

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING MORAL DECISIONS

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Confronting temptations to “cross the line” that separates moral from immoral behavior is as old as Adam and Eve. Temptation may involve money, deceit, pride, sex, power, or other elements. For those wise enough to honor the Bible as their standard, they will find some valuable principles for confronting and overcoming temptation:

- **“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation”** (Mat. 26:41a). As with the three apostles in Gethsemane on the night of Judas’ betrayal of Jesus into the hands of His enemies, so with us: Awareness of Satan’s wiles—coupled with our earnest prayers—will help us avoid temptation.
- **“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals”** (1 Cor. 15:33). One invites temptation to drink liquor and engage in immorality if he runs with those who frequent bars and “gentlemen’s clubs.”
- **“Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (1 Pet. 5:8). A sober approach to life (it is more than a “party,” after all), coupled with vigilance of the prevalence of Satan’s determination to destroy us, will spare us many temptations.
- **“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (Jam. 4:7b; cf. 1 Pet. 5:9a). When Satan confronts us, the general rule is to stand and fight. Only when we have put on the “whole armor of God” and are adept in our use of the “sword of the Spirit” can we withstand Satan’s attacks (Eph. 6:10–17).
- **“Flee” fornication, idolatry, the love of money, and youthful lusts** (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim 6:11a; 2 Tim. 2: 22a). While the general rule is to stand and fight when Satan assails, some circumstances require “flight” rather than “fight.” When Potiphar’s wife sought to seduce Joseph, he wisely did not tarry to fight: “he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Gen. 39:12).
- **“Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”** (1 Tim. 6:11:b; 2 Tim. 2:22b). We should not only flee situations of temptation, but also fill our lives with wholesome qualities. It is still true: “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.”
- **“Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee”** (Psa. 119:11). Those who rarely read their Bibles and/or hear Bible preaching invite Satan’s attacks. Bible ignoramuses don’t stand a chance when he comes calling with all his insidious tricks.

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