

# Faith to Walk Above

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There are many in our day seeking more of what God has for them. Some call it "the deeper life," some "the way of holiness." "Perfection" is defined in many different ways. In most cases the seeking soul is told it is not for us today. But despite the popular conception--what man says God is doing today--God is working His perfect work of conforming all who choose Christ to His image.

God's eternal plan is predestined; the work is finished. All that is left for us is to receive the gift of God and then live by the faith of the Son of God who gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20). Very few today want to know what God says about the areas of temptation and carnality. They will not allow themselves to hear what God is saying in His Word. But if you will, the truth will set you free and you can go on to please God.

## Temptation

The reason so many are falling short of God's purpose in Christ is that they have never seen what that purpose is. To be in the purpose of God we need first to know what His purpose is, and then to obey what God has shown or revealed to us. If we do not obey God's word, we cannot have living faith. Living faith knows only God and His will.

We know that man in the natural realm can only look from his own standpoint of sinfulness. He knows no other life as he is outside of God's redemptive work at Calvary. But there is no place for sin in Christ, the body of Christ, or its members. We must allow God to show us our life in Christ, because sin has been left outside. We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37). We are not saved *in* sin, but *from* sin.

This is not to say that we can't be tempted. But we can't be tempted by sin as long as we are abiding in Christ. To be able to see our position in Christ pertaining to temptation, we must see what the scriptures say about the temptations of Christ. Was Jesus tempted by sin? To answer this question, we must know who was being tempted, and with what.

First of all, can one be tempting another, without the other being tempted? God's Word says that God cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13). Even though the devil tempted Jesus, Jesus was not drawn away by His own lust, because there was no lust in Him. All things that existed were by Him and for Him. Everything was in its proper relationship to Him as God-Man. How could He be tempted, drawn away by His own lust, from Himself? He could not be tempted with evil.

To understand what it means that Jesus was *"in all points tempted as we are"* (Hebrews 4:15), we must know that "tempted" means "tested." To be tested never means "to be drawn away." Testing reveals what degree of reality is in that which is being tested. So, Jesus suffered in all points even as we do and is able to succor us in all of our sufferings for Him. He knows what it is to suffer in the flesh. We need to say as Paul did: *"that I might know Him in His sufferings"* (Philippians 3:10). Jesus suffered in the flesh because of who He was, and what He did because of who He was.

Jesus was tested by Satan to reveal whether He was the Son of God. If it were on any other basis, Christ would have had to be drawn away by His own lust. Christ was tested in the same way that we are now, as sons of God. Every test only proves who we are in Christ. Furthermore, He will never allow us to be tempted (tested) above what we are able to bear, but with every test will provide a way

of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

If the possibility of sin was before Jesus when He walked this earth, is there still that possibility? If not, then why not? If the possibility were ever in Christ, when did it cease to be a possibility? We may also consider, could He be tempted with good? No, because in God things are not judged on the basis of "good" or "bad," but according to His will and purpose. *"There is none good but One,"* Jesus said (Matthew 19:17). Jesus considered only the will of the Father.

For us to say that Jesus was tempted by the things of the world, sexual sin, or any other foolishness, or to say there was even this possibility is not consistent with the revelation of who Jesus was and what He came to do. How could God be tempted with that which is His? How could He be tempted with authority over that which He is already the Creator of? His mission was to redeem back to God that which had fallen away from God.

Simply because Jesus was God revealed in the flesh does not mean that this God-Man could be tempted with evil. A body was prepared for Jesus to do God's will (Hebrews 10:5-7), not to be tempted to see whether He would do the will of the Father. If we consider Jesus as man and God separately, we contradict who Jesus was. He was God in flesh, *"God with us."* (Matthew 1:23) We cannot say He was tempted with sin as a man and not as God. If we are going to consider Jesus and temptation, we must look at Him as God-Man.

So, can we say that Jesus came to be tempted with sin? He came to die for our sins. He was a perfect sacrifice. Christ was not another creation of God as the first Adam was. He was God in the flesh. He is only the "second Adam" as the federal head of the new creation. It was through physical death that Christ broke the power of the devil and sin. In order to do His work of love, He had to be made like His brothers in every way, but without sin.

Therefore, to say Jesus was tempted with immorality of any sort, idolatry in any form, or anything outside of the will of God, is only trying to bring Jesus down to what we are as sinners. To think on this line is foolishness on man's part. Jesus did not come to be what we are as sinners. He came and took our sins. In no way did He become a sinner for us. Christ was God's perfect sacrifice. He was without sin or the possibility of sin because He was God in flesh, God-Man.

Jesus was as much a part of the Godhead as the Father, but this was to reveal the love of God in His redemption of man. If Jesus could have failed, He would be no more than another man, but our salvation and the working out of God's salvation depends on God. In God there are no failures, nor can there be. Salvation is not just for our benefit, but because of who God is, it brings to light His highest good in us--not what we may think is best for us. Why do we have to try to bring Christ down to our level, to believe He is able to succor (help) us in our testings? We must constantly remember that Christ did not come to succor us in our sins, but to succor us in our walk.

