are instructed in 46th. Psalm, “Be still and know that I am God.” That is telling all of us, that when we (through our trials and tests, and God’s workmanship and teaching) come to the end of our self-efforts and self-merit and cease from our works of the flesh, we will find out (like Abraham, Moses, Job, Paul, and many others did) what kind of a loving God we have in Heaven. God will then be able to reveal Himself to us in all His love, mercy, and power, and prepare us for Eternal Life, and that will be worth far more than everything we ever had to go through in our life. Just one view for us of what God and His power is really like, will make us forget all our trouble and will automatically fill us with His peace in our heart and life. That is the value of the temptations that God allows us to go through in our life.

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S272R MAIN POINTS OF GOD ALLOWS VALUABLE TEMPTATIONS;

1... Temptations in our life are used by God to test our faith and teach us to place our trust only on Him. God allows us to be tempted to see if we will turn back to trusting on self or some other person or thing, (so that He can rid us of self-trust to perfect our Christian character and prepare us for Eternal Life).

2... Trouble when met right becomes the richest of blessings to a believer. Scripture proves that meeting temptation according to God’s Word is directly connected to a person receiving Eternal Life, (and there are many Bible examples of those who had to meet with terrible trials to prove their faith). &&&&&&&&&&