

Temptations & Illusions

by Bill Crews

Read the third chapter of Genesis. It tells of the sins of Adam and Eve (in doing what God had expressly forbidden) and of the consequences of those sins. When confronted by God and asked, "What is this thou hast done," she responded, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (vs. 13). She told the truth. Paul wrote that "the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness" (2 Cor. 11:3; cf. 1 Tim. 2:14). But she was neither justified nor excused. Do you think that the pleasures of her sin were worth the price of the consequences she had to pay for them? How many times thereafter she must have wished that she could relive that moment when she said "yes" to that temptation.

Sin, in prospect, promises so much, but delivers so little. Sin, in prospect, is never as appealing as sin in retrospect. It focuses on the pleasures of the moment and veils the eyes to the consequences that time and eternity will surely bring. The writer of Hebrews spoke of the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:11-13), and nothing in life is more deceitful than sin. The master of deceit is behind it all (Jn. 8:44), and he is called "the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). He has even fashioned "himself into an angel of light;" he has many ministers, some of whom even fashion "themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

In a large shopping mall there was a wide area containing several businesses in small, individual booths. Side by side were two with these names: "Sweet Temptations" and "Grand Illusions." (One sold sweet things to eat, and the other jewelry.) I thought: "What marvelous names for the devil's enticing wares and deceptive promises." He portrays his temptations as sweet, but how bitter they will always eventually prove to be. And his promises of benefits, gains, and rewards are only grand illusions.

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