

## Temptation

There is always that one sin everyone loves. Their favorite sin(s). There are also the sins that we think we will only commit this once because of circumstantial reasons. What is even worse is the time we cannot resist the sin, so we let it slip this once or twice or countless numbers of times. Let us face it, we all face temptations. We all give in whether today or tomorrow and commit that, oh so harmless, one-time sin.

What is the big deal? We face so many temptations. Why not let this one sin slip through? But what we forget is that once we are introduced to that new sin, we cannot forget it. Once we learn how to smoke, we cannot just forget how to smoke and that goes for anything. For example, why couldn't Adam and Eve just stop sinning after they ate the forbidden fruit? Why couldn't they just turn away? It is because once we learn how to sin a specific sin, it becomes ingrained in us. What about the tiny sins? I do not have extramarital sex, take drugs, take advantage of people, and commit any other big sin out there! I must be a saint compared to the world around me! As a bonus, I am even respectful of the people around me. But that is a wrong state of mind! Yes, it is important not to commit the big sins, but what is even more dangerous is the neglect of the smaller ones. We feel tempted to eat in the morning, even though we should be fasting. So, it is okay to eat that granola bar. No! That breaking of the fast one morning leads to the breaking of the fast every morning, which then leads to loss of self-control. Our loss of self-control can then spread to any other form in our life such as the loss of our temper since we no longer have self-control. And the worst part of it all is that you do not see this happening. It all happened so slowly that you do not realize that within a year you are a completely different person. That is why we need to be aware of even the tiniest of temptations and sins.

Yes, it is hard to resist temptations over every single aspect of your life, but the ability to resist temptation will drastically change your life.

Putting in the effort to stop gossiping when out with your friends will help you see the good light in people and thus love them. The struggle you put in to stop watching that show that wastes your time will give you time to read up on God and become knowledgeable in Him. Every little effort to defeat that temptation every time it comes up, whether once a week or several times a day, will add up to change you as a person.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:13 it says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

We learn that God will never tempt us beyond our ability. However, we must remember that our ability is not just human willpower and strength, but rather God's grace and strength granted to us to overcome this temptation. Without God, we cannot do anything, but with Him, we can overcome anything.

When we say in Our Father, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil," it sounds like God is the one who tempts us. But this is not the case, God does not tempt us, but he allows us to be tempted. Why would God ever let us be tempted if He wants us to remain sinless? But if we were never tempted to sin in the first place, we would not have the freedom or the choice to sin. Thus, we would have no free will. God created us with free will, meaning we need to be able to have that option. Also, if

we were never tempted, then how will we show God that we truly want to spend our lives with Him? We will never have been tried and we will never have proved our love for Him.

So how can I overcome temptation? First, we need to set small goals. I cannot just overcome all of my temptations at once (there are exceptions). I will keep slipping up and eventually get frustrated at how hard it is to overcome temptations. I need an achievable plan. First, I need to pray every day for the will to overcome the many temptations that will pass me by. Next, take myself out of the situation. If my car is set on a radio station that plays songs full of curses then I need to change the audio in my car. If I cannot take myself out of the situation, then I need to recognize and acknowledge every time the person commits the sin, making it feel unsettling within myself. After that, I need to become aware of every time I am tempted and commit the sin. Following this step, I should start to decrease the frequency or severity of myself submitting to this sin in achievable goals. For example, I feel tempted to eat at eight in the morning when I should fast, so for one week, I fast until 8:15 am and extend that time by fifteen minutes every week. I can also work on one particular temptation I struggle with at a time. As you overcome your temptations, replace your new time with something beneficial. Take up a new hobby that will benefit those in need, pick up a spiritual book, catch up on school work, and so much more as long as it is beneficial. When you have truly overcome a certain temptation, be careful that it never creeps up on you again and be prepared to constantly overcome the temptation. And never forget that if you fall into temptation, never give up! We are all weak and fall into temptation countless times an hour alone, but we continue to have the chance to get up and try harder. God does not care that you commit a billion sins a day, what He cares about is that you tirelessly try to resist that temptation and continue to repent for the ones you just fell into.