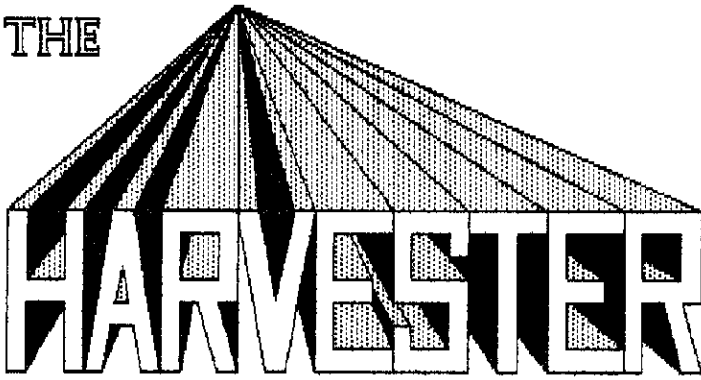


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

APRIL 1998

No. 148

IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATIONS

All things considered, perhaps there has never been a more tempting offer to sin than that which Joseph encountered in the book of Genesis. There we read how Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and how he came into the service of an Egyptian officer, Potiphar, and became overseer of his master's household. Because of Joseph, the Lord blessed all that was in the officer's house and in his fields. However, Potiphar's wife soon noticed what a "goodly person, and well-favored" man Joseph was. She proposed that he "lie"

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with her. At this point let us speculate what an irresistible temptation this must have been for the young man. Since he was far from home and really had no reason to think he would ever see his family again, surely he could get away with this sin. This married woman who was making these advances on him would no doubt keep this a secret. So he had her protection against discovery. Since Joseph was overseer of the household, he would also have a legitimate reason for being inside the house while all the other slaves were working in the fields. And if she accidentally became pregnant, she could easily say the baby belonged to her husband. So what did Joseph do with this seemingly "irresistible temptation?" We are told he "*fled, and got him out.*" (Gen. 39:12)

Joseph teaches us a very good lesson. Someday there will be temptations that come our way and those temptations may look pretty "irresistible" to us. We might ponder, "Hey, I could probably do this and not get caught." We might say to ourselves, "There's no way I can avoid this one." But if we really think about it, there is always a way of escape. The problem is in finding it. "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" (1 Cor. 10:13)

If we truly want to live the Christian life, we will find that way of escape. We might have to do like Joseph and turn

around and immediately flee from it altogether. Remember, God provided Joseph a door which led out of the house. He will likewise give us opportunities to 'hightail it.' As James put it, yielding to temptations will result in spiritual death. *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."* (Jas. 1:14,15)

James also reveals tells us that God does not tempt man but God does allow us to be enticed by Satan. This is God's way of testing our faith to see if it is strong and pure and sincere. *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."* (1 Pet. 1:6,7) Fire is used to manufacture and mold and test gold. That same fire also purifies the metal. Yet our faith is more precious than gold, so imagine how much purer our faith becomes when it passes the test of temptation!

Another reason why we are sometimes subject to "irresistible" temptations is to develop our patience. *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."* (Jas. 1:2,3) When the way is rough, it simply takes more patience to reach our goals.

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How does one resist temptations? First of all, trust in the Lord. We must have faith that He will provide those avenues of escape. *"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly person out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."* (2 Pet. 2:9) Next, obey all of God's commandments. If we keep His word, then He will keep us from being overcome by temptations. *"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* (Rev. 3:10)

Let us also consider the good advice that Christ gave to Peter. *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* (Matt. 26:41) Notice that Christ is not directing Peter to pray to God that no temptation come before him, but that he might have the strength NOT to be overcome by the enticement in which he might be involved with. Too often we pray for God to remove the mountain instead of asking for His support to help us scale the hill.

When Joseph was tested, he found the way of escape. Today, as we face one trial after another, we also should strive to find the way out of trouble. Let's not yield to temptation and give the excuse that there was no possible way out. We have an example of a man who faced every temptation known to mankind, yet He found the way of escape to every one of them! *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb. 4:15) Jesus did all this in the form of flesh just to show us that it can be done. Are we up to the challenge? Think of the great reward that awaits us if we do succeed. *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* (Jas. 1:12) May God bless us all in our efforts to overcome that "irresistible temptation" to sin so that we may obtain that crown of life.

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
2. According to Deuteronomy, when a man married, how long was he to stay home?
3. What does God call friendship with the world?

4. Name one of the three rewards promised Daniel by Belshazzar for interpreting the sign?

5. Who was the father of Peter and Andrew?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. What name was given a child meaning, "Because I have asked him of the Lord"?
SAMUEL (1 Sam. 1:20)

2. In what direction did Ezekiel see the cloud that contained the vision from God?
NORTH (Eze. 1:4)

3. Who placed all things under Christ's feet? GOD (Eph. 1:22)

4. For whose sake does Peter say one should obey the laws of the land? FOR THE LORD'S SAKE (1 Pet. 2:13)

5. What priestly garment was designed to cover the heart? THE BREASTPIECE OF JUDGMENT (Exo. 28:30)

JUMP

After the long day at work in his cubicle the young man simply wanted to go home, relax, and prepare for his next day at work. As he made his way toward the elevator, he heard screaming and saw black smoke and flames billowing out of the hallway. Panic gripped him as a

succession of thoughts flew through his mind, I'm on the sixth floor. I'll never make it down. I'm going to die!

What he considered to be his only escape -- the hallway -- was engulfed in flames and impossible to navigate. As his mind continued to race, he heard fire engines and remembered that the office was lined with tall windows all across his floor. He coughed and staggered to the windows in hope of a swift rescue. Instead, when he looked down he could see nothing but a curtain of smoke covering the area.

Through the smoke and flames, he realized that a crowd had gathered and along with the firemen everyone was yelling, "Jump!" "Jump!" The young man felt a cloud of fear envelop him. Over a loudspeaker he heard the voice of what he assumed to be a fireman, "The only way you'll survive is if you jump. We've spread out a safety net. You'll be perfectly safe." As the crowd continued to yell, the young man realized he didn't have the courage to make the leap without being able to see the net. His feet were cemented to the floor.

Then, over the loudspeaker came the voice of his dad, "It's okay son, you can jump." As the familiar voice reached the young man, he felt the grip of fear lift. The trust and love that had been established between dad and son gave him the courage to jump safely down into the net.

Do we know and trust our heavenly Father's love that much?

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
April 3 - 5	Antioch Church Livingston, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 3 - 5	Owens Road Church Prattville, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
April 5 - 10	West Broad St.. Church Wedowee, AL	Jim Pritchard (Shawnee, OK)
April 5 - 11	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 6 - 10	Oak Grove Church Pulaski Co., KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 12 - 17	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
April 13 - 17	Blanchester, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 24 - 26	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 27- - May 1	Clover Hill Church near Tompkinsville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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PREACH THE WORD;
 be instant in season, out of season;
REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT
 with all longsuffering and doctrine.
 (2 Timothy 4:2)