

SICK OF EVIL • Week 4: Hall Pass to Harm

Daily Briefing • Day 3 of 5 • What Has to Go

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

Sunday we read what Jesus said about cutting off whatever causes you to sin, and we named a few examples from the stage. Today is different. Today you sit with God one on one and let Him tell you what specifically has to go in your life. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I don't want to settle for less than Your best. I don't want to tolerate people or situations or pursuits that lure me in and tempt me to give in. Help me identify what I need to cut out of my life so that I can have Your best. I will trust You for the outcome of my surrender and sacrifice. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

A surgeon does not remove a healthy limb. Amputation only happens when something has gone so wrong that keeping the limb would cost the person their life. Nobody walks into that decision casually, and nobody walks out of it wishing they had waited longer.

That is the picture Jesus reaches for when He talks about temptation. He is teaching on lust, and He says *"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell"* (Matthew 5:29). This is a metaphor, but the intensity is not a metaphor. Jesus is saying that whatever keeps dragging you under is worth losing, even if losing it hurts.

Notice He does not say resist harder. He does not say pray about it more. He says remove the temptation, or the ability to embrace the temptation. Yesterday we looked at God's promise that there is always a way of escape. Very often the escape is not a burst of willpower in the moment. It is a decision you make in advance that keeps you out of the scenario where the temptation occurs.

Paul says the same thing with a different word. *"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart"* (2 Timothy 2:22). Flee is not a dignified word. It does not mean "stand your ground and be strong." It means leave. Go somewhere else. And notice he does not stop at fleeing. There is a direction to run toward, and there are people to run with.

Here is why this stays theoretical for most people. From a stage, all anybody can offer is examples. Delete the app. Change the route home. Get a filter. Those are fine, but they are somebody else's list. The only people who know the actual thing in your life are you and God. Which is what today is for.

Fair warning: when God points something out and calls you to amputate it, your mind will immediately start negotiating. It will tell you that cutting that thing is extreme, that other people handle it fine, that you can manage it with more discipline, that it would be awkward to explain, etc. That negotiation is not wisdom. It is your heart and your mind rationalizing and reasoning in order to protect the problem. Jesus already answered it. Better to lose one part than to lose everything.

READ & MEDITATE

Matthew 5:29-30

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

2 Timothy 2:22

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Read Matthew 5:29-30 and notice Jesus says the same thing twice, once about the eye and once about the hand. Ask why He would repeat it. Then read 2 Timothy 2:22 and notice fleeing is only the first of three instructions in that sentence.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment is far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Sunday gave examples from the stage. Nobody up there knows the full scope of your actual situation. However, God does.

Stop and ask Him directly: what in my life keeps putting me in position to sin against You? Write down whatever comes, even if it seems small.

Now get specific. Is it a place, a person, an app, a routine, a time of day, or a habit that always comes right before the fall? Name it plainly instead of describing it vaguely.

Fill in the blank from Matthew 5:29:

"For it is better that you lose _____ of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell." (Matthew 5:29)

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

What does the math in that sentence tell you about how Jesus weighs short-term loss against long-term consequence?

Your mind will start negotiating the second you name the thing. That is your heart and your mind rationalizing and reasoning in order to protect the problem.

What excuse came up first when you wrote it down? Write the actual sentence your brain used.

Is that excuse true, or is it just familiar? What would you say to a friend who gave you that same reason?

In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul does not stop at “flee”. He says pursue, and he says do it alongside other people. *If you cut this thing out, what are you going to put in the space it leaves? Something has to.*

Many people get unstuck and find tremendous success by leveraging accountability and positive peer pressure. This could very much be a "whatever it takes" step for you. If you're open to that, who is one person you would feel comfortable looping in on the situation to leverage the power of accountability? This doesn't need to be a group of people. Just one person can suffice.

A surgeon does not schedule an amputation for “someday.” If it's important, it gets a specific date on the calendar.

What is the specific step, and when are you doing it? Today, tomorrow, this weekend?

If you are not willing to set an actual date, how would you interpret that in terms of upper desires and lower desires from day one of this week? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 1 Corinthians 10:13 from memory:
