

Just Say “No!”

Ponder: Handling temptation

Scripture: “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent” (Proverbs 1:10, NKJV).

Critics mocked former first lady Nancy Reagan as she urged people to “just say ‘No’” to illegal drug use. Her approach, they claimed, was too simplistic. Politics aside, Mrs. Reagan recognized that behavior, whether good or bad, is by choice. And that fact is not limited to choosing whether to use drugs or abstain.

Let’s face it – sin is enticing. The wise King Solomon understood that wicked people would tempt his son to join them in their depraved behavior. They would paint an alluring picture of companionship, exciting adventure, and great riches (Proverbs 1:11-14). Yes, it would involve robbery and murder, but just think of the abundant wealth we’ll share! Come on, it’ll be fun!

As he warned of such potential temptations, Solomon exhorted his son, “do not consent!” Just say “No!” You don’t have to yield to temptation. Nobody can force you to sin. Flip Wilson’s comedic character Geraldine famously said, “The devil made me do it!” But not even Satan himself can make you sin. You have the God-given ability to choose, and you are responsible for the choices you make.

Jesus said Satan is “a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). Why, then, would we believe him? Through his human servants, Satan promises great benefits. “We shall find all kinds of precious possessions. We shall fill our houses with spoil” (Proverbs 1:13). For a time, it might even appear that the devil is fulfilling his pledge. In the final analysis, though, “they lie in wait for their own blood; they lurk secretly for their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; it takes away the life of its owners” (1:18-19).

You will be tempted. Our adversary has thousands of years of experience gift-wrapping sin to make it look appealing and desirable. But, while he can tempt you, he cannot force you to yield. You can – indeed, you must – just say “No!”

Song: “Yield Not To Temptation”

Prayer: Gracious Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your wisdom and goodness in giving us the ability to choose how we behave. Please forgive us when we foolishly fall for Satan’s lies, and help us to say “no” to his temptations. In Jesus’ name, Amen.