

Introduction:

To introduce today's topic to you we'll read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 from *The Message*:

<sup>14-18</sup>Don't become partners with those who reject God. How can you make a partnership out of right and wrong? That's not partnership; that's war. Is light best friends with dark? Does Christ go strolling with the Devil? Do trust and mistrust hold hands? Who would think of setting up pagan idols in God's holy Temple? But that is exactly what we are, each of us a temple in whom God lives. God himself put it this way:

"I'll live in them, move into them;  
I'll be their God and they'll be my people.  
So leave the corruption and compromise;  
leave it for good," says God.

"Don't link up with those who will pollute you.  
I want you all for myself.  
I'll be a Father to you;  
you'll be sons and daughters to me."  
The Word of the Master, God.

<sup>7</sup> <sup>1</sup>With promises like this to pull us on, dear friends, let's make a clean break with everything that defiles or distracts us, both within and without. Let's make our entire lives fit and holy temples for the worship of God.

What I want to talk about this morning is contained in this portion of Scripture. I hope to make it very practical so that we can all aspire to "mak(ing) our entire lives fit and holy temples for the worship of God." We can see from this Scripture that we have a part in the process of becoming "fit and holy temples". So what is that part and how do we go about it?

A temple is a place of worship, in the case of a Christian, the worship of God. According to Nuttall's Everyday Dictionary, the word "holy" means "pure in heart, free from sin, set apart to a sacred use". So that is what we're supposed to be.

---

How do we become righteous?

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT) reads:

<sup>21</sup>For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

So we are made righteous by what Jesus did for us. BUT, we need to appropriate it continually. That means that when we are born again, we don't sit back and say "oh well, I'm ok now", but embark on a lifestyle that sees us living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is absolutely vital to us to be baptised in the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised to us upon His ascension to glory.

**We become righteous by continuously accepting, declaring and believing by faith the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives.**

---

Remember that each one of us has been shaped to a greater or lesser degree by the world, and that shaping needs to be worked out of us.

Remember also that we have a very powerful and intelligent enemy whose purpose is to cause us to lose our right-standing with God.

So what we're going to do now is have a look at the traps that would cause us to sin (miss the mark, love less), but first, what is the Lord's heart towards us?

### What is the Lord's heart towards us?

He desires eternal fellowship with us. So He desires, with all of His heart, for us to succeed in this life on earth that is the proving ground for each of us to test our fitness for the Lord's eternal purpose as the bride of Christ, reigning with Him in His Kingdom. This means that we can trust Him absolutely even when what He is telling us defies our limited human logic or reason.

The Lord is good! His plans and destiny for us are for our eternal benefit!

---

### What can cause us to lose our righteousness (right standing) with the Lord and consequently our place in the Kingdom?

The danger, however, is that we do unrighteous acts (sin). Sin is bad for us because by it we separate ourselves from fellowship with the Lord, it blunts our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and it does not glorify the Lord.

While sin in itself does not cause us to lose our salvation, continuing in sin will result in a cycle of ever-increasing sinfulness which can lead to our actively rebelling against the Lord. I know that there are those people who say that we can never lose our salvation, but I disagree. If we ignore the Holy Spirit for long enough, we will eventually deny Christ and what He represents and lose our place in the Kingdom of God. It is important to take note that this is extreme and is a result of sustained rebellion against the Holy Spirit's direction to us.

**Rebellion against the Lord (sin) that is not dealt with can ultimately cause us to discard our righteousness and, consequently, our place in the Kingdom.**

---

### Why do we do sin?

**We sin when we love the will and standards of the Lord less than we love our own will.**

---

### How do we avoid the trap of sin?

It's all about the choices that we make - it can never be a case of "the devil made me do it". It is, in reality, a case of "I was tempted to do it and I chose to give in to the temptation".

**We avoid sin by resisting the temptation to sin.**

---

Now let's examine temptation so that we can discover how to recognise it and how to avoid being ensnared by it.

### Why are we tempted?

You need to know that there is a very real and powerful enemy, Satan, or the devil, out there who wants you as an individual, and us as the Church of Jesus Christ, to fail. 1 Peter 5:8-11 (NIV) reads:

<sup>8</sup>Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

**John 12:31 (NLT) quotes Jesus:**

<sup>31</sup>The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out.

**The enemy wants to destroy us.**

**James 1:13-15 (NLT) reads:**

<sup>13</sup>And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. <sup>4</sup>Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. <sup>15</sup>These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

**We are tempted where we submit to the sinful desires that the world has trained us into having.**

---

The end result of sin:

**Hebrews 10:26 (NIV)**

<sup>26</sup>If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,

This can become what is referred to as "grieving the Holy Spirit".

Sin destroys our relationship with the Lord by causing us to love Him less than the sin.

**The end of sin is eternal separation from the Lord (death) for us.**

---

How does temptation work?

When we read this passage of Scripture, let's keep in mind that Satan is the prince of the world.

**1 John 2:15-16 (NIV) reads:**

<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

From this Scripture we can deduce that temptation works in the following ways:

**The sowing of lust**

"You're worth it", "you deserve it".

**Sowing of pride**

"You could do it so much better than them..."

**Sowing of doubt**

"What makes you think that you could do that?" "Did God really say..."

---

How do we avoid sinning?

**Matthew 6:13 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup> **And don't let us yield to temptation,**

**but rescue us from the evil one.**

**We pray.**

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (NLT) reads:

<sup>22</sup>Stay away from every kind of evil.

What a compelling and simple verse! Stay away from people and situations that could tempt you into sin. At a practical level this might mean changing your circle of friends - this will cost you, but it is necessary and so worth it.

**We run from evil towards the Lord.**

Romans 16:17-20 (GW)

<sup>17</sup>Brothers and sisters, I urge you to watch out for those people who create divisions and who make others fall away (from the Christian faith) by teaching doctrine that is not the same as you have learned. Stay away from them. <sup>18</sup>People like these are not serving Christ our Lord. They are serving their own desires. By their smooth talk and flattering words they deceive unsuspecting people.

<sup>19</sup>Everyone has heard about your obedience and this makes me happy for you. I want you to do what is good and to avoid what is evil. <sup>20</sup>The God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet. May the good will of our Lord Jesus be with you!

**We run from deceivers to the Lord.**

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**We submit to accountability.**

---

Right, now that we've looked at the mechanics of temptation and how it can lead to sin, let's see how we deal with sin should we fail to resist temptation.

How do we deal with sin?

1 John 1:8 (NLT)

<sup>8</sup>If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

When we come into the presence of the Lord, we are aware of our sin. If we repent (turn away) from the sin, He is faithful to forgive us and wash us clean. If we stay in His presence, we won't even be tempted to sin.

**We run to Jesus in repentance!**

---

What does Jesus do when we repent of our sin?

1 John 1:9 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup>But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

**He cleanses us.**

**He restores us to righteousness.**

---

## Conclusion

### Isaiah 57:15 (NLT)

<sup>15</sup> The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this:

“I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.

**Run to Jesus, He loves you with all of His heart! He will never turn you away! He loves a repentant heart!**

---