

# The Destiny We Choose!



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We don't like to think that we *choose* our destiny, but God has given *everyone* that choice. Every temptation presents a choice—a choice to go in one of two directions—toward the *Word* or toward the *World*. Today's technology has just about *everyone* connected to *someone* or some kind of information, news, or images! Temptations have increased exponentially!

Satan will use everything and anything to tempt people. Temptations are more *serious*; of greater *diversity*; and easier to yield to than ever before! Satan is working overtime to ruin lives here on earth and to destroy souls forever in eternity with new ways to harm the unsuspecting.

Satan can tempt anyone at any time—often using unscriptural *thoughts* and then condemning us for having *had* such thoughts. Being *tempted* does not mean we have *sinned*—not yet; anyway! If we are tempted with any kind of unscriptural desire, it is—at *that* point—just a *temptation* and not a *sin*—unless we *yield* to the temptation by our being off our guard and not alert!

It is all about choices we make, and no one is *exempted* from temptation—but everyone has the *promise* of the ability to *resist*—if we choose to ask God for help when *being* tempted. <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 10:13 “*The temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up*

*against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.*”

Too many times we keep *looking* at the tempting image—even if we have *prayed* to be delivered from such. If Eve had not kept looking at the fruit, the temptation would *not* have become *so strong*; and the results would *not* have been *so disastrous*! We know our *weak* areas—and so does the devil. We should not *put* ourselves in tempting situations.

The love for money has tempted people for eons. <sup>1</sup> Timothy 6:9-10 “*They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*”

The choice we have is to move away from the tempting *situation*—otherwise, we are asking to be *tempted* by staring at the *tempting* image—and we then risk *yielding* to the temptation. That choice is *always* ours; and we *always* have the Holy Spirit to help us—if we *want* His help. <sup>Matthew 6:13</sup> “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*”—is our everyday prayer.

The Christian life is a serious *struggle* against a dangerous *enemy*—Satan, who tempts us in any way, or by any means he can. *Satan* knows our weak areas better than *we* do, and he will take advantage of that type of temptation. <sup>Galatians 6:7</sup> “*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*”

We choose what *doctrine* we accept as a way of life. *False* doctrines jeopardize eternal life. *Once Saved Always Saved* is a deadly delusion that has caused millions of people to let down their spiritual guard against temptation and sin. Satan has presented an enticing religious message and multitudes have accepted it—thinking they

will always *stay* saved—even if they have sinned by yielding to temptation.

Millions are misled to think they can never be out of God's grace, no matter *what* sins they commit or wrong attitudes they retain. The truth is <sup>James 1:14</sup> “*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*” If there is no real *repentance*; no *forsaking* of sin; and no *returning* to a position of trust on God; then the Lake of Fire would be the result.

King David had the Holy Spirit and was *in* God's will, but later he yielded to temptation, committed adultery, and took himself *out* of God's will. He even plotted to have Uriah killed. King David would have gone straight to the Lake of Fire, had he not sincerely confessed and repented of those serious sins. It was his *choice* to turn back to God and be forgiven, or to rebel and be lost.

When we are tempted to do something we know is wrong; when we are tempted to entertain unscriptural thoughts; or when we are tempted to have a wrong attitude toward someone—that is being *tempted*; but we have not sinned; not yet, and only when we follow through with them. God says “*All have sinned*” <sup>Romans 3:23</sup>. Sin must be *dealt* with by repentance and recommitment to God.

