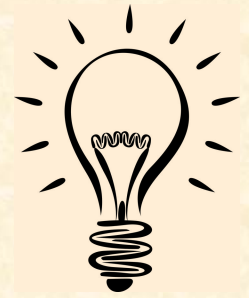


The Christian Light

Editor - Mitch Sparks



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

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From the Editor: Hello to All, this year’s theme for “The Christian Light,” is: **“What the Church Needs to Hear In 2022.”** We have a lot of new writers this year and some from the past year. Thank you for your words of encouragement and we hope that these articles are beneficial to everyone world over. Thanks, Mitch Sparks

“Blessed Is the Man That Endureth Temptation”

Mitch Sparks – Bay church of Christ – Bay, AR

Blessed (“makarios” – supremely blest, fortunate, well off, Happy, specifically a Christian, one who is looking for the joy, pleasure and delight of heaven that awaits us at the end of life) **is the man** (“aner”- the individual) **that endureth** (“hupomeno” - to remain firm, solid, and resistant under suffering or misfortune without yielding to) **temptation** (“peirasmos” - enticement, lure, a thing or course of action that attracts or tempts someone, a trial, proving, to test) **for when he** (the individual) **is tried** (trials, affliction in his life) **he shall receive the crown of life** (through his faithfulness to God and being faithful to death) **which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.** God demands us to be winners! Not whiners! Some would say “I don’t know why I can’t rid these temptations, or I wish these trials or difficulties would just move on. We are to be winners!

The difficulties of this life are the means which prove (Test) our faith, and produce maturity in the Christian character, and enables one to possess an abiding peace described as Blessed. The mere fact that one is subject to trials does not mean that this state of being blessed will always be the result. James said only those who endure trials are declared to inherit the blessing. The one who endures is the one who patiently submits to the trials of life, knowing that they are the furnace of fire which test (proves) faith and strengthens the Child of God. Some verses to recall to our memory to help us each day as a Child of God: (Heb. 3:14) – “For we are made partakers of Christ, If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb. 12:1) – “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Rev. 2:10) – “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

There are many things in life that can cause us to have temptations and trails. Life can be a difficult thing for many. They think it is peculiar to them. They don’t accept the fact that “life” is difficult. That is the reason we see only “our” problems – our temptations, our trials in life. But what should we do about them? Do we just sit down and moan and whine over them, or do we try to solve them? We need to solve them only with the help of God and His word, and He is willing to help us if we will allow Him to and He will carry us through the trials of life.

Temptation - The enticements, allurements, a thing, or course of action that attracts or tempts someone. Spiritually speaking we all know what the answer is: SIN! (Missing the mark). For us to understand the word “endureth” in (James 1:12), we must take a closer look at the word “temptation” and what it is and what leads to temptations in this life we are living in, and to help us all to stay away from things which hinder the soul. Temptations can approach us through various avenues. In public, in our homes, at our jobs, through various social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, Tik Tok, etc... also think of the atmosphere in which our children are around during their daily routines of being in public school, all of the temptations and enticements that have spread like wildfire through the student body each day. Wherever we go in this life there will always be things to tempt us, and we must not yield to any temptations that can cause our soul to be lost.

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In (1 John 2:15-17), “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” (a) Lust of the Flesh – These are appeals made through the desires which arise from the evil appetites of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). (b) Lust of the Eyes – These are the desires which are aroused through the appeal of objects by the way they look. We lust for them because they are very appealing to us in appearance through our natural eyesight. (c) The Pride of Life – These are the evil desires for worldly honor, they appeal to our vanity. Evil actions are often produced because of our desire for the praise of men, to have something that will cause others to honor us and can cause us to become prideful and to boast of ourselves. God should be the one we glorify, and not man! We can see all three of these avenues of sin throughout the Bible: Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and the pride of Life.

First, we can see in the beginning of the Old Testament, in the account of Adam and Eve, and the temptation, and the fall of man (Gen. 3:1-13). Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food, there was more than enough food in the garden of Eden to satisfy her need. Her hunger was not sinful, but her desire to eat this fruit certainly caused her to sin. Eve was tempted through the lust of the eyes. It was pleasant to her sight. She was tempted through the pride (vainglory) of life, the desire to be as wise as God. “But what a lie the devil told her!”

Second, we can see from our New Testament, in the account where the Devil tries to tempt Jesus in the Wilderness in (Matt. 4:1-11). The Devil tries to tempt Jesus to turn these stones into bread (v.3), takes Him up on the pinnacle of the temple (v.5), then the Devil took him up into a high mountain, and showed Him the kingdoms of the world, the Devil promising that he would give all to the Lord if He would worship him. Jesus replied that it was God who was to be worshipped and served, Not Satan! The Devil is very crafty, and slick, but notice that the Devil is trying to get Jesus to commit sin just as Adam and Eve did through the Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Jesus tells the Devil in (Matt. 4:7) – “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” We must understand that Jesus was tempted like we are each day, but Jesus did not sin (Heb. 4:15).

The Devil will try his best to tempt us each day, but we must not yield to the temptations and schemes of his deceived ways. Also, we as Christians must understand that God will not and cannot tempt anyone with evil (James 1:13-15) – “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he (the individual) is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” If one were to lose his or her faith, it will not be because God abused you, or that He tempted you, or tested you beyond your ability. It will be because the individual has failed to respond accordingly to his or her efforts to build their faith through the teachings of Christ, and through daily studying the Word of God. We must grow daily, grow in the knowledge of our Lord, study each day to be approved of God, rightly dividing the Word of truth (2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15).

Application Today in Our Christian Walk With God – (1) Sin has a strong blinding appeal, we don’t see clearly when we are tempted by Sin! Sin is missing the mark. Sin is moral and spiritual failure, and having a wrong attitude of the mind. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). (2) Sin is a failure to do what is right! “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). Sin will blind us to its negative consequences. Sin is tricky, Sin is death. Sin is a spiritual blockade on the road to heaven. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). (3) Sin brings Ruin! Sin separates us from God. “Behold the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1,2). When God say’s “Thou Shalt Not” He means don’t hurt yourself! Sin puts us at odds with God. Sin can be overcome only through the blood of Christ. Let us be determined as Christians that we will not let temptations stand in the way when we are trying our best to serve the true and living God. Be the best Soldier for God, the best Servant for Christ, and the best Steward for the kingdom of God and you can endure the trials, temptations, of this life. James tells us to count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations (James 1:2).

How are we to consider trials and temptations as joy? This is not man’s first reaction to have joy when I fall into temptations. The natural reaction would be to recoil to draw back. The man who has faith must be ready at all times for what the Devil entices us with through the temptations of life.

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Notice James said, “When ye fall” not “if we fall.” Trails are coming to try us all but the man who has faith must react accordingly. Trials become the testing ground for our faith. Jesus suffered the cross to arrive at joy (Heb. 12:2). Jesus taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, in (Matt. 5:10-12) – “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Notice Jesus says to “rejoice, and be exceedingly glad,” where James says to “count it all joy.” The question may be asked, How can someone rejoice or have joy in suffering? What about Moses? (Heb. 11:24,25). What about the Apostles? (Acts 5:40-42). What about Paul and Silas? (Acts 16:17-36).

The trials and temptations become the occasion of Joy. All the afflictions, All the persecution one may endure as a Christian, count it all joy, How? Why? Because we are victorious, we will win! Christ is our Victory! He has overcome the World. (John 16:33). Endurance is what proves our faith and loyalty to God, it builds us up and molds us into the kind of person that Christ wants us to be each day. The “joy” of (James 1:2), is for the opportunity to Win! “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad” for great is your reward in heaven.”

Receive The Crown of Life – One might ask the question, How is it possible to receive the crown of life with all the trials and temptations a Christian endures each day? James says the answer is with “patience” (James 1:3,4). Trials worketh patience. Trials can lead us to patience or steadfastness, and steadfastness leads us to perfection, or spiritual maturity. Having patience in time of suffering is the ability to wait calmly and in joy for the glad day when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes (Rev. 7:17, 21:4). The trying of our faith is to produce patience and the man (the individual) who has faith is to “let patience have her perfect work.” The Christian is to react patiently to the trials and tribulations of life. We have need for patience! The steadfastness, constancy, endurance until the end (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 10:36). We have need for patience to hold fast the faith (Heb. 10:22,23), and faith endures the coming of the Lord (James 5:7,8). We have need for patience which is required by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23; Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Another step James puts forth to “receive the crown of life,” is to pray to God (James 1:5,6). We all have days where we seem to forget to pray as we should. Possibly we have had times in our lives where we simply did not feel like praying, we all have been there. When you don’t feel like praying, PRAY! – if we are to not doubt or waver as the verse implies then we need to pray even if we don’t feel like praying, because it is then when temptations and trials will arise the quickest in our life because we have lost focus on our priorities which is God, Christ, and the Church. (Matt. 7:7,8; 6:7-14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; James 5:16). When we lack wisdom, pray to God! but ask in faith, nothing wavering.

James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, has shown us that to overcome the temptations and trials of this life, we must have joy, patience, wisdom, and a faithful prayer life to God in order for us to endure until the end and to receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (James 1:12; 5:11).

As the song “**Yield Not to Temptation**” suggest and implies: “Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each victory will help you Some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue, look ever to Jesus: He’ll carry you thro’. Shun evil companions, Bad language disdain. God’s name hold in reverence, Nor take it in vain; Be thoughtful and earnest, Kindhearted and true, Look ever to Jesus: He’ll carry you thro’. To him that o’er cometh, God giveth a crown; Thro’ faith we shall conquer, Tho’ often cast down; he who is our Savior, Our strength will renew; Look ever to Jesus: He’ll carry you thro’. Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you thro’.

May we all endure the temptations and press on to the end! God Bless! – Mitch Sparks

Next week’s article will be by Brother Jameson Steward, preacher at the West Hobbs Street church of Christ in Athens, Alabama. His topic:

What the Church Needs to Hear in 2022:
“Faith Without Works is Dead!” (James 2:14-17).

From the Editor: If you or the congregation where you attend would like to receive this publication, please send us an email to thechristianlight1@gmail.com and in the subject line “**Sign Up for The Christian Light.**” Thanks, Mitch Sparks