

The Temptations of a Sanctified Man

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The sanctified man is 'dead to sin' and must fight to hold fast his faith in God's love, the Saviour's cleansing Blood, and the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power to overcome Satan's accusations and achieve victory.

Scripture: Romans 6:11, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 3:3, Hebrews 11:25

Topics: "Sanctification", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle addresses the question of how a sanctified man, who is 'dead to sin,' can still face temptations. He explains that while the sanctified individual no longer has inclinations to respond to worldly temptations, they still engage in a spiritual battle against Satan, who seeks to undermine their faith. Brengle emphasizes the importance of maintaining faith in God's love, the cleansing power of Jesus' blood, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to resist the devil's accusations and temptations. He encourages believers to be vigilant, to fight the good fight of faith, and to hold fast to their testimony to overcome the enemy. Ultimately, the sanctified man finds true freedom and victory through faith in Christ.

Transcript

How can a man that is "dead to sin" be "tempted?" asked an earnest but unsanctified Christian of me some time ago. "If the very tendencies and inclinations to sin be destroyed, what is there in the man to respond to a solicitation to evil?"

This is a question which every man will ask sooner or later, and when God showed me the answer, it threw great light on my pathway and helped me to defeat Satan in many a pitched battle.

The fact is, that the truly sanctified man who is "dead to sin" does not have any inclinations in him that respond to the ordinary temptations of men. As Paul declares, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" -- against the sensual, fleshly and worldly temptations which used to have such power over him -- but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly -- as in his closet, in secret prayer-places" (Eph. vi. 12, marginal reading).

If he were once a drinking man, he is no longer tempted in the least to get drunk, for he is "dead" and his life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3).

If he were ever proud and vain, delighting in dress and jewels, he is no longer allured by the cheap glitter and the vain pomp and glory of this world, for he has set his affection on things above, not on things on the

earth (Col. iii. 2). Such things now have no more attraction for him than the brass trinkets, eagle feathers and war-paint of an Indian.

If he once coveted the honor and praise of men, he now counts such as dung and dross, that he may win Christ and have the honor that comes from God only.

If he once desired riches and ease, he now gladly gives up all earthly possessions and comforts, that he may have treasure in Heaven and not be "entangled with the affairs of this life"; "that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. ii. 4). I do not mean to say that Satan will never hold up any of these worldly and fleshly pleasures and honors to induce the soul to leave Christ, for he will. But what I do mean to say is, that the soul being now "dead to sin," having the very roots of sin destroyed, does not respond to the suggestion of Satan, but instantly rejects it. Satan may send along a beautiful adulteress, as he did to Joseph in Egypt; but this sanctified man will flee away and cry out, as Joseph did, "How ... can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9).

Or, Satan may offer him great power and honor and riches, as he did to Moses in Egypt; but comparing these with the infinite fullness of glory and power he has found in Christ, the sanctified man will instantly reject the Devil's offer: "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. xi. 25, 26).

Or again, Satan may tempt his palate with the dainty wines and rich viands of a king's palace, as he did Daniel in Babylon; but, like Daniel, this sanctified man will have at once "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Dan. i. 8).

All these worldly baits were held out to Jesus (Matt. iv. 1-11 and Luke iv. 2-13), but we see in the account of the apostles how gloriously He triumphed over every suggestion of the Tempter. And just as He rejected Satan's temptations and gained the victory, so will the sanctified man, for he has Christ Himself come to dwell in his heart and to fight his battles, and can now say with the Master, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John xiv. 30).

In fact, he has found such satisfaction, such peace and joy, such comfort, such purity and power in Christ, that the power of temptation along any of the old lines is completely broken, and he now enjoys the liberty of the sons of God; he is free as any archangel, for "if the Son ... shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36), even with "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. v. 1).

But while Christ has set this sanctified man at liberty, and he no longer has to fight against his old worldly passions and fleshly appetites, yet he has a continual warfare with Satan to keep this liberty. This warfare is what Paul calls "the good fight of faith" (I Tim. vi. 12).

He must fight to hold fast his faith in the Father's love. He must fight to hold fast his faith in the Saviour's cleansing Blood.

He must fight to hold fast his faith in the Holy Spirit's sanctifying and keeping power.

Although not seen by the world, this fight is as real as that of Waterloo or Gettysburg, and its far-reaching consequences for good or evil are infinitely greater.

