

## Resisting Temptation

By Hendrik Joubert

*The problem with resisting temptation is that it may not return.* This infamous saying is popular among the people of the world, but I have heard it repeated among the Lord's called. We cannot afford to be lighthearted about this important strategy in our battle against sin.

Understanding the seriousness of sin is lacking. To appreciate the gravity of the problem consider the following; An accepted principle is that *punishment should fit the crime*. With this in mind, do you consider yourself bad enough to *deserve* eternal punishment in hell? Have you been *that bad*? Has anyone been that wicked?

The general idea seems to be that one is safe unless you really mess up. Everyone is on his or her way to heaven unless one does something really terrible. Notice how the *good deeds* of a person are stressed at his funeral. Certainly such a one is in heaven with the Lord?

This explains why few are serious in their search for salvation. What was the act which caused the fall of man? What was it that Adam and Eve did that was so terribly wrong? Disobedience to the Most Holy God. Yes, but what did they actually do? They ate a fruit He told them not to eat. What is so terrible about that? It was not as if they killed or raped someone. If people were able to understand the seriousness of sin and therefore their personal situation, they would be more serious in their search for God.

Are we able to fully appreciate the seriousness of sin? Why did it take such a brutal Sacrifice to atone for sin? Can we appreciate why God had to take such serious measure to make forgiveness available? It is only by faith, by God telling us how terrible sin is, that we are able to get some understanding of the problem, and for this reason we should not make light of it.

Notice the following exhortation: ***Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*** <sup>12</sup> ***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*** Ephesians 6:11-12. *The forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* – sound like a star wars type fantasy? It is a serious matter, an extremely serious matter. Joking about the sin and temptation only contributes to the lack of understanding.

Notice another exhortation: ***Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*** <sup>9</sup> ***But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*** 1 Peter 5:8-9. Consider the idea of being *of sober spirit* and *being on the alert*. We should not allow lighthearted statements cause us to drop our guard.

Another drastic exhortation reads: ***Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.*** <sup>19</sup> ***Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*** <sup>20</sup> ***For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*** 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. How could we enjoy watching a soap opera glorifying infidelity?

Consider carefully every syllable of the following exhortation and consider your own responsibilities with regard to the appeal starting in verse 7: ***You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*** <sup>5</sup> ***Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?*** <sup>6</sup> ***But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."*** <sup>7</sup> ***Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*** <sup>8</sup> ***Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*** <sup>9</sup> ***Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.*** <sup>10</sup> ***Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*** James 4:4-10.