



From Temptation to Sin: A Theological Study of Human Moral Struggles

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ABSTRACT

Sin has damaged human relationships with God, fellow beings, and the universe. It could only be resolved by God's grace. Even believers who have been redeemed still have the potential to fall into sin when faced with temptation. The purpose of this research is to discover and describe the pattern of human fall into sin and the efforts of believers in resisting temptation and fighting sin. This study employs a qualitative theological research method with text analysis. The findings reveal that the pattern of falling into sin begins with temptation, which enters through the five senses and is then processed by the human mind and heart. The response is subsequently expressed in thoughts, feelings, and actions. A sinful heart tends to lead a person toward sin, whereas a heart filled with God's Word is more likely to overcome trials and endure tests of faith. Therefore, believers must fill and guard their hearts with God's Word so that their hearts, minds, and will align with His will and are reflected in actions that glorify Him.

Keywords: sin, believer, temptation, fall pattern, test.

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INTRODUCTION

Sin is humanity's main problem as it destroys their relationship with God, fellow humans and the natural world around them (J. Gulo, 2020; Randa, 2020; Tarigan & Viktorahadi, 2023). The Bible clearly states that the primary consequence of sin is death, which means eternal separation from God (Rom. 6:23). As a result, humans live their entire lives in fear of death (Heb. 2:15). Sin also causes frequent conflicts among humans, leading them to blame, fight, and harm one another. Additionally, sin has brought a curse upon the land and nature, requiring humans to labor hard to cultivate it (Gen. 3:17-19). At times, nature itself brings destruction upon humanity (Gen. 6-9). Hauw and Emmanuella (2023, p. 1) also express that the consequences of the first human transgression severed our exclusive relationship with God and disrupted the cosmic order. In other words, sin has made humanity hostile toward God, at odds with others, and out of harmony with nature.

Humans try to resolve sin but are limited and imperfect. As Adon expresses, humans are unable to see God, save themselves or even reconnect with Him (Adon, 2022, pp. 112–125; Mendrofa et al., 2023). Gulo (2020) states that humans struggle with various efforts to solve the problem of sin but never succeed. The resolution of sin can only be accomplished by God Himself, and that is through His grace (Sulastio, 2020, pp. 62–75). After the fall of man into sin, God took the initiative to seek out humanity and gave them the promise of salvation through redemption (Daeli et al., 2022; Hauw & Emmanuella, 2023). Therefore, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, had to come to earth to solve humanity's main problem—by dying on the cross in place of the penalty for human sin (John 3:14-21). Through Jesus' death on the cross, the way of reconciliation with God was opened, leading to reconciliation with others and nature (Heb. 10:19-25). However, this solution is not automatically granted to everyone; it must be accepted through faith (Rom. 3:21-31). Therefore, everyone who believes in Jesus Christ experiences reconciliation with God, which is reflected in their relationship with others and nature (Sugianto, 2018).

Believers have experienced freedom from the law of sin, but this does not mean they are free from the challenge of sinning. As Sarumaha (2019, p. 1) states, even though believers identify themselves as followers of Christ, they still struggle against sin. The Apostle Paul testified to this struggle in Romans 7. In other words, believers remain in a body of flesh with sinful nature and live in a world filled with sin. As a result, challenges and temptations continue to arise, and believers are still capable of sinning. However, they must persist in their struggle against sin and the desires of the flesh, striving for victory after victory to become more like Christ (Sugianto, 2011). In the doctrine of soteriology, this process is known as sanctification. Those who believe in Jesus are saved from the law of sin through justification, then continuously sanctified to become more like Christ (sanctification), until they are ultimately glorified in eternity (glorification) (Budiono et al., 2023).

