

When the Rubber Meets the Road

We can teach our children what Jesus taught about lust (Matthew 5:27-28), about marrying someone whom God says is ineligible for marriage (Matthew 5:31-32) and about not resisting an evil person (Matthew 5:38-41), but when the rubber meets the road *what will they do* when they encounter the gripping pleasures of pornography, meet someone whom they care about deeply but who God claims is not eligible for marriage or suffer at the hands of someone who is intent upon taking advantage of them? Will they respond as those who belong to God or merely react based upon their feelings and desire? Whether or not they will respond as a dedicated disciple will in part depend upon what they believe about our Lord.

Why Has God Given Us Guidance?

When God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the forbidden fruit, in love God was seeking their well being as He guided them away from death. When God gave His Law at Mount Sinai, God was pursuing Israel's best interests (Deuteronomy 10:13; 6:2-3). When God sent His Son to reveal His Word, God was trying to lead us into life (John 12:49-50). In short, God's teachings are always motivated by His desire to lead us into the truly good life, not keep something good from us.

A young child might not understand why he must put the milk away before going out to play. He might reason, "mom is preventing me from having fun." But his parents know that this simple action can prevent sickness and the waste of resources. Although the child might not understand why, if he at least believes that his parents are seeking his best interests then his parents' guidance will be seen as something good not bad.

Resisting Temptation

One tool which can help anyone overcome temptation is to understand that God's ways are for our own good. If young people believe that they will be missing out on something good by refraining from sowing wild oats or squelching their impulses, the power of temptation will be stronger and they have failed to understand who our loving Lord truly is. On the other hand, those who realize that God says "do not do this" because He is seeking our best interests will be provided with a powerful reason to resist temptation if they are willing to heed that help. Although sin promises to serve up the good life and at times might even appear to be to our advantage, it always destroys.

The foolish believe that God prevents them from experiencing something good. Inevitably, this belief will cause them to harm themselves. The wise understand that God is seeking our best interests by guiding us away from danger. Quite naturally their desire will be to meditate upon His Word and to revere Him. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise instruction.