

Temptation Can Be Good

“But Peter said to Him, ‘Even if they all fall away, yet I will not!’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.’ But Peter repeatedly said insistently, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’”

Mark 15:29-31 (NASB)

“A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘You really are one of them as well, since even the way you talk gives you away.’ Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know the man!’ And immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the statement that Jesus had made: “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.”

Matthew 26:73-75 (NASB)

“Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.

Galatians 6:1 (NASB)

Temptation is a tricky notion because it is usually associated with evil, or negative consequences. Hence it is puzzling to suggest that good can come from temptation.

In the story of Peter’s vow of loyalty, Peter repeatedly insists he would never deny the Master even if it meant he would die for remaining loyal. Such a boast is a blight on the highly positive record of the fisherman. When push came to shove around the fire, in sight of the Saviour’s Jewish trial, Peter was three times questioned about being one of the accused man’s followers. Each time he denied knowing the Galilean.

However, the third denial (Luke 22:59-62) was the most vociferous on Peter’s part. He was told that he had the same Galilean accent as the man on trial and that was evidence of knowing the Man. It does not take much imagination to hear Peter’s Galilean accent, full of panic, repeatedly insisting that he had nothing to do with the One on trial. In denying his beloved Saviour his accent gave evidence against him.

The scene of denial was of benefit to Peter, as it painfully proved to him that he was not as full of courage as he thought. He was not yet strong enough to die for his beloved Master. The day would come when he would die for the Saviour, but there was much growth in grace needed before that hour.

So, as temptation helped Peter get to know his limitation of courage, it was a humbling experience. It was what we call a reality check. Peter learned his limits.

We cannot condone Peter’s efforts to deceive the people around the fire that night. Plainly stated, Peter lied about his identity. Deceit is sin. However, we must not be harsh in judging Peter. It was well said by a beloved pastor I served with when I first graduated from Seminary—“The best of men are men at best.” We need to consider the fact that we can succumb to the pressure of temptation just as easily as Peter did that dark night in history.

You may have shocked yourself by yielding to a sudden temptation and

stand in need of being recovered by a mature and gentle believer. Seek out such a person quickly.

On the other hand, you may see a tempted saint who needs a gentle recovery plan. Go to that fallen one, gently lift them up, carefully help them learn the needed lesson, stay by their side as they recuperate, and always be humble enough to remember that but for the grace of God you might have been caught in the same sin.

Satan would tempt us in order to defeat us. Let us, by the grace of God, make temptation a vehicle to bring us closer to the One Who died and rose again for us.

*“Eternity to the godly
is a day that has no sunset;
eternity to the wicked
is a night that has no sunrise.”*

-Thomas Watson

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