



10/27/25

One of the things I thought was so cool in the message yesterday was when Tim talked about how God steps in to restore us when we repent of our sin. We are body, soul, and spirit... and God is working in ALL parts of us. Tim said... our bodies will be fully restored and transformed when God takes us home... our souls are being transformed to be like Jesus one degree of glory to the next... and our spirits were regenerated to new life at salvation (though the soul and spirit are so intertwined that it's hard to tell where one ends and the other begins). I'm so thankful for the hope of total transformation in the presence of Jesus. So I pray this blessing for you and me today from 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it." AMEN!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

James 1:12-17, 1 John 2:15-17 ~

Through the story of Eve's deception, I see that Satan tries to get me to question God's goodness and then he twists God's words and tells me that God's rules are meant to withhold good from me. But God's commands are really there to protect me from evil. But when I get caught into the devil's trap... when I believe his lies... I fall into sin, and then hide to cover my sin, avoid God, and then blame God and others.

Why do I get caught into Satan's deception? James 1:12-17 helps me understand this...

Vs. 12 ~ "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him."

Let me not miss this... God has made a promise that He will bless me for remaining steadfast under trial. The big question is, do I trust Him? Do I believe that God's blessing is greater than the payoff I get if I give in to the temptation? The longer I remain steadfast under trial, the harder it gets if I'm fixing my eyes on the thing that's tempting me. Rejecting sin is always

a trial because my flesh is always drawn to sin. But God has blessing waiting for me when I endure the trial.

Vs. 13-15 ~ God blesses me for remaining steadfast and not giving in to temptation. God allows the trial, but He does not cause the temptation. He cannot be tempted to sin, and He will not tempt any person to sin. Thinking of Tim's illustration of the roadkill of sin... It's easy for me to see the soft fur and miss the maggots eating the dead flesh away. God sees the maggots very clearly. He is not deceived in any way by evil. And because He knows how disgusting it is, He would never try to get me to cuddle with roadkill.

But when MY desire gets stirred for the fuzzy, soft promise of sin, I have the choice to run FROM it or to run TO it. I can't say, "God's at fault for this," and I can't say, "The devil made me do it." If I choose to sin, it's because I want it. It is my responsibility.

The temptation itself is not the sin. I can run from the temptation, and I will not have sinned. But when I choose to stay focused on the temptation rather than run from it, I let the temptation take over. Then the temptation intermingles with my choice, and they have a baby... sin... and then that sin grows into full grown roadkill... death. It is not possible to engage in just a little bit of sin and have it stay benign. Sin will always lead to more and bigger sin... which leads to death. Nothing good comes from sin.

Vs. 16-17 ~ "Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers..." How was Eve deceived? The devil got her to question God's goodness... but "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." Whatever Satan offers, it is a lie. It is not good. Only good and perfect things come from God.

God's gifts are good and perfect, including His rules. No matter what God gives, I can always know that it is good and perfect in the eternal perspective... and that's the perspective that matters. To look at difficult circumstances with a temporary focus, I may conclude that there's no way this can be good. To look at satisfying circumstances with a temporary focus, I may conclude that there's no way this can be bad. That's why I need to trust the Lord to be the interpreter of my circumstances. He has an eternal perspective. He promises blessing. And He never changes. His promises never change. His goodness never changes.

Once again, I have to ask myself, "Do I believe this?" If I don't, I'm being deceived. Overcoming temptation STARTS with acknowledging God's goodness. In His goodness, He has told me that trials will come... but blessing waits for me when I cling to Him instead of roadkill.

What is the roadkill? What does Satan use to tempt and deceive me? He uses the things that the world calls good... where they look at the fuzzy side of the roadkill and not the maggot infested parts. 1 John 2:15-17 gives me warning not to get caught up in what the world calls good...

Vs. 15-17 ~ "Do not love the world or the things in the world." Everything that the world calls

good is the antithesis of what God calls good because the world tried to define itself without God. To love what the world loves is to love what God hates. I can't say that I stand with the Lord while I want the things of the world. I can't say that the love of the Father motivates my life while I'm motivated by the love of the world.

This sounds obvious... but it's easy to get caught up in trying to live on both sides of the fence. Like... "I love Jesus, but I can't stand that person because of what he did." Or "I know Jesus wants me to trust Him and not be anxious, but this is just who I am." To love the Lord, I will give up the things He hates... as I ask Him for help and He carefully helps me open my fingers to release the grasp of sin from my grip.

What are the things I get caught up in?

- The desires of the flesh... rather than the desires of the Spirit. The desires of the flesh are all about what makes ME feel good, even though it's just a temporary fix and others get hurt in the process. The desires of the Spirit are about unity, goodness, wisdom, and love.*
- The desires of the eyes... rather than the desires of my God. The desires of my eyes only see what's in front of me and they don't take the whole picture into consideration. What the Lord calls good will always have the whole, eternal picture in mind.*
- The pride of life rather than boasting in the Lord alone. Pride of life is all about gaining honor for myself. That sounds very desirable... but it doesn't satisfy. Enough is never enough. Boasting in the Lord alone is the only thing worth boasting in. Only He deserves all glory.*

The thing about loving as the world loves is... it doesn't always mean doing things that look bad or wrong to others. It's less about the "thing" and more about the motive. The love of the world is about the love of SELF... living life as a functional atheist... treating circumstances as if there is no God. But He is more real than I will ever be. And the world is passing away.

Here's the promise and blessing of loving what the Lord loves through obedience... of going after the desires of the Spirit, what pleases the Lord, and honoring Him... eternal life. As I pursue the Lord rather than the things of the world, I experience the blessing of every good and perfect gift that comes from Him.

O Lord, please help me to remain steadfast with You through every trial. Let me not be deceived. The only things that are satisfying, good, and perfect are from You. And that will never change. Praise Your name!