The seed of woman that was to bruise Satan's head (Genesis 3:15) was to come by woman, but the actual seed was the seed of God. This was the only manner in which God could come in the flesh without sin. Jesus did not come in a human body just to die as a man. He came as God in a body so that He might die, condemning sin in the flesh, taking our sins in His body on the cross. Sin had no place in Jesus, the God-Man. He came to redeem us back to God. The Godhead has never been out of harmony, nor can it be, because the nature of God is oneness. How could Jesus as God-Man be out of relationship with Himself?

It doesn't make sense to make the possibility in Jesus for sin. If we say that Jesus could have been tempted as a man with sin and not as God, then we are bringing the same principle over to each one of

us as born-again believers--that we can be tempted by sin in our flesh but not in our spirits. Out of this kind of thinking, we can see, comes the eternal security doctrine: "You can sin in the body but not in the spirit." But we cannot separate man's body and spirit and think each can move separate from the other. Man must stand or fall as a whole.

Thus we say that Jesus stands as our federal head as God-Man. Our walk is a walk of faith. We abide in Christ by faith, but Jesus did not remain God by faith, for He was God. In salvation, man is dependent on God for life. God did not create "man-God" in the beginning. He breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul, not a quickening spirit (see I Corinthians 15:45-49). We will always be God's creation. If we have life, it is because we have received the free gift and are abiding in Christ by faith.

When we are naked in "self," then and then alone are we aware of ourselves. Man was not ashamed until sin entered in. Then man wanted to hide himself. While there was no sin, he did not know he was naked. Only when man is not walking in the Spirit is he aware of himself and then tries to make excuses for his natural walk, or sin. This is because he is finding that what he is does not measure up to the life in God. Life outside Christ cannot be without self-expression and self-realization.

In Christ, we are not aware of "self." We are living and enjoying His life and strength in times of testing. We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus; we can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13). In Christ, man can find his life once again in God, as God designed from the beginning. But to look at self and give it a place of expression is the core of sin. When we become more aware of self than of Christ, we are in a dangerous place. Then we can be in only one of two places. Either we are in sin, or we are being accused by our conscience. If we are in sin, it must be repented of. If our conscience condemns us, we can only stand in God's Word by faith (1 John 3:20). We have a witness. Faith stands. I John 3:6 says, *"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him."*

This brings us to the question, "When is a person a Christian?" Scripture reveals that it is when he is "led by the Spirit," and while he "abides in Him." Both of these require active faith. In this place, a Christian cannot be tempted by sin. Sin can only have an effect on us or in us when we are drawn away by our own lust and enticed (James 1:14). This can only happen when we allow our heads to be turned. As the same iniquity was found in the heart of Satan, so also can iniquity be found in our hearts.

This can only happen because God created men with a will to choose. God did not create Satan with sin in his heart. Pride was found or revealed in him when he wanted to rise above what God's purpose was for him, and can also be found in us as we in our own strength try to find a place outside God's purpose.

The way of self is very deceitful. This is the reason we must live in the Spirit. The believer can have no other life and still be a Christian. A man that thinks otherwise is selling salvation short, and he cannot walk in faith. If you are consistently going on trying to better your ways, seeing all your weaknesses, you are not walking in faith.

We are being conformed to His image by His grace as we walk in faith. That which is not faith is sin (Romans 14:23). If we cannot think on a higher level than sin, we have not the mind of Christ. Jesus Christ never considered sin. This does not mean He did not know sin existed, because this is why He died. But He never took it into consideration in the finished work He came to do at Calvary. Sin has no place on the other side of the cross. Those who have died in Christ have ceased from sin--we have been freed by His sacrifice.

When we do not realize that God's grace is greater than the pull or power of sin, then we do not know what God has already done in Christ. We are leaning on our own understanding rather than walking by faith. Everything is evil outside of that which is related to God and His purpose. Christ will fill all in all. Every high thing and every thought must be brought into captivity to Him (2 Corinthians 10:5).

If we move on impulse, we cannot be moving in faith. Thus, impulse is the first thing that would draw us away from our place of abiding by faith. If we allow impulse, feeling, or emotion to be the motivating force in our lives, we are moving in something other than faith, and this is sin.

In salvation man does consider his weakness, but he knows by revelation the strength of God's love which has been revealed (1 John 5:4,5). Our overcoming in this life is through Christ, and our walk in Him (faith) overcomes the world. We live now by His faith.

This can only bring us to the conclusion that man, in Christ, cannot be tempted, and this is true only as we understand sin, will and faith. Again, to say man cannot be tempted is not true. He has a will and is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. God will never take away man's will, but let us not come short of the glory of God in Christ Jesus, which is when man by the power of the Spirit puts his will into God's will and moves in God's purpose. Christ came to bring us back to God, into relationship and fellowship which cannot be separated.

If salvation had been possible through a perfect man who could be tempted as a human, then why did God send Jesus? He could have created another man without sin as He created Adam in the beginning, but no man was capable of redeeming man. That is why God came in the flesh, and Jesus said, "Satan has no part in Me." So, man now abiding in Life--abiding in Christ--knows no temptation without being drawn out of that relationship with God. Paul said that we are more than conquerors in Christ.