The Bible explains the fall of man into sin begins with temptation. Some biblical figures succeeded in overcoming temptation, while many others failed and fell into temptation and sinned. The first humans, Adam and Eve, failed the test, succumbing to temptation and falling into sin (Gen. 3). The same happened with Cain (Gen. 4) and his descendants, as stated in Genesis 6, along other figures. However, some individuals triumphed over temptation and resisted sin, such as Noah—though he also stumbled (Gen. 6; 9:18-29)—Joseph (Gen. 39), and other biblical figures. Jesus Christ stands as the perfect example of victory over temptation (Matt. 4; Mark 1; Luke 4). This highlights that the reality of temptation and the need for believers to confront it. Regarding temptation, the Bible appears to present a seeming contradiction in the Gospel of Matthew 6:13 and the Letter of James 1:2. Matthew records the phrase “...lead us not into temptation...”, while James writes the phrase “...count it all joy when you fall into various trials...”. However, both texts need to be understood within their respective contexts to gain a comprehensive and harmonized understanding. Ultimately, both passages emphasize the real challenge of temptation that believers must face.

This article will discuss the pattern of the fall of man into sin as stated in the Bible and how believers or God's people strive to resist sin when faced with temptation. While previous studies have explored the topics of temptation, the fall of man, and related biblical texts, very few have specifically examined the pattern of the fall of man into sin. For example, Sumarto's (2017) research, “*A Review of the Fall of Man into Sin Based on Genesis Chapter 3*”, focuses on the consequences of sin rather than the pattern of the fall itself. Cheek's (2021) discussion of Genesis 3 as the initial text emphasizes the seed of the woman rather than the fall of man. Lam's (2024) study on Genesis 1-3 addresses the sin of man but primarily focuses on unhealthy spiritual defense, without explaining how man commits sin. Batool (2025), in on “*Concept of Morality in Islam and Christianity: A Review*” equates sin in Christianity with evil but does not examine how this evil occurs. Furthermore, Gulo's (2020) research entitled “*The Concept of Temptation According to James 1:12-15*”, touches on the process of the birth of sin and death, but does not explore further and has not discussed how humans overcome sin. Lutticke and Weidemann (2021, p. 25) in their book entitled “*He himself was tempted (Hebr 2:18): The temptation of Jesus in the New Testament*” discussed the synoptic temptation stories of Jesus only and the depiction of the topic in the letter to the Hebrews. Then Samosir's (2016) research, discusses “*Understanding the Concept of Temptation in the Letter of James 1:2-3*” but also does not discuss the pattern of the fall of man into sin in facing temptation. Furthermore, the article by Istinatun et al. (2021), discusses the text of Genesis 3:1-7, but predominantly focuses on the word “*naked*”. In addition, Adon's (2022) research is entitled “*The Origin of Evil and Suffering According to Genesis 3:1-24 and Human Efforts to Fight Sin*”, but has not discussed the fall of man into sin. This shows that there is still no discussion of the principle of the pattern of the fall of man into sin which is

related to human efforts to fight sin. Thus, the thesis of this study is that by understanding the pattern of the fall of man into sin, believers can understand strategies to face temptation and fight sin, so that they can stand firm faith when tested and are more like Christ. Therefore, this study aims to find and describe the pattern of the fall of man into sin and the efforts of believers to face temptation and fight against sin.

METHOD

To achieve this article's goal, this study uses a descriptive qualitative research method design, specifically hermeneutics with an interpretative design (Zaluchu, 2020). This method works by describing the meaning of the process and results of hermeneutic interpretation of biblical texts (Zaluchu, 2020). The existing data will be analyzed using a theological descriptive interpretation approach (Hardiman, 2018). The discussion begins with an explanation of the definition and concept of sin, followed by an analysis of the events surrounding the origin of the fall of man and an exploration of the principles underlying the pattern of the fall. Furthermore, a confirmation analysis is carried out on several narrative texts concerning the fall of man into sin. Ultimately, the pattern of the fall, as stated in the Bible, provides insight and implications for believers to develop strategies in facing temptation and striving to resist sin.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Definition and The Concept of Sin

