

## Feeding the Beast!

Every person has a battle within. God calls it “temptation.” Paul described the battle in Romans 7. Peter fell to it in Galatians 2 and we all understand that siren’s song ourselves. But why is it so hard to overcome? We love Jesus and we want to keep His commandments, per John 14:15. That being true, what happens?

God made our bodies with a marvelous, wonderful design that includes a mechanism that brings joy into our hearts when we do something pleasant. It’s a good thing. We experience a heightened sense of joy, fun, pleasure, and we want to repeat it.

Scientists now know that mechanism as dopamine. It is a good, and thoroughly wholesome, process. We LOVE dopamine and the feeling it brings into our daily experience. It is sort of a “feel good” natural body chemical that is part of what we feel as joy and we want to repeat the experiences that produce it.

But dopamine, like other good things God created, can be abused. If we decide (mental choice, whether conscious or unconscious) to do something wrong, and we have a biblically educated conscience, we actually feel bad – not much dopamine released to the brain. But without a biblically educated conscience, or without enough love for Jesus, we can do something bad and feel good! BOOM – a load of dopamine hits the brain like a freight train of “feel good.”

The brain remembers that. Big payoffs of dopamine created a desire to repeat the event like a kid who rides a roller coaster repeatedly. The scary part is that even Christians can get a dopamine hit from doing bad things. In a medical sense, we get addicted! And like any other addiction it takes courage, time, commitment and self-discipline to overcome.

God to the rescue! Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” God to the rescue! Galatians 5:23, “The fruit of the spirit is... (among other things) self-control.” God to the rescue! Romans 7:24, 25, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” He is always the answer!

-Ray Wallace