**A PERSONAL STORY**

I write this story not to call attention to myself or to lift myself up as a perfect example, but to try to communicate to the reader the reality that temptation is normal for those who follow Christ—and that the Holy Spirit will be faithful to us if we are willing to listen and follow His voice. The voice of the Spirit that has helped me in this story is not the only way God will help those who sincerely want to walk with Christ.

I had been a Christian for about 3 months, and several challenges had come into my life, not the least of which was to have my father suddenly move from the church where he was pastor and I had turned my life over to Christ, and go to a new church—taking our family with him. I found myself attending a new High School two miles away from my home and this new church. I was the only teen in that church that went to that school. The other teens all went to a closer High School to the church, but the home of the pastor was in a different direction, and therefore I was alone in a High School of over 2000 students where no one knew me or my family.

As the school year started right after accepting Christ, in the third period—U. S. History—I began doing what I had done in my previous school when I was not following Jesus. I was not interested in education, especially not History, and just one row to the left, and two seats forward was this very, very attractive young lady. She was right in my line of sight to see the teacher, and I began in that class dreaming about the pleasure I might have with her rather, than thinking anything about U.S. History!

But as I began to do what I had always done in my schools before, God spoke quietly to me saying: I thought you became a Christian! I all at once saw how inappropriate my thoughts and my dreams were to Jesus. God immediately led me to begin to pray for that girl that she would become a holy Christian, be a happy wife to someone someday and a loving mother to children—and not a plaything or someone to be used by me or anyone else. And that plan which God led me to follow has been a help to me whenever, or wherever I have been tempted in the same way since then.

I think it is important to distinguish between the natural desires we have and choosing to begin to think about satisfying those desires outside of God’s will for us and for others. I began that day to care about the other person and God’s plan for their life as one who was created by God.

**Matthew 5:27-28 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”***

Notice that this verse does not say that it is wrong to look at a woman, but that it is wrong to **look at her with lust.** There is a difference between noticing the attractiveness of someone of the opposite sex—and beginning to allow your desires to start thinking and planning how you could satisfy those desires contrary to God’s plan for your life and for their life.

Just as we are to be angry and sin not (Ephesians 4:26), we are to be human in our nature, and yet we are not to sin. The evil one is there to try to lead us in that direction—and a misunderstanding is that because we have human desires, we should consider ourselves “damaged” and not able to walk with Christ. We need to own our humanity, and not allow the evil one to condemn us and through that condemnation to begin to think that following Christ is too hard or even impossible for us.

With temptation, there is always a way to escape, but we must be willing to take that way, and not condemn ourselves because we were put to the test. A Conference in Discipleship at Denver First several years ago asked the question, “If a young boy who hasn’t eaten for two days goes into a grocery store and desires a loaf of bread, starts to think about how he could hide the bread under his coat and walk out the door, decides to do that, and walks out the door—when did he sin? **Surely it was not that he was hungry and wanted food**. But when he began to think about stealing the bread—sin was at least at his door. And surely when he walked out the door with bread that he did not pay for, we call that stealing.” Psalm 19:14 “**May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”**

\*\*So when you become angry at someone—do you pray for that person that they would walk close to Christ?

\*\*So when a crisis or harm comes to you from another person, do you pray for the Spirit of God to dwell in that person?

…you can carry the application on to other areas of your life. My witness to you is that it is powerful to allow the Holy Spirit to direct your thinking in times of temptation.