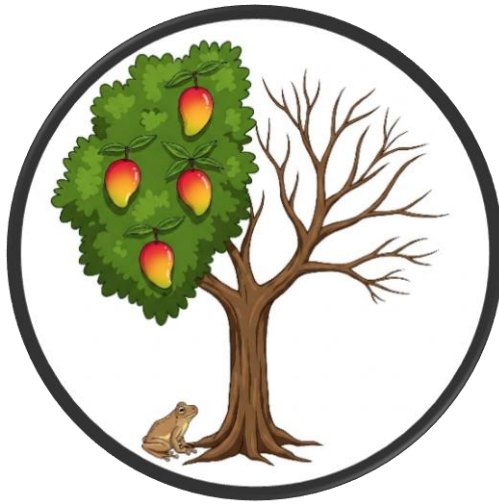




Easy Beliefs

A False Promise

Peace is not something you think; it is received. May the peace of the Lord be with you.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1).

Unrestrained passions are one of the most common and silent struggles the Christian and non-Christian face. It promises intimacy but delivers emptiness. This essay explores the subtle stages that allow passion to take root in our lives, using a biblical story to show us a practical path toward freedom and true fulfillment in Christ.

The Christian norm to living well is for sanctification (the process of being made more like Christ), love, forgiveness, service to others, and avoiding actions that harm us or those around us. Anything that subjects us to a force, power, or influence that does not glorify Christ is not what God has intended for us. Unrestrained passions like anger, pride, deceitfulness, impulsiveness and greed put us under the control of others and of the evil forces of this world. It can ruin the lives of others and yours through offence, guilt, embarrassment, dishonor and dampens the voice of the Holy Spirit in each one of us.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul says: **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”.** (Galatians 5:16-17).

This booklet is not for condemnation, but for your liberation. It's about breaking free from control, about forced consumption, about the threat to your soul. **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”** (Ephesians 6:12).

A Christian Struggle

Let's define lust as a desire for intimacy, reduced to a physical or imagined act centered around our own pleasure. It threatens to put us under the power and control of worldly pleasures for the pursuit of self-satisfaction without the spiritual intimacy and godly covenantal commitment God wants us to have.

In my season in life, I have not met someone, man or woman, lady nor gentleman, the young or not, who does not ever experience these temptations overtly or covertly, as there are physiological and hormonal drivers that influence our bodies as well as psychological factors such as the quality of our relationships, emotional and self-image considerations. Left unrestrained, it is used against our own spiritual weakness by the adversary and the tempter (Matthew 4:3) to defeat us. You are not alone in this fight; and it can be won.

“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:11-12)

The Bible teaches us how devastating these passions are for the self and others. The tragic story of Tamar and Amnon (2 Samuel 13) relates how the sin of lust, ungodly passions and guilt lead to the shattered lives of the victims. Lust is a big category that we tend to associate with a certain type of person, but the reality is that there are common practical areas and thought processes that help it creep into the lives of everyone.

There are several components to lust that when left individually unrecognized or uncontrolled leads us to sin. Preacher N. Rittenhouse noted many of the components in Amnon and Tamar's story that are worth considering in light of our own lives, as most of the time it follows the same pattern. Recognizing these is key, to stop and pray for liberation.

Thinking it through

First is forbidden beauty. Amnon saw Tamar's beauty and loved her from a distance. Beauty itself is not sinful. All things are created beautifully for the glory of Christ. Respectful admiration can be a recognition of God's infinite creative power. **"Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him."** (2 Samuel 14:25).

Second, there's the fixation in and frustration of wanting what is not God-ordained to be ours. That fuels an obsession with the object of our desire. This can cloud our judgement and imagination, creating an emotional fixation for a person, behaviors, ideas, and goals.

Third is the company we keep. We have this compulsion and frustration that we cannot do what we want, and then we find counsel from those who are likely to agree with our point of view and encourage our motivations. We look for someone or something that tells us, "Hey, this is ok, go for it!". Wise counsel mirrors Scripture.

Fourth goes from bad advice to moral justification of the action we are about to do. In Amnon's case, he thinks it is an injustice not having Tamar's affection for himself. There is a degree of entitlement involved that tells us "We deserve this. We've earned it. It's only right for me to have this."

Next comes the deception. Amnon fakes being sick. With debauch intentions, he sets up a plan to deceive all around him to leave him alone, in the darker parts of his soul, to commit the act.

Unsurprisingly, then comes the abuse. This is when others get hurt, hearts are wounded, and shame should indict us. Self-fulfillment without regard to God's intentions and the Holy Spirit's voice.

The disgust then settles in. After he had assaulted Tamar, he hated her more than he had ever wanted her. Receiving what he had craved

repulsed him. Likely he hated himself for what he had done to her and his family.

The wound we have inflicted on our relationship with God is felt deep in our hearts. We may also have hurt our friends, our family, spouse or children. Unforeseen and unintended consequences result. In Amnon and Tamar's tragedy, it ended with death and rebellion in the kingdom of Israel.

It's a minefield for us

Lust, anger, pride, deceitfulness, impulsiveness and greed. There is an Amnon and a Tamar in each one of us. We are the wound and the wounded; we are constantly tested with sin and sinful persuasion. These are in your Instagram feed. In your Facebook. The secret WhatsApp messages you keep. The YouTube video with the sensual thumbnail. The TikTok short. That look at your coworker. In the sensual literature you read. The secret fantasy. That scene in the popular show people keep talking about. Every kind of adult material, whether posing as "art" or "freedom of expression". That page you visit. The salacious conversations. Our own vanity.

These are the markets of false promises. The fake promise of intimacy, connection, satisfaction and fulfillment. Shelves filled with products that lead you not to contentment and self-acceptance, but to emptiness and depression. To crave more. Endless repetition. The whole culture seems designed and driven by the devil himself, fashioned after a modern-day bacchanalia. **"...The Lord rebuke you, Satan!..."** (Zechariah 3:2)

Resisting this constant assault of temptations is exhausting and leads to frustration. It tempts us to get upset with God when you don't have things others have, but that's like getting mad at someone for not giving you a gift they never promised in the first place. Instead of being frustrated about what you think you should have, focus on what's right in front of you. Live well with the life you've been given. Do not spend your energy chasing a life you're trying to build on quicksand, far from

the blessing of God. The evil one has us chasing after things that were never meant for us so that we miss out on the good things God has already put in our lives and the peace it brings.

This is the battlefield where Christians are tested. At all times wear the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Form the habit of prayer to God. **“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”** (Matthew 6:6). Pray not with whispers or justifications, generic words or scripted monologue, but with confession, loudly repentant, with a contrite and open heart. State that which made you sin. Be specific. Get into the habit of confessing in your heart and soul the very moment you fall. Stand up, commit to the fight with more determination. With intention and faith. Practice fasting from that app, that website, that show. Fast will clear your mind and help you see things for what they really are. Jesus will carry you every step thru the minefield. Worship the one true God of Scripture.

I am hopeful

Pray earnestly every day for strength and discernment to identify these tendencies in ourselves. Every morning, ask “Holy Spirit, guide my day”. Read Psalm 23. Trust Christ will give you the power to control, overcome, and triumph thru faith and constant communication with the Holy Spirit.

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Recognize that the need of emotional connection and intimacy is to be expressed in a godly way thru legitimate relationships and constant connection to the works and wonder of God, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit. Practice spiritual discernment (Malachi 3:18). Trust that

your deep relationship with the Highest of the High is sufficient to fill all your needs. The prize of the righteous is not in this world, but in the coming kingdom of Christ. By appreciating what you do have and focusing on living your own life well, you can find a lot more peace, freedom and contentment.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-6)

Filling the empty heart

Sometimes we feel that we pray, read the Bible, and serve, but our heart feels incomplete, as if a part of it were missing. We look fine, we are in obedience and spiritual contact, but something invisible begins to crack inside of us. Like a foundation that gives way. Those cracks are hidden sins. We have not abandoned faith or good works, but our heart is not warm with the same fire as before.

Hidden sins are not always scandalous, but they cool down our love, and that lack of ardor makes us spiritually lazy. We settle for a hollow spiritual routine that contributes nothing to our growth and makes our heart an easier target for sin. This is especially dangerous because it is a condition that is not readily apparent.

Salvation

God reveals what is hidden in our hearts to restore us. He opens cracks in our conscience because He wants us to make spiritual renovations to renew our love for Him. What seems like condemnation is actually an invitation to renew your vows with the true love of His presence, to that sincere intimacy that changes us from the inside out. Pride, envy, resentment, or indifference make no noise, but they corrode the

soul. Restoration begins with sincerity; acknowledging our faults before God and having faith in the midst of our battles opens the door to freedom in Christ.

Therefore, **“When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”** (James 1:13-14). Let us ask God for forgiveness, **“...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”** (Matthew 6:13).

Sources:

- Zechariah 3:2: ‘And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”’
- Matthew 4:3: ‘Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”’
- Lust - A Message by Nathan Rittenhouse. Retrieved on 09-09-2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PICYFzEs4Ro>
- Ephesians 6:10-18: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; **18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."
- Malachi 3:18: “Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.”

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“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Titus 2:11-14

