

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

DOES MAN HAVE TO SIN?

By Johnnie Edwards

It is often wondered if man has to sin. The discussion comes about when one looks at the temptation of Jesus. It is reasoned that Jesus was *“in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). A reading of the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11 will show that he was tempted through the same three avenues as we are today: *“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”* (1 Jn. 2:16). Jesus did not give in to the temptations of the devil. He called Scripture to mind as he said, *“It is written.”* He resisted the devil and the devil fled from him (Jas. 4:7-8). There was nothing miraculous about Jesus not sinning on this occasion; he just did not give into the devil’s temptations.

What about us? Do we have to sin? The answer is no. We don’t have to sin. We can resist the devil (Jas. 4:7-8), just as Jesus did. There is a way of escape. *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* (1 Cor. 10:13). Often we are not willing to take the way of escape!

It is not a question of “Do we have to sin?” but “Do we sin?” How do we answer this question?

1. All have sinned. Every person who reaches the age of accountability before God is said to be a sinner. *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). Sin comes about when one commits sin and transgresses the law of God (1 Jn. 3:4).

2. Sin has pleasure. Moses chose rather *“to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”* (Heb. 11:25). Man likes sins and the evil things a person wants becomes the problem. James said, *“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away from his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”* (Jas. 1:14-15).

3. Sinners by choice. We are free moral agents and can obey God or disobey. We are not born a sinner but become sinners by omitting doing what God says or committing acts of unrighteousness (1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17). We make the choice. Who is there among us that would say, “I have never sinned” or “I cannot sin”? John said, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”* (1 Jn. 1:8-10). – *Guardian of Truth, January 3, 1991.* ■

Any Counterfeiters Around?

By Jerry Fite

Oh yes, there are those making fake 20, 50 and 100-dollar bills, and passing them off daily. Sure, there are those selling “look alike merchandise,” from expensive watches to trendy sneakers, and marketing them as the genuine article. No doubt about it, in the capitalistic world of buying and selling for profit, counterfeiters seek their fortune through deception and fraud. If something is of value, you can be assured that there will be a false look alike not far off stage ready to enter and deceive.

While it is readily admitted that counterfeiters are at work in the secular world, few ever have their consciousness raised to be alarmed of counterfeiters in the spiritual realm. But the Bible identifies many counterfeit things existing, and if not identified, they will harm us eternally.

The Bible speaks of counterfeit prophets. Jesus says, ***“beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves”*** (Matt. 7:15). Does this sound like every spokesman for God is a true prophet? If we acknowledge with Jesus that there are ***“false prophets,”*** can we pass them off as being harmless and benign when Jesus calls them “ravening wolves?”

Peter warns us of counterfeit or false teachers who ***“privily bring in destructive heresies, denying the Master that bought them...”*** (2 Pet. 2:1). They are teaching an “easy religion.” You can live like you want and continue to satisfy the desires of the fleshly mind (2 Pet. 2:18). These teachers are offering a counterfeit religion. They are promising ***“liberty,”*** when really, they are ***“bondservants of corruption”*** (2 Pet. 2:19).

Were these false teachers harmless? Those following the teachings of such counterfeiters fall into a spiritual state before God that has ***“become worse with them than the first”*** (2 Pet. 2:20). Like a dog returning to his vomit, and the sow returning to the wallowing in the mire, the once cleansed Christian returns to his old ways of sin. Spiritual death, or separation from God, continues to be the wage of sin, regardless of how many counterfeit teachers claim otherwise (Rom. 6:23). We have the freedom to choose our Masters: Christ or Sin. If we choose Christ, we must put to death the old man of sin (Col. 3:1-9) and put on the new man created in the image of Christ (Col. 3:10-14). There is no genuine “easy-do-what-I-want Christian religion.”

Paul warns us of a counterfeit gospel. He speaks of ***“another gospel”*** which really is not another gospel, ***“only there are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ”*** (Gal. 1:7). The only gospel that can be trusted is the gospel preached by Paul (Gal. 1:8-9). Men may try to be righteous according to their own standard of “think-so’s” and “I feel like,” but the only standard that makes us right before God is the gospel of Christ. For in this genuine message, the ***“righteousness of God”*** is revealed (Rom. 1:16-17).

Be on guard! There are spiritual counterfeits around. Take the true gospel of Christ revealed in the New Testament, and ***“prove all things; hold fast to that which is good”*** (1 Thess. 5:21-22). To not do so, is naive and spiritually irresponsible. Your soul is at stake! – ***Parkview church of Christ Bulletin***, January 21, 2018. ■



Be Careful What You Say

There are numerous statements in the Proverbs about the use of our tongues. We are warned about the sins we can commit with our words, but we are also encouraged about the good that can be done if we exercise caution in our speech. Consider these important truths:

- 15:1, 2 – ***“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.”***
- 29:11 – ***“A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.”***
- 12:22 – ***“Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.”***
- 12:18 – ***“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.”***
- 16:13 – ***“Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.”***
- 10:11 – ***“The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.”***
- 10:20 – ***“The tongue of the just is as choice silver the heart of the wicked is little worth.”***
- 15:4 – ***“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.”***
- 25:11 – ***“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”*** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250