

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Fallen

Bill Brinkworth

Although Psalm 81:8-16 reminds Israel of their sin against God, it is a chilling wake-up call of what can happen to Christians today. When believers get to the point they neglect God's Word and do what they want, as did Israel, God may give them over to their own destructive ways. *"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."* Psalm 81:11-12

Romans 1 also recorded some in the early church with a similar "I'll do what I want" attitude. Since some of the first Christians were determined to do their own will and way, God also gave them "gave them up" (Romans 1:24,26, 28) to their sin. The ungodliness of those Romans worsened, and God let them reap the terrible consequences of their iniquities. In Romans 1:27-31, one can read how progressively vile and immoral their iniquities became when God stopped His intervention, and they reaped the

awful wages of the sins they had sown. It is a fearsome time in one's life when God's helping hand is withdrawn.

Both early Israel and the early church learned that God would not force Himself or His way on people. He does not want puppets that are forced to do what He wants. God desires to have one love Him as much as He loves them. With that kind of relationship, the believer will gladly do all they can to please their heavenly Father.

There are times that God's warnings halt, and He allows sinners to reap what they have sown. However, that is not God's desire. He wants to bless and help His followers, but God will not tolerate wanton sin.

"I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. 15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. 16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." Psalm 81:14-16

Rebellious sinners believe they are in control of their life and believe getting what they want will make them happy. Unfortunately, they unknowingly are missing real joy and a safer, fulfilled life of obeying God. Father knows best, despite what the sinner believes.

"God hates sin, but He loves the sinner." —D. L. Moody

Tempted

Bill Brinkworth

Noah Webster defined temptation as “enticement to do evil.” Matthew 4 contains one of the most famous accounts of Jesus’ temptations. There the enemy, Satan, came to Jesus and tried to get Jesus to sin.

Although we do not all rate the spiritual threat to get Satan’s personal attention to get us to fall, we can relate to Jesus’ temptations when our flesh tempts us. All can learn from Jesus’ account with Satan:

- Jesus was tempted when He was physically weak. He had fasted for 40 days and nights. Although His body was more vulnerable without having eaten, His spiritual relationship with God was strong. He had just spent a lot of time in fellowship with God. Our bodies can be weak from exhaustion, sickness, or trials, we also can still be spiritually strong.
- Temptation came to Jesus. He did not look for it. Although no one seeks trials and testings, they will occur.
- In all of Jesus’ three temptations, He fought off the enemy with the Word of God. He did not taunt Satan with smart quips, or remind him of the enemy’s past and future. He shut him up and moved him away from Him with the Word of God. We can fight any temptation to do wrong by remembering and applying Scripture.

For a saved person, it is difficult to have wrong thoughts in one's mind and have the Word of God in the mind at the same time. The darkness will flee when the Light (God's Word) is turned on!

The Word of God is also known as the "two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Knowing it and memorizing it will fill our minds with defenses that, when needed, can be pulled out of the mind's scabbard. Unfortunately, because most do not read and memorize Scripture, when their "temptation" comes" and they reach for the "Sword," all they find is an empty scabbard.

Everyone will face temptations to do things contrary to what God wants them to do. When you meet those challenges, will you fight them as the Son of God did, or will you fight it with your flesh, that cannot win a spiritual battle?

It Has Been Going on For A While

Suite, 1840

A church is sometimes astounded by the spiritual fall of one of its members. Their falling away from the things of God is the fruit from backsliding, not the seed or the beginning.

A man is laid in bed, but the disorder has only now arrived at its crisis. For some time, his infirmity had been working in his body. After a while, it at last burst out and laid him low and weakened him.

The sin of departing from God and spiritually weakening has most likely been going on for a while. The process of backsliding had been silently working. In the sight of God, the man was fallen before. Only recently, it may have been publicly discovered.

Not Always A Second Chance

Alphonois ab Avendarnus, 1590

We find in Scripture many desperately sick, yet cured the first time by our Saviour. However, where do we read in the Scripture where any blind man's eyes were twice enlightened? Of any deaf ears twice opened? Of any tied tongue twice loosened? Of any possessed with devils twice dispossessed? Of any dead twice raised?

No doubt that Christ could have done His miracles twice on the same person, but we read not that He ever did. The reason is why we should be more careful to avoid relapses into former sins. When one's spiritual heart is rebelliously bent to continue in sin, the recovery is harder, and in some cases, may never happen.

Seduced!

Bill Brinkworth

Many of the problems the early church faced are very much a problem today. They had to deal with many that departed from the faith and followed "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). Being this is the "latter times" (vs. 1) Paul spoke of, today this problem is very present.

Some, then and now claim, to be Christians. They may be; they may not be. At first, they make a profession of salvation and start doing something for the Lord. It is not long before they are nowhere to be found.

Why did they wander away from trying to live for the Lord? They may not have been really saved and were only going through “religious” motions. If they were truly saved, then they are still born-again, but they may have been “seduced” by demonic spirits.

Perhaps those spirits encouraged feelings to be hurt or prides to be offended. People may have faced an overwhelming temptation and succumbed to it. There are thousands of ways Christians can be trapped into running the opposite direction of obeying God. Satan and his devils cannot get anyone unsaved, but they certainly can make sure one’s testimony is so poor that they are of little use to the Lord. That is the goal of Satan, and unfortunately, millions have fallen for his ploy and have been tempted away from serving the Lord.

None of the reasons a saved person gives for not serving the Lord are legitimate. Nowhere in the Bible is there one reason why anyone should stop living for and obeying God’s commandments. All rationales for not doing what a Christian should are not of God!

- “Well, you don’t understand. So-and-so in the church said mean things to me, so I’ll not go anymore.” You

have been seduced, and a non-holy spirit knew where your weak point was.

- “That preacher just doesn’t feed me anymore, so I’m outa there!” You have been seduced, and the wicked spirits are giggling because they “got another one.”
- “I’m not reading my Bible anymore. I just don’t get anything out of it.” You have been seduced by a spirit.
- “If I live like a Christian, everyone will laugh at me.” You have been seduced.

As Ephesians 6 reminds us, there is a spiritual war going on. Satan and his devils are trying their hardest to seek one “whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8). Be wary in the raging battle and purpose to always do the will of God — no matter the temptations.

“Seven days without prayer makes one weak!”

— *Author Unknown*