

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: James 1:13-15 “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is *drawn away* by his own desires and *enticed*. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

Quote: “O to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee. *Prone to wander*, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here’s my heart, o take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.” R. Robinson

Christians are not immune to personal desires that tempt them to sin. We are drawn away like a fish by bait that looks like “the real thing.” We are enticed like an animal is tricked by a hunter’s call and then trapped, or killed when it carelessly gets too close to escape. As James warns, sinful passions that linger in the mind, or that work their way out into actions, do indeed lead to death. It may indeed be physical death, or it may be the “death” of a reputation, a relationship, an opportunity, or peace of mind. Careless people react impulsively to temptation without thinking of the long-lasting, harmful consequences of their sin upon themselves and often upon others.

Genesis 3 illustrates the tragedy of “taking the bait.” “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it *your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”

Although God made us with five senses to enjoy His wonderful creation, it is through those same senses that we are lured to take temptation’s bait. Eve listened to Satan’s lies. She saw that the tree could meet a “need” for food, that it was pleasant to look at, and that it would give her what she thought was wisdom. Eve let down her guard, took the fruit and tasted it. She placed a desire to be “*like God*” in a self-serving way before her relationship with Him. She now knew the difference between good and evil. Instead of being in control of her life, she became controlled by an evil desire that led to the sin of disobedience. Choosing the good of obedience over the evil of disobedience takes wisdom that God will give to all who ask for it.¹ Wisdom is the ability to use the knowledge of God’s Word in ways that glorify Him. Wisdom for Eve would have led her to know that disobeying a clear command of God would bring His certain judgment upon her.²

**Don’t Fall
for the Bait**

The lives of believers in the Bible clearly demonstrate that we are all prone to wander. Allurements arise from within, from uncontrolled appetites and evil passions.³ David was a man after God’s own heart and yet he followed the same slippery slope that Eve traveled. He looked, lingered, lusted, let down and lost! The same can happen to us! Although our old self is crucified with Christ, sin retains a foothold in our flesh.⁴ Unlike David, Joseph fled from temptation!⁵ We must do the same. Paul warned Timothy, “*Flee* also youthful lusts; but *pursue* righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”⁶ Peter called believers a “royal priesthood” who are to “proclaim the praises of Him who called (them) out of darkness into His marvelous light.” He begged them to “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”⁷ God always provides the path to victory!⁸ It boils down to us humbly acknowledging that we can fail.⁹ We must flee from temptation for God’s glory, and faithfully follow after that which fosters godliness (as we) fight the good fight of faith....”¹⁰

1 James 1:5-8 2 Gal.6:7-8 3 Gen.6:5; 8:21 4 Gal.2:20; Rom.6:6; II Cor.5:15 5 Gen.7 6 II Tim.2:22 7 I Peter 2:9-12 8 I Cor.10:12-13 9 Rom.12:3 10 I Tim.6:11-12