Sin in the context of Christian theology is understood as a violation of God's will and truth (Tangiruru et al., 2023). Lukito (2019) also defines sin as rebellion and non-conformity with God's law, both in thought and action, based on an attitude of faithlessness and disobedience to the Creator. Moreover, the Bible has emphasized that sin is a violation of God's law (1 John 3:4; 1 Sam. 15:22-23), passivity in doing good (James 4:17), actions without faith (Rom. 14:23), including desires that are not in accordance with God's will (Matt. 5:28; Rom. 7; Gal. 5:17; James 1:14; 1 John 2:15-17). This is stated by the term "sin" which is used in the Hebrew or Greek language of the Bible. Fruchtenbaum (2007, pp. 4–6) lists the terms of sin used in the Bible, namely eight terms in Hebrew: "*chata*" (missing the mark), "*pasha*" (to revolt), "*maal*" (unfaithfulness), "*avon*" (to be bent), "*aven*" (nothingness), "*rasha*" (wickedness), "*ra*" (to ruin), "*amal*" (toil), "*aval*" (unjust), "*avar*" (transgression), and "*asheim*" (error). Meanwhile, in Greek there are seven terms used, namely "*hamartia*" (to miss the mark), "*parabasis*" (transgression), "*adikia*" (unrighteousness), "*asebeia*" (impiety), "*anomia*" (iniquity), "*poneiria*" (depravity), and "*epithumia*" (lust). Thus, sin is a deviation from God's truth and rebellion against God which is expressed in all aspects, both through thoughts, words, attitudes and actions.

The main impact of sin is separation from God. God is holy and does not allow anything unclean come near Him. Farrel (2024) stated that God, who is love, desires His people to love him and practice righteousness in accordance with His will. Meanwhile, in human life, Adam's sin has caused all his descendants to inherit a sinful nature. The effects of original sin on the human faculties of intellect and will make it nearly impossible to perform meritorious actions and almost inevitable to commit sinful ones (Visala & Vainio, 2024). This is referred to as “collective sin” (Raschke, 2021) and inclines the human heart toward sin, which is why humanity has struggled with sin throughout history. This reality instills fear in humans, as the wages of sin is death—eternal separation from God.

The problem of sin can only be solved by God, who sent Jesus Christ, His only Son, into the world to save mankind from the power of sin. Sin caused God to endure suffering by sending Christ to die in humanity's place (Zaluchu, 2021). Jesus became the Redeemer, Savior, and Mediator, enabling His people to have a true relationship and fellowship with God. Whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life (John 3:16). Believers will be called to live in love, righteousness, and repentance, glorifying God, and continually being renewed to become more like Him (Tangiruru et al., 2023). Therefore, humans must strive to resist sin so that they may experience continuous renewal. Understanding the pattern of the fall is essential for believers to overcome sin.

A Study of Narrative Texts on the Fall of Man into Sin

The biblical account of the fall of man into sin is first recorded in Genesis 3. The fall of Adam and Eve resulted in a change in their relationship with God, others, and nature. Every generations of humanity have been contaminated by sin, inheriting a sinful nature that inclines the hearts toward evil (Gen. 6:5) (Manafe, 2020). The Bible contains numerous narrative texts depicting the fall of man into sin. This discussion presents only a few texts that explicitly follow a similar pattern but are representative of the general pattern of the fall of man into sin.

Genesis 3:1-7

The author of Genesis presents chapters 1 and 2 as depicting a world that is good, beautiful, and harmonious. However, in chapter 3, a heartbreaking tragedy unfolds. Chapter 3: 1-7 narrates the first instance of humanity's fall into sin. Humans violated and disobeyed the words or commandments of God, leading to the replacement of their once beautiful existence with an uncomfortable and broken condition (Natar, 2020).

The narrative of the fall of man into sin is systematically described by the author of Genesis. It began with the appearance of the serpent, who engages the woman in a conversation about God's command about the fruit of the tree in the Garden of Eden (Gen.

3:1-5). The cunning serpent distorts God's Word, while the woman, instead of accurately conveying God's command, adds to it. This moment marks the beginning of humanity's struggle with temptation.

Next, the woman faced the object of temptation—the fruit of the tree that God had forbidden—until she ultimately fell into sin. Genesis 3:6-7 clearly presents the narrative of this process. It began when the woman “saw” the fruit of the forbidden tree. Through this act of seeing, she judged the fruit of the tree to be good and desirable for eating. This perception then progressed to the stage of “attracting the heart and giving understanding,” indicating a process of judgment within the human heart and mind. After considering and assessing, the woman finally decided to “take and eat the forbidden fruit”. Furthermore, she also “gave” it to her husband to eat, who ate it as well. By eating the forbidden fruit, they had sinned against God, having disobeyed His command.