Sins do not have to be *continuous* to be *sin*—because telling *one* lie makes us a liar; stealing *one* item defines a thief; killing *one* time is murder, and being greedy *one* time makes us an idolater. We are told <sup>Revelation 21:8</sup> that “*The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

The apostle says <sup>Ephesians 5:5</sup> no “*Covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* <sup>6</sup> *Let no man*

*deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*” Jesus warns Matthew 24:4, “*Take heed that no man deceive you.*”

Eve was tempted and yielded, because she stayed near the tempting fruit. And everyone born since then has a nature prone to do the very same. *Temptation* is not sin—until our *choice* is to *yield*. Being tempted is for sure, but 1 John 1:9 “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

God knows the fate of those who sin, so He is ready to *forgive*, if we will *confess* and *forsake* them. Repenting is *more* than being sorry—Judas betrayed Jesus, felt sorry, and even returned the money—but he did *not* repent and did *not* ask Jesus to forgive him. Instead Judas committed suicide and went to “*The fiery lake of burning sulfur*” Revelation 21:8 as an unrepentant murderer. Wrong *choice*—wrong *destination*!

Jesus says to take serious *action* against serious *temptations*. Matthew 5:30 “*If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*”

We are to get rid of anything that is *causing* us to sin—mindless Web surfing; Cell phone scrolling; worldly entertainment; questionable books; alcohol; unscriptural magazines; unbelieving friends; laid-up money, or anything that is *causing* us to make *wrong* choices.

We must take *drastic* action to remove the *source* of unscriptural images—Jesus said Matthew 5:30 “*It is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*” Anything that is *tempting* us should be removed *by* us!

If a worldly friend tempts us to sin, we should end the friendship; If a magazine tempts

us with immoral thoughts, we should shred it; If Web-surfing tempts us to view immoral images, we cancel the online service. It is much better to be *rid* of them, than to *keep* them—and to keep sinning. It is all too easy to *gain* the world and to *forfeit* our eternal soul—Matthew 16:26.

The devil has a custom-made *temptation* just for *you*. He knows where you are weak and will *exploit* that area. Jesus has given ample warning to take serious action against serious temptations. He told us to confess; repent; and forsake sins. Everyone is *accountable*, so everyone must take corrective actions!

Being *tempted* is certain, but the *choices* we make can be right ones with the Holy Spirit’s help. Satan can present a temptation in a *second*—we *have* to resist in a *split-instant*. We have so many warnings 1 Peter 5:8 “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil,*” is like a lion, “*seeking whom he may devour.*”

Being tempted can happen so quickly and come from various sources—cell phones; iPads; text messages; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; TikTok; television; books, magazines, web sites, email, and other forms of communication—a few taps can take us into murky waters—be aware!

It is so easy to be *angry* about something or toward someone, but it is just a temptation and not a sin until we give in and resent them and maybe plot a payback. We are *not* obligated Romans 8:12-13 “*to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*”

Old habits are tough to *break* and harder to *forsake*, but we *have to* because Galatians 2:20 “*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” No one can afford to forfeit their soul! We *cannot* allow *anything* or *anyone* take

us out of God’s will. Being with Jesus forever is our only objective.

*Temptation* and *sin* are hard-wired to *desire* and *deception*. Satan first places a *desire* in our heart for something outside the will of God. Then he has us *justify* getting what we *desire*—*I’m not harming anyone*, he suggests. The desire can become so strong we are *deceived* about the consequences.

James 1:14-16 “*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err [be not led astray], my beloved brethren.*”

The battle is for the mind—we *think* we *need* something or *deserve* something. If the desire is unscriptural, the devil is poised to *deceive* us and *convince* us to try it. If we lose the battle with *desire*, we are an easy prey to *deception*, which leads to *disobedience*—then to sin and eternal fire.

When tempted with anything, we must ask for God’s help. The longer we delay, the more likely we will yield. Eve hesitated, kept looking—and failed! Joseph did *not* hesitate, did *not* ponder the matter, and *ran out* of the house!

When we are tempted—to resent a wrong; mindlessly surf the Web; slander a reputation; hang with the wrong friends; “*lay up treasure*” on earth Luke 12:21, or to do anything against God’s will—we are being *tempted*, but we have not *sinned*—not yet! We do *not* have to sin or give in—because the *power* to *resist* is within—1 John 4:4 “*Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*”



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