

Wisdom for a New Year

It's Worth the Fight ~ James 1:12-18 ~ January 26 & 27, 2008

God blesses (gives joy to) those who patiently endure (stay under the weight of) testing and temptation. Afterward (once they are proven) they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. James chapter 1 verse 12 (930)

My greatest danger is not the wrong being done TO ME, but the wrong that could be done BY ME!

Remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else. James chapter 1 verse 13 (930)

- **God reigns above the nations, sitting on His holy throne. Psalm 47 verse 8 (434)**
- **God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. 1 John chapter 1 verse 5 (941)**
- God NEVER sets anyone up to fail! God NEVER entices anyone with evil!
- If God really loves me, then why doesn't He just take all temptation out of my life??
- **For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect (mature) & complete, needing nothing.**
James chapter 1 verses 3 & 4 (930)

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us & drag us away. James chapter 1 verse 14

- I sin because I give into MY OWN SINFUL DESIRES
- It's NOT my parents' fault. It's NOT my spouse's fault. It's NOT my kids' fault. It's NOT my friend's fault. It's NOT society's fault. It's my fault.
- The first step in defeating any temptation is to admit that when I give into it, it's my fault...no one else's
- My good desires (longings) can cause me to get trapped & then dragged away...

These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

James chapter 1 verse 15 (930)

- Desires can become sinful actions, sinful actions become destructive habits, destructive habits lead to death

So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. James chapter 1 verse 16 (930)

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 8 (937)

Responding to my temptations

It starts with my admission that I need a savior

- **Now (after asking Jesus to forgive your sins) you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.**
Romans chapter 6 verse 22 (861)

Realize that each temptation / test is an opportunity for me to learn to make good choices

- **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Romans chapter 12 verse 2 (866)**
- **The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be.... 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 8**

Don't even flirt with temptation...RUN the other way!!!

- **Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.**
2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 22 (915)
- I imitate God & His holiness when I resist sin!

When confronted with temptation, look for the escape hatch!

- **God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.** 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13 (876)

Immerse yourself in God's plan for the "new you!"

Live out the "new you" that you are in Christ

- **Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!** 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 (884)

Make worship & Bible study a regular part of your life

- **I have hidden Your word (the Bible) in my heart, that I might not sin against You.** Psalm 119 verse 11 (468)
- **Your word (the Bible) is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.** Psalm 119 verse 105 (470)

Faithfully complete God's plan for your life

- **...Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.** Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1 (927)

Be intentional about NOT doing life alone

- **Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage (admonish, exhort, invite to join, speak truth to) one another....** Hebrews chapter 10 verses 24 & 25 (926)
- **As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.** Proverbs chapter 27 verse 17 (501)

When you fail, ask for & claim God's forgiveness...then get up & keep moving!

- **If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.** 1 John chapter 1 verse 9 (941)

More...

Take some time & study the info under "responding to my temptations, then interact with the following:

- Can you identify a time when you asked Jesus to be your Savior, the forgiver of your sins? If not, why not do that now?
- In relation to your temptations, what are the good choices you are already making? What are the good choices you need to start making?
- What are the steps you need to take so you're running from, not flirting with temptations in your life?
- Make a list of the temptations you are consistently falling to. What do you need to do to start spotting & taking advantage of the escape hatches when in the heat of this temptation?

Take some time & study the info under "God's plan for the new you" then interact with the following:

- The term "new" refers to a radical & complete transformation. Read through Romans chapter 6 and see what all of this means in relation to your struggle with sin.
- Is worship, Bible study & prayer a part of your daily life? If not, what will you do to make it so?
- What are the weights in your life that are holding you back from really running the race God has put before you? What will you do to get rid of these weights? Who will you talk to about this (One of Bethel's counselors? A Christian friend?); Pray with?
- As a Christ-follower, who are you "doing life" with, admitting your faults / sins too, asking for prayer from? Why not become a part of Bethel's Women's Bible study, Men's Accountability Group, Men's Breakfast & Bible Study, Home Group or Set Free (addictions) group?
- When you give into temptation & sin, what is your regular pattern after you sin? How does that line up with what God wants you to do in confessing your sin, claiming His forgiveness & then getting back up and moving forward?

Next week: For best results, follow the instructions! (James 1:19-27)