In the following verses, the consequences of sin and the responses—whether through human efforts or God's initiative are explained (Gen. 3:7). The fall of humans into sin brought changes within humans: their eyes were opened, they realized their nakedness, and they became afraid to meet God. In an attempt to cover up the effects of sin, they made loincloths from fig leaves, but this was temporary solution. Ultimately, God Himself came to hold them accountable. He punished the serpent that tempted them, as well as the humans and even the land. However, God's symbolic actions and the promises He made at that time also served as a solution to human sin.

Based on the narrative of Genesis 3:1-7, we can observe the pattern of the fall that humans experience. Several verbs stated above contribute to this pattern. The fall began with temptation (from the serpent), followed by the human response through sight, which led to contemplation in the heart and mind. This process ultimately resulted in sinful action—taking and eating the forbidden fruit. Furthermore, sin did not remain confined to one individual but was shared with others. Thus, this pattern, first seen in the fall of the first humans, is repeated in other biblical narratives of human sin.

Genesis 6:1-8

Sin did not stop with the first man but also continued through subsequent generations. Throughout the biblical narrative, human life is depicted as a cycle of rising and falling. Genesis 6:1-8 presents a narrative that is explicitly similar to the fall of the first man.

In this passage, the fall begins with an object of temptation—“the beautiful daughters of men”. Humans (the sons of God) respond to this temptation through their sense of sight—“seeing.” With the sense of sight, humans judge that the daughters are beautiful. Through their eyes, they judge that the daughters of men are beautiful. This perception then moves into their hearts and minds, where they contemplate and develop a response of “liking.” Eventually, this desire leads to sinful action, as they “take” wives

as they please. This indicates that they do not follow the divine provisions for marriage but instead act according to their own desires.

Some of the consequences of this are the Spirit of God no longer remains with humans forever, and their lifespan is increasingly shortened by God. An even more severe consequence is that God destroys sinful humans, along with the animals He created. God sees that the inclination of the human heart continually produces evil. Tarigan and Viktorahadi (2023) state that the flood was a form of judgment and punishment, as well as a call for repentance. However, God remained faithful to His promise, which is why it is stated that He showed grace to Noah. Thus, the story of the fall in this passage follows a similar pattern. It begins with temptation, followed by the human response through the sense of sight, which then influences the heart and mind, leading to desire. This desire ultimately results in sinful actions—taking wives as they please. Moreover, sin not only affects the human generation of that time but also extends to the surrounding creation, including animals.

Joshua 7:20-21

The next story is the narrative of Achan who fell into sin, recorded in Joshua 7:1-26. The pattern of Achan's sin is clearly seen in Verses 20 and 21, aligning with the previous narratives discussed.

The first verse of Joshua 7 provides an introduction to how the Israelites, through Achan's sin, provoked the Lord God's anger (Josh. 7:1). Sin always brings God's wrath upon humans, affecting both the sinner and those around them. At that time, the Israelites were defeated in battle by a small city named Ai (Josh. 7:2-5). Joshua sought the Lord and asked for guidance. It was that one of the Israelites, Achan, had sinned by breaking God's command (Josh. 7:6-18).

Ultimately, Achan's sin led to severe consequences, not only for himself but also for his family and possessions, as they were all destroyed to cleanse Israel from the Lord's wrath (Josh. 7:24-26). This reinforces the biblical principle that sin does not only impact individuals but also extends to their communities.

Achan was interrogated by Joshua and it was revealed that the Israelites were defeated because of the sin he had committed. Achan's confession of his sin follows a pattern of fall similar to the previous stories (Josh. 7:19-22). The pattern begins with the object of temptation, namely the spoils of a beautiful robe and silver and gold. His eyes "saw" the goods, his heart developed "desire," and he "took" them, hiding them under his tent. His actions violated the Lord's command in Joshua 6:18-19.

The narrative of the seventh chapter of Joshua ends with the consequences of Achan's sin. Initially, the entire nation of Israel faced the consequences, but in this section, the punishment of sin is specifically experienced by Achan himself, his family,

and all his possessions (Josh. 7:23-26). This once again emphasizes that sin carries consequences.

