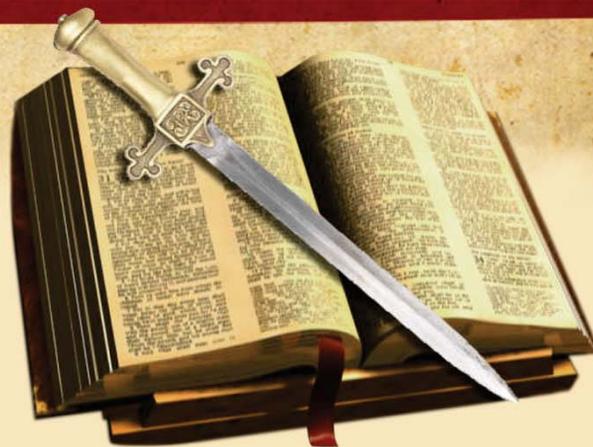


Setting Your Heart on the Kingdom



JAMES

Oh Lord, I've Failed the Test...Again!

(The Principle of: Sin, Faith and Perseverance)

James 1:2-15

Don't kid yourself! You'll never be a sinless Christian (*1 John 1:8*). Sin is a predator, "crouching at the door; and its desire is for you" (*Gen. 4:7*). It knows your weaknesses and lies in ambush for your soul. Then, in your unguarded moments, it attacks...drowning you in guilt and shame. Some sins are more tenacious than others, but their goal is the same...destroy your faith and steal your confidence. And this is its strategy: attach moral failure to your faith! For if sin can make you discard faith, then you'll walk away from your destiny in God. *But if your faith in Christ's redemptive work is greater than your failure, then your faith hasn't failed. It seeks forgiveness and lives to fight another day.*

James, in his forthright epistle to Jewish-Christians, said it like this, "The testing of your faith produces perseverance." In other words, untested faith isn't faith at all...it's just religious theory. But if your faith believes that what God did for you is greater than what you failed to do, then it passes the test, even though your flesh didn't! Did you understand what you just read? *In God's Kingdom, you don't give up just because you've sinned! Perseverance, therefore, means that you won't surrender your destiny in God, even if you've sinned repeatedly!*

So, does this mean that you can choose to sin as much as you want as long as you still believe in God? Absolutely NOT! Paul made it clear that the Christian walk is dying to sin and living in Christ (*Rom. 6:1-14*). But when you sin, don't let the devil (or your friends or yourself) cause you to lose confidence before God. *How then do you fight sin? With a faith that perseveres! Young Christian, how many times have you sinned in thought, word or deed? Seek forgiveness and walk with perseverance knowing that God's destiny still awaits you. Middle-aged Believer, has a mid-life crisis surfaced a sin that you thought didn't exist? Repent and trust Jesus to put you back on track. Godly Pastor, has a flesh weakness threatened your life's ministry? For goodness sake, don't quit! That's what the devil wants you to do! He's after your anointing. *Repent with true humility and persevere. Refuse to give up the destiny for which God called you!**

Next: The Kingdom of God in 1 Peter - What If God Offers Grace to People You Despise?