Christ must be our life. If He is not, we are open to be drawn into every evil sin. To know God and to walk by faith brings us, in Christ, to a place where the evil one cannot touch us (1 John 5:18). Only faith can walk in this place. If we consider anything or anyone else, even ourselves, we cannot walk in faith. Faith hears God; faith moves in God.

Salvation is always spoken of as a free gift, and it is. We cannot work for it, but to receive the greatest of all gifts we must be willing to receive it. This always requires repentance, turning loose what we are holding onto so that we can receive Christ. Salvation does cost us something--everything that we are, to receive everything that He is. This is not "works" but it is repentance. Your heart must be open to receive, and your hands not so occupied with self that you cannot take hold of the one gift you cannot afford to miss.

I John 4:17 says, *"As He is, so are we in this world."* If we fail to see ourselves in Christ as we are called to walk out this life in the world, we do not have salvation but an imitation, sold to us by the deceiver. Men will always make excuses until they stand before God. But the man filled with the Spirit knows God's ways and walks in His life.

## **Carnality**

*"And that He died for all, that the living might live no longer to themselves, but to Him who, for their sakes, died and rose again. I therefore, from henceforth, view no man carnally; yea, though once my view of Christ was carnal, yet now it is no longer carnal. Whosoever then is in Christ is a new creation: his old being has passed away, and behold, all has become new. But all comes from God, for He it is who reconciled me to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:15-18).*

*"For all who are led by God's Spirit, they alone are the sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of bondage, that you should go back again to the state of slavish fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption wherein we cry unto God saying, Father" (Romans 8:14,15).*

*"But your life is not in the flesh, if indeed the Spirit of God be dwelling in you; and if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not Christ's" (Romans 8:9). "...if you live after the flesh, you are doomed to die..." (Romans 8:13).*

*"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).*

Faith knows nothing of carnality. Faith has its beginning and its end in God. Man's trouble is that he looks at himself and this is death. Only as we walk in faith are we in life. If a man can make a place for carnality, he can make a place for sin. Many have done this, and this is not a place of faith.

Carnal ways are only an expression of self. "Self" can only exist when a man is not in Christ. Again and again we must say: only faith can walk in God. Anything less than faith wants to educate self, and can never know God. This educated self only tells us about God with words that have no life. Death to self was the only thing that would satisfy God's heart, because God had passed judgment on sin. God judged all of Adam's race at Calvary. No expression of the old man can find a place in the new creation. Carnality has no place in a Christian's life. Why does man think he can bring darkness into that which is light?

If anyone continually looks at himself, he will continually try to work things out himself. But did not God say that He would put His laws in our hearts and write them in our minds? Our life and knowledge then is Christ.

Always keep in mind that the church is not just a group of people coming together in their own strength, but the body of Christ coming together in the power of the Spirit. Carnality has no place in the church. The church is only the church as it is connected to the Head, and the church is complete in Him. Whether a person is in the body of Christ or not is another thing. We know this by the fruits of his or her life, and by the witness of the Spirit.

Darkness (sin) has no expression in the body of Christ, the church. If there is lukewarmness, God removes it. If a group is not moving in the Spirit and has need of faith, righteousness to hide their nakedness, and the anointing to see spiritually, then we find Christ standing on the outside. We must hear Him and open our heart's door to Him. Then He will come in and we shall know His sweet fellowship.

We cannot be more or move in more than faith will allow. Each member of the body of Christ can be no more than what God has designed. God's real glory is revealed when we are obedient to what the Spirit is revealing. The sons of God are those who are led by the Spirit. *"He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"* (Hebrews 10:14). *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering..."* (Hebrews 10:23).

To walk in life is to walk in knowing God, because life is experiencing God. How can we get back to the walk of faith, if we see that we have turned aside? The only way is to repent. Jesus speaks this to the churches: *"Repent, and do the first works..."* (Revelation 2:5). *"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly..."* (Revelation 2:16). Repentance gives light to our pathway. So many are sorry they got caught, but there is never a real godly sorrow which works repentance unto life. Without repentance we

cannot see God.

*"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* (Romans 6:16). Obedience speaks of action. Action is our will active in God's will. Our righteousness is Christ, so we must have faith to please Him. We must abide in Him.

*"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:26). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).*

God's salvation is much more than man can understand, because it is something man has not experienced before. Men keep on selling God's salvation short, defining it as less than what God says it is. They would rather not believe what God is saying. They would rather give their own interpretation of what God says than take seriously the literal meaning of His Word.

But what does God say and how can we know what God means? We can never know until we do what we know He is demanding right now. God's salvation is still in God's hands, and what man does or says or interprets of God's Word can never change God or His salvation.

The new and living way which God has made for us is through His flesh. He has revealed His love to us in the Son, thus taking away our shame and giving us His life. With that life comes the ability to be what God has purposed for us to be. We don't try to be Christians. Rather, in the words of the apostle Paul:

*"I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and 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" (Galatians 2:20).*