By faith, the sanctified man is made an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ (Rom. viii. 17) of all things, and his faith makes his Heavenly Father and this heavenly inheritance so real to him, that the influence of these unseen things far surpasses the influence of the things he sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, and handles with his hands.

The sanctified man says with Paul, and fully realizes it in his heart as he says it, that "the things which are seen are temporal," and will soon perish; "but the things which are not seen" with our natural eyes, but are seen by the eye of faith, "are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18) and will remain when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. iii. 10), and "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. xxxiv. 14).

Now in the very nature of the case, these things can only be held by faith; but so long as the sanctified man thus holds them, Satan's power over him is utterly broken. This the devil knows quite well, so he begins systematic warfare against the faith of such a man.

He will accuse him of sin, when the man's conscience is as clear of willfully breaking God's law as is the conscience of an angel. But Satan knows if he can get him to listen to this accusation and lose faith in the cleansing Blood of Jesus, he has him at his mercy. Satan will in this way accuse a sanctified man, and then turn right about and declare that it is the Holy Spirit, instead of himself, condemning the man! He is "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10). Here is the difference we want to notice:

The devil accuses us of sin.

The Holy Spirit condemns us for sin.

If I tell a lie, get proud, or break any of God's commandments, the Holy Spirit will condemn me at once. Satan will accuse me of having sinned when I have not, and he cannot prove it.

For instance, a sanctified man talks to a sinner about his soul, urges him to flee from the wrath to come, and give his heart to God; but the sinner will not. Then Satan begins to accuse the Christian: "You did not say the right things to that sinner; if you had, he would have given in to God."

It is of no use arguing with the devil. The only thing the man can do is to look away from the accuser to the Saviour and say:

"Dear Lord, Thou knowest that I did the best I could at the time, and if I did anything wrong or left anything unsaid, I trust Thy Blood this moment to cleanse me."

If Satan is met this way at the beginning of his accusation, the man's faith will gain a victory, and he will rejoice in the Saviour's cleansing Blood and the Spirit's keeping power; but if he listen to the devil until his conscience and faith are both wounded, it may take a long time for his faith to regain the strength which will enable him to shout and triumph over all the power of the enemy.

When Satan has injured the faith of the sanctified man, he will begin to blacken the character of God. He will suggest to the man that the Father no longer loves him with that mighty love He had for His Son Jesus; yet Jesus declares that He does. Then he will suggest that, maybe, the Blood does not cleanse him from all sin and that the Holy Spirit cannot -- or, at least, does not -- keep anybody spotless and blameless, and that, after all, there is no such thing as a holy life down here in this world.

As a further result of this wounded faith, the man's secret prayer loses much of its blessedness; his intense desire to deal with souls will grow dull; the joy of testifying for Christ will grow less, and dry talk will take the place of burning testimony, and the Bible will cease to be a constant source of blessing and strength. Then the devil will tempt him to actual sin, through the neglect of some of these duties.

Now if the man listens to Satan and begins to doubt, woe be to his faith! If he does not cry mightily to God, if he does not search the Bible to know God's will and find His promises, and plead them day and night, as Jesus did, "who in the days of His flesh ... offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death" (Heb. v. 7); if he does not hurl these promises at Satan and resolutely shut his ears to every suggestion to doubt God, it is only a question of time when he will be numbered among those who have a name to live and are dead (Rev. lii. 1); "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5); whose prayer and testimonies are dead; whose Bible study and exhortations and works are dead, because there is no living faith in them; or he will become an out-and-out backslider.

What shall the sanctified man do to overcome the devil?

Listen to what Peter says: "Be sober, be vigilant" (that means, keep your eyes open), "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith" (1 Pet. v. 8, 9).

Hear James: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (iv. 7).

Listen to Paul: "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vs. 12). "The just shall live by faith (Rom. i. 17). "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. vi. 16).

And John: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). "And they overcame him" (the devil, the accuser of the brethren) "by the Blood of the Lamb" (in which Blood they had childlike faith), "and by the word of their testimony" (for if a man will not testify his faith will soon die), "and they loved not their lives unto the death "(Rev. xii. 11); they obeyed God at all costs, and denied themselves to the uttermost.

Paul attaches the same importance to testimony when he says: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb. x. 23).

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12).

" Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward (Heb. x. 35).

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