The narrative of Joshua 7:20-21 illustrates the same pattern of humanity's fall into sin. This pattern begins with temptation (possessions), followed by the response of the human eye, which sees and perceives, leading to desire in the heart. Ultimately, this desire gave birth to a sinful act—taking what was forbidden by God.

2 Samuel 11:1-27

The fall of King David as recorded in 2 Samuel 11:1-27, follows the same narrative pattern of sin. David was an extraordinary person, and the Lord himself affirmed that he lived righteously and did not deviate from God's presence. However, he sinned in the case of Uriah the Hittite (1 Kings 15:5).

David's fall into sin follows the same pattern as the previous narrative. As before, the fall began with temptation. David faced temptation when he was alone and "saw" the object of temptation—Bathsheba, a woman of great beauty—causing his heart to desire her (2 Sam. 11:1-3). He then sent someone to inquire about her and took her, ultimately committing adultery (2 Sam. 11:4). This action is a sin, as it violates God's commands.

Additionally, the narrative continues with the domino effect of David's actions. In 2 Samuel 11:5-27b, David attempted to cover up his transgressions and sins, using methods that ranged from gentle to harsh. However, instead of freeing him from sin, his efforts only led to new sins. To conceal his wrongdoing, David had killed Uriah, which was a crime in the eyes of the Lord (2 Sam. 11:27c). This narrative demonstrates that sin begets sin and that humans cannot resolve the problem of sin with their own strength. Furthermore, the consequences of David's sinful actions led to new problems in his personal life, his family, and even his kingdom (2 Sam. 12-20). From the description above, it is clear that David's fall into sin follows the same pattern. It begins with temptation (a woman), followed by the sense of sight (the eyes), which then stirs desires and ultimately leads to the sinful act of taking. This passage further emphasizes that sin can give birth to new sins and always carries consequences.

The Principles of the Pattern of the Fall of Man into Sin

A study of the various narrative texts about the fall of man into sin, as described above, provides an understanding of the fundamental pattern of human transgression. This pattern follows a clear principle: First, it is always initiated by temptation. Second, the object of the temptation is perceived through the sense of sight. Third, the human heart and mind develop desires. Fourth, these desires are expressed through sinful actions that involve taking and violating God's commandments. Finally, every sinful act carries consequences, including punishment for those who commit it. The process and pattern of the fall of man into sin can be further described and explained as follows.



Figure 1. Diagram of the Process of the Fall of Man into Sin

Starts with a Temptation

The fall of man into sin does not happen immediately but begins with a trigger—temptation. The term of "temptation" or "testing" is frequently used in various parts of the Bible (Lukito, 2019). In the Old Testament, two terms are commonly used. The first is "*bahan*," which means to examine in order to determine value (Ps. 139:23), similar to how metal undergoes testing for purification. The second term is "*nasa*" which means to try to prove (1 Sam. 17:39). Thus, in the Old Testament, the concept of "tempting" has a constructive meaning—to purify the faith of God's people rather than to bring them down. In the New Testament, the parallel term used is "*dokimazo*", which means to purify (1 Pet. 1:7a), with the ultimate goal of testing and proving the endurance, character and loyalty of believers (James 1:2-3). Another term found in the New Testament is "*peirazo*", which refers to temptation with a negative motive, originating from an evil source. The term "*peirazo*" is further explained in Romans chapter 3, describing the desires of the human heart apart from the Holy Spirit.

Using the term "temptation" indicates that temptation itself is not inherently bad or evil, as its basic meaning is neutral and even leans toward the positive—unless it comes from an evil source. A person's response to temptation determines whether their faith will grow stronger or they will fall into sin. Humans often tend to blame God when they fall into sin, but the Bible explains that temptation does not come from God, as He cannot be tempted and does not tempt anyone. Instead, temptation arises from human desires (James 1:13-14) (Yuber et al., 2023). However, God can use temptation as a test to further purify a person's faith.

