



Temperance: Mind Over Matter

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- When you think of temperance, what commonly comes to mind?
 - Alcohol
 - But it can be related to anything addictive or harmful: drugs, video games, otc medicines, porn, television, people, anything over which one can obsess

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- 2Peter 1:5-11 - “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

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- Gal 5:22-23 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”
- 1Cor. 9:24-25 - “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.”
- 1Cor. 6:12-13 - “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”

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- Temperance - egkrateuomai - “to exercise self-restraint or self-control in diet and chastity; contain, be temperate; generic in form and application”
- Generic because there is a multitude of sins whereby one can become entangled and apparently unable to break free
- “Be temperate” is a verb which always implies an action; it is in the present tense and indicative mood.
- In short, everyone has the ability to refrain from sin that is destructive both to the spirit, flesh, and influence

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- Thought - Sin always begins with a thought
 - James 1:13-15 - “Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”
 - Rom. 12:2 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

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- Consideration - Contemplating sin in the mind
 - Psalm 4:4 - “Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.”
 - Mark 7:18-23 - “So He said to them, Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods? 20 And He said, What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

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- Attitude - Form or adjust a belief about the sin; begin to rationalize
 - Prov. 4:23 - “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”
 - Prov. 14:9 - “Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is favor.”
 - Prov. 17:15 - “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.”
 - 1Kings 16:31 - “And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.”

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- Action - Gives himself enough rationale to entertain the desires of the flesh, so he performs the sin he pondered
 - Psalm 7:14 - “Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.”
 - Prov. 29:6 - “By transgression an evil man is snared...”

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- Habit - At this stage the person has done it a number of times and gives it an ongoing place in his life
 - John 8:34 - “Jesus answered them, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”
 - 2Peter 2:18-19 - “For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”

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- Addiction - At this point the person has become addicted, and because of inertia and the power of sin, he becomes reprobate; he will be unable to remove it from his life
 - Reprobate - “a mind void of judgment or an unapproving mind” (Strong's)

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- Heb. 3:13 - “but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”
- Rom. 1:28 - “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting”
- 2Tim. 3:8 - “Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the fait”
- Titus 1:16 - “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”

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- At this point it is too late
 - Heb. 6:4-6 - “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

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- At this point it is too late
 - Heb. 10:26-27 - “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”
 - Rom. 7:22-25 - “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

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- Realize that giving in to addiction is sin and not a psychological deficiency or disease.
- Men minimize sin with familiarity, amusement, TV psychology, euphemisms, and comparisons
 - Prov. 14:9 - “Fools mock at sin...”
 - Prov. 10:23 - “To do evil is like sport to a fool”

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- Take responsibility for your actions
 - Gen. 3:11-13 - “And He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? 12 Then the man said, The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, What is this you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
 - Matt. 27:24 - “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.”

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- Take responsibility for your actions
 - Luke 19:8 - “Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”
 - 1Tim. 1:12-15 - “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

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- Realize you cannot do it alone and then pursue God's help
 - 2Cor. 10:3-5 - “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”
 - Phil 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

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- Destroy everything associated with the sin, including risky associations
 - Eph. 4:22 - “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”
 - Mark 9:43, 45, 47 - “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched... 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched...47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire”

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- Begin rebuilding and reclaiming your mind
 - Eph. 4:23 - “and be renewed in the spirit of your mind”
 - Rom. 12:1-2 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
 - Rom. 13:13-14 - “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

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- Get busy in God's work
 - Eph. 4:24 - “and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
 - Eph. 2:10 - “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

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- Rest in the promises of God
 - Heb. 13:5 - “...For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
 - Matt. 28:20 - “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
 - 1Peter 5:10 - “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”
 - 2Tim. 4:8 - “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

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- “I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom... When I could stop, I didn't want to, and now that I want to stop, I cannot.”
(Edgar Allan Poe)
- On October 3, 1849, Poe was found on the streets of Baltimore delirious from the long term effects of alcoholism. He never recovered coherency, and died four days later in agony at Washington College Hospital, crying out “Lord, help my poor soul!”