

Solid Rock #10: "Incoming!"

Now that you have determined to follow Christ and be a co-laborer with Him (1Corinthians 3:9) in His plan to rescue others, you will experience opposition. The Bible compares it to joining an army that is fighting the forces of darkness for the hearts of men. (2 Timothy 2:4) The opposition usually comes from one of three sources, Satan (a fallen angel), your desires or habits that aren't of God, and other people's influence that for selfish reasons oppose the good news of Christ. Let's look at one at a time.

Satan was a beautiful creation of God, who had one of the highest positions in Heaven. Isaiah 14 tells of his pride and fall, and we learn from Revelations that a third of the angels joined this angelic creature in his bid to take the throne of God. But we also understand from the book of Job that He can only do to believers what he is permitted to do. In the end, his attacks on Job brought Job closer to God and even more material blessing than Job had before. Knowing that should comfort us and keep us from fear. (2Timothy 1:7) We can also see from Mt 4 that Jesus was tested by Satan. Jesus answers Satan with scripture, showing us how to deal with him. In 1John 4:4 we read that, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world". (Satan was banned from free access to heaven and confined to earth that is temporarily under his limited authority) Since Christ reigns in your heart you have the Creator in you and need not fear a creation (Satan). Remember Romans 8:28 will always be true for you as long as you love God and are called to His purposes. As Satan is an angel, we should ask God to deal with him when he tries to influence our lives and not try to deal with him on our own. We need to reassure ourselves of the Truth of God's Word which will keep us from his confusing tactics. (Jude 1:9) If you draw close to God and resist Satan, he will flee! (James 4:7)

The other opposition we face from the moment of salvation is our old habits and desires. (Galatians 5:1; 2Peter 2:20; James 1:14) Christ has set us free from the power of sin and death so that we can choose to do good. 1Corinthians 10:13 says we are all tempted but God provides a way out of the temptation. It may be tough but it will never be so difficult that you cannot choose to resist. The problem we face is the habits we have formed which we now must break and replace with Godly habits. (Romans 13:12-14) The sin we so readily gave in to, we must now learn to stand against with the power of the Holy Spirit. We have the power, but we must learn to tap into it and resist. We have access to many great tools. Christian music tapes and Christian radio can help keep our minds and teach us. There are 1000s of great inspirational books and devotionals to help us apply the Bible to our life. For more deep-rooted problems we have access to Christian counseling, and there are some awesome teaching seminars, retreats and conferences to attend as well as weekly Bible studies like this

one. We need all the help we can get in this age as temptation abounds. Hide the Word in your heart! (Psalm 119:11)

Another great source of strength is a mentor. We all need someone who we respect to teach us what they have learned in their life with Christ and to warn us of pitfalls. Some examples are Paul teaching Timothy and Paul's instruction for the older women to teach the younger women. (Titus 2:3 & 4) But the greatest source of strength is the Lord himself. (Psalm 27:1) We will find direction and power to overcome temptations of our flesh if we stay close to His side. When you are knowingly tempted to sin, ask yourself if you can do so hanging on to that hand with the nail hole. The more we love Him the less tempting sin becomes as we begin to see it as a cheap counterfeit for what He has given us in Himself.

And finally you will face temptations from others, especially loved ones. (2Timothy 3:12) We all want to be accepted and liked, and here is where many fall. We don't want to hurt their feelings, but we have to come to the point of loving them with Christ's love. A love that would risk rejection to see them gain eternal life, and that is relationship with Christ. That is not to say we should purposely offend them. Paul tried to be all things to all men in order to win them. To love them like that means to not compromise your convictions but to share the truth in love. One of the greatest ways you can do that is to let them see you have changed, but you will also have to explain it in words. Jesus warned that if we were ashamed of Him, He would be ashamed of us. (Mark 8:38)

What are the three sources of temptation?

What can you do about each one?

In what area are you most susceptible to temptation?

What steps do you need to take to see that none of these keep you from the fullness of your relationship with Christ?