Temptation does not come from the creator but from creation. Based on various biblical narratives about the fall of man into sin, it can be concluded that temptation comes from creation—namely from Satan, the world and human desires (James 4:1-10). The Bible reveals how Satan, the evil one, attempts to bring down God's people by continuously launching temptations, as recorded in the fall of the first man (Gen. 3), David's transgressions (1 Chr. 21:1), Job's trials (Job 1:6), the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11), Peter's struggle (Matt. 16:23), Jesus' rebuke to the Jews (John 8), Judas Iscariot's betrayal (John 13:27), Ananias and Sapphira's deception (Acts 5:5), the trials faced by the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 7:5), the church in Ephesus (Eph. 4:27), and many more.

The devil, as the power of darkness, continually seeks opportunities to tempt and even looks for the right time to bring humans down (Luke 4:13; 1 Peter 5:8).

Furthermore, the second source of temptation is the world and human desires themselves. Therefore, the Apostle John emphasized that the children of God should not love the world, as it contains the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The world can be a source of temptation as it is under the control of the Devil (Luke 4:6).

Thus, temptation can take various forms, including seduction or enticement from the Evil One, food and drink, physical beauty or attractiveness, material possessions, power, or worldly glory, and others. In Indonesian society, a common expression describes these temptations as *4-ta*: *harta* (wealth), *takhta* (throne), *cinta* (love), and *quota* (internet quota). Therefore, temptation is not always associated with bad things or circumstances such as suffering, misery, sorrow, and the like; even good conditions, such as pleasure, abundance, and others, can become sources of temptation for humans. One proverb illustrates this wisdom through a prayer—asking for just enough to avoid sinning against God (Prov. 30:7-9).

The Entrance: Five Senses

Temptations can start originate from external sources and enter through one's senses. However, they can also arise from within. For example, Jeremiah 17:9 states that the human heart can be deceitful, indicating that temptation can come from external sources such as Satan, other people, or "the world", but also from within a person.

Temptation itself does not cause a person to sin as long as it remains external. However, it can enter the human self through the five senses: taste (tongue), smell (nose), hearing (ears), sight (eyes), and touch (skin), all of which have the function of knowing the conditions around the human self (Kholidun, 2021, pp. 21–23). Each of these senses serves as a gateway through which temptation can take hold to enter the human self.

Descartes (1662), as quoted by Fali (2022), states that the five human senses serve a means of receiving input from external objects, which then enter the human self and produce an emotional response—either a response of desire or avoidance. In addition to being a means of entry point, the five senses also function to distinguish between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). However, the determination of positive or negative responses is ultimately decided by the human heart and mind. Therefore, the object of temptation outside humans can vary, as each sense can serve as an entry point.

Decided in the Heart and Mind

Temptations that have been received by the five senses enter into the human body, namely into the mind and heart. Human response to temptation is determined by the mind that understands and the heart that believes the object of temptation is something good or

not. The mind will process every object of temptation received and then enter the human heart, which can then become sin (Sudarma, 2021). Therefore, the heart and mind become places of consideration and decision making to respond to existing temptations.

The Lord Jesus emphasized that sin can occur in the human heart (Matt. 5:28). Patandean and Hermanto (2019) state that the phrase "in the heart" in Greek also means in the mind. Jesus wanted to emphasize that sinful acts do not have to be seen through actions or words, but can already occur in the human heart. Therefore, God also once said that "the inclination of the human heart is only evil" (Gen. 6:5). In addition, James also said that "if anyone knows to do good and does not do it, he sins" (James 4:17). More than that, Paul also said that everything without faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Thus, if the human heart and mind are evil, then every temptation that comes will produce a negative response, namely sin. Because the heart and mind deviate from God's purpose. On the other hand, if the human heart and mind are filled with the Word of God and led by the Holy Spirit and have faith, then what exists is not the will/desire of oneself but the desire of the Spirit and the will of God, so that the temptation does not become a temptation of sin (*peirasmós*) but a test that is won (*dokimos*).

Expressed through Acts of Sin

Temptations that are responded to negatively by the heart and mind, in ways that are not in accordance with God's will, will result in sin. Human desires that contradict the desires of the Holy Spirit will entice and lead a person into sin (James 1:13-15). These desires stem from the flesh and can manifest in works of the flesh, such as fornication, impurity, lust, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, envy, anger, selfishness, division, dissension, jealousy, drunkenness, revelry and more (Gal. 5:19-21).

