

Giving In

June 11, 2018

Proverbs 19:3

One's own folly leads to ruin, yet the heart rages against the LORD.

1st Corinthians 10: 12-13

¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

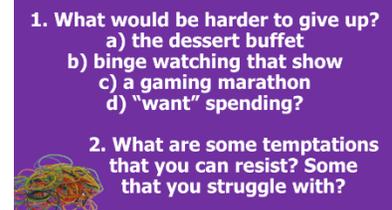


How many times have you been in line with your children at the grocery store, waiting to check out, and they see the candy? Can you hear the whining? As it gets a little louder and a little louder, what do you want to do? But you know that you shouldn't. Have you ever been shopping for a new pair of pants because you tore or got a really bad stain on the old ones? You really do need a new pair. As you begin to head to the check-out, you think, "You know, I don't have a shirt that really goes with this shade of tan". And after you have a nice new shirt picked out, you begin to think about shoes and a belt. You don't "need" the shirt or the shoes or the belt, but... Or, one last scenario. You have been through the buffet a couple of times and to the desert area once. But that brownie sure looked good. Once you have the brownie you pass the soft serve ice cream machine, and, well... In these basic scenarios, we have all been there. Even in these simple situations, the temptation is so hard to resist.

Let's begin with some questions to discuss at your table:

1. What would be harder to give up?

- a) the dessert buffet
- b) binge watching that show
- c) a gaming marathon
- d) "want" spending?



2. What are some temptations that you can resist? Some that you struggle with?



When we are tempted - whether it is in the candy line or in one of these situations or with one more drink or one last bet or just a parting thought in the argument – we usually come to that moment when we must make a decision. What happens in that moment in your head? For me, I am really good at rationalizing a poor decision that I am about to make. If it is to have one more bowl of ice cream, then I tell myself that I will go for an extra-long walk the next day. If it is buying something I do not really need, I set an imaginary time in my head that I will wait until "x" date to buy anything else. If it is giving a parting shot as I walk away from a disagreement, in my mind I say it is just getting even. In each of these cases, I try and make myself feel okay with a decision I know I should not be making.

Sometimes the pressure to give in or to go along is more than we can bear. Our best friend bought a new car and has really been showing it off, so... The guy in the cubicle next to mine at work lied to seal that deal and now he is the boss's new best friend, so... All of my friends ordered one more drink even though we should have gone home an hour ago, so... The last of my circle of college friends is getting married next month, so... We all want to fit in, to appear to have it all together, to be successful. So, we give in.

But before we actually give in, we think about it two or three times. We weigh over the choices and the ramifications or the possible consequences. Once in a while, though, we just jump at the first impulse we have. Sometimes we do. We buy that new television without thinking or we down a quick beer right when we get home. Then, in a bit, we have a moment of clarity and wonder why we did what we did. Experts say that when we give in to temptation, there are three primary reasons. We have talked about two: justification and impulse.

The third reason experts identify is self-reliance. Webster's defines "self-reliance" as: 'trust in one's own powers and abilities rather than those of others'. Translated into church language, here is how I would define self-reliance: 'trust in one's own powers and resources rather than in God'. From my experiences through most of my adult life, when I trust myself rather than God, I am not making a wise or good choice. The outcome is always better when I first trust in God and His leading in my life. When I am tempted and I think about it that second or third time, the little voice of the Holy Spirit is ever whispering in my

ear, trying to remind me of all that I know in my heart to be true. And yet, once in a while, I still choose to rely on what I think are my own sufficient knowledge or abilities or powers of persuasion. This proverb speaks well of what I am really doing when I allow self-reliance to guide my decisions.

Proverbs 19:3 reads: *"One's own folly leads to ruin, yet the heart rages against the Lord"*. Trusting in myself rather than in God leads to ruin. Trusting in myself rather than in God is really me raging against God, saying to God that I know better than God does.



Now that we have discussed these three reasons that allow people give in to temptation, **I invite you to discuss two more questions** to discuss at your table:



1) Which reason that people give for falling to temptation do you most struggle with: impulse, justification, or self-reliance?

2) How have you seen these three play out in your past poor decisions?

None of us are impervious to temptation. Even the strongest of Christians will sin every day. Think of the best person you have ever known. Yes, even they have bad thoughts, judgmental thoughts, condemning thoughts at times. As human beings we are simply prone to sin. As creatures of the flesh, we are naturally inclined towards the things of the world, toward the things of the flesh.

us no matter how long it has been since our last time. Maybe it is the long, long time that we have heard that we are not good enough or not worthy enough. But Paul tells us, "God is faithful". **To illustrate, a story:**

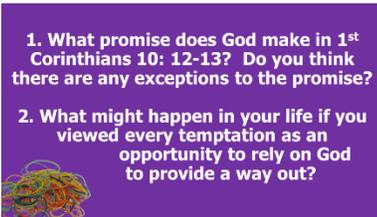


"A man in Dundee, Scotland, was confined to bed for forty years, having broken his neck in a fall at age fifteen. But his spirit remained unbroken, and his cheer and courage so inspired people that he enjoyed a constant stream of guests. One day a visitor asked him, "Doesn't Satan ever tempt you to doubt God?" "Oh, yes," replied the man. "He does try to tempt me. I lie here and see my old schoolmates driving along in their carriages and Satan whispers, 'If God is so good, why does He keep you here all these years? Why did he permit your neck to be broken?'" "What do you do when Satan whispers those things?" asked the guest. "Ah," replied the invalid, "I take him to Calvary, show him Christ, and point to those deep wounds, and say, 'You see, he does love me'. And Satan has no answer to that. He flees every time."

When we are tempted and feel like there is always no way out, we must remember that God will always show us the way through if we trust Him. In this story the man faced down the tempting by Satan by recalling Jesus' gift on the cross. When he looked at those wounds, he knew that Jesus loved him. Satan knows it too. When we are tempted and maybe feel like giving in, we need to remember that God was faithful on the cross and that God will be faithful every time that we put our trust in Him and call on His name to protect us. The last

line of our scripture passage read, *"he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it"*. May we put out trust in God, knowing that God will show us the way so that we can endure the temptation to give in.

As we close this time together, I leave you with two questions to consider in the week ahead. I hope that you think about the temptation to give in and hold onto the promise we find in 1st Corinthians 10. **Here are the questions:**



1) What promise does God make in 1st Corinthians 10: 12-13? Do you think there are any exceptions to the promise?

2) What might happen in your life if you viewed every temptation as an opportunity to rely on God to provide a way out?

These two questions are on the bulletin and I encourage you to spend some time with these questions in the week ahead. **As we prepare to transition** into a time



of sharing in communion, I invite you to return to those things that test you, to those temptations that may cause you to sin. There are sticky notes on the tables and pens in the coffee cups. I invite you to take a

moment to privately name the testing or temptation that you need to turn over to God. As we come forward to share in communion, you will be invited to turn

these slips of paper over to God. Take a moment to write down that struggle that you are enduring that is tempting you to give in. **Let us pray...**

