

Issues Related to Temptation and Following Jesus

The issue isn't whether or not you are being tempted. If you are a disciple of Jesus, you can *expect* to be tempted. After all, the devil considers you an enemy! Even Jesus was tempted.

The issue is what you do with that temptation. Do you habitually (perhaps even eagerly) give-in to it, or do you fight it?

The Bible tells us *how* to fight temptation. If you don't spend time in the Bible, you really won't know how to correctly fight it. (Instead, you will have a good reason to consider the possibility that you are *not* a disciple.)

Again, the issue is *not* whether or not you ever give-in to temptation... but how you choose to respond when you *do* yield. When you fall into the "mud" of sin, do you cry out for Jesus' help, get out of the "mud," let Jesus wash you clean, and continue on your spiritual journey? Or do you wallow in it, like a pig wallows in the mud - 2 Peter 2:22b?

There *are* consequences to sin. If you are a disciple of Jesus, you will discover that the consequences are not worth the temporary "pleasure" that the sin might give you. You will become increasingly disgusted with the sin, and will grow in your awareness of how horrible it really is.

The issue isn't even whether or not you have the strength to resist temptation. The fact of the matter is that you *don't* have the strength. Without strength from Jesus, you *will* fall into sin, sooner or later. It's just natural for you (and I) to do so.

If you are a disciple of Jesus, you will learn the *necessity* of relying on Jesus for the power and ability to fight temptation. You will *want* to maintain communication with him - paying attention to what he says in his Word and talking to him in prayer.

It is true that Jesus asks us to *choose* to follow him - to deny ourselves (and our values) and to carry the cross (and Jesus' values). However, it is also true that we need Jesus for the strength to do this. Without him we are powerless. But with him, even the gates of hell will not prevail against us!