Jesus emphasized that all evil thoughts and actions—such as fornication, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lust, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness—come from within a person's heart (Mark 7:21-23). Such conditions are experienced by those whose hearts are not led by the Holy Spirit. This means that sin in the human heart and mind continues to be nurtured and eventually manifests in sinful words, attitudes and actions that go against God's will, even leading to further sins or influencing others. On the other hand, if the human heart aligns with God's will, it will produce not sinful acts but acts of faith that bless others.

The Impact of Sin

The act of sin is not the final outcome of the chain reaction caused by temptation; rather, it ultimately leads to death (desire → sin → death) (Yuber et al., 2023). The desires of the flesh give birth to sin, which, when continually nurtured, matures and results in death (James 1:13-15). The consequence of sin is eternal spiritual death—eternal separation from God—as Paul stated, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). No human

effort or willpower can ever satisfy God's requirement for redemption from sin and eternal death (Tritch, 2025). Death is the final consequence of sin, but other consequences arise from sin while a person is still in the world. Because God is just, every sin is subject to punishment or discipline. This aligns with Klokocki's (2022) statement that, according to the Bible, death is God's punishment for sin in three forms: spiritual, physical, and eternal death. This is evident from the narrative of the fall that has been previously discussed.

For those who sin but recognize, confess, and repent, restoration is possible because God is both loving and just (1 John 1:9). His justice punishes sin, while His love offers forgiveness. Those who are willing to undergo the process of discipline will be restored through sanctification, but those who refuse to repent will drift further away from God. James emphasizes that sin leads to death, but on the other hand, tested faith produces perfection and results in the crown of life (James 1:12). H. Gulo (2020), states that the phrase "crown of life" is a metaphor for eternal life, which is granted by God's grace to those who endure trials.

Implications for the Life of a Believer

Trials can be a Process of Sanctification for Believers

After the fall of Adam and Eve, every generation born afterward inherits a sinful nature, and the inclination of the human heart is solely evil before God. Since humanity possesses a sinful nature, it naturally follows that their actions are also sinful. However, God's love has provided a redemptive sacrifice through Jesus Christ, so that everyone who believes in Him will be saved. Furthermore, every believer must continue to grow in holiness to become more like Christ. Setiawan (2019) stated that every believer who is born again has a new nature, enabling them to demonstrate a transformed life. However, believers can still sin each day as humans cannot reach perfection in this life. In Phillippians 2:12-14, Paul explicitly stated that he and all the believers have not yet reached perfection.

Believers will still face challenges or temptations while waiting for the second coming of Christ. Although they have been redeemed by Christ, they are still capable of sinning. As Augustine (2016), quoted by Yahya and Ilahi (2021), stated that since the fall, humanity has always been in a state of *posse peccare*—able to sin. However, especially for those who have believed in Jesus, their condition is also returned to the same as at the time of creation, namely *posse non peccare* (able not to sin). Thus, as expressed by Sudarma (2021), for believers, temptations (*peirasmos*) can become tests (*dokimos*) when won and this is the process of sanctification in God. This shows that believers are not yet perfect and are continually moving towards Christ-likeness through daily victory over sin. Therefore, believers need to be aware of temptations so as not to fall into sin, and try to face temptations correctly so as not to sin.

However, for those who have believed in Jesus, their condition is also restored to that of creation—*posse non peccare*—able not to sin. Thus, as expressed by Sudarma (2021), for believers, temptations (*peirasmós*) can become tests (*dokimós*) when they are overcome, forming part of the sanctification process in God. This demonstrates that believers are not yet perfect but are continually progressing toward Christ-likeness through daily victories over sin. Therefore, believers must remain vigilant against temptations, striving to confront them in the right way to avoid falling into sin.

Thus, believers do not need to be afraid and worried when facing temptations. As James stated, believers should rejoice because the testing of their faith develops perseverance, and they will receive the crown of life from God (James 1:2-4,12). Additionally, believers must understand that God does not allow them to fall into sin, as the temptations that they face will never exceed human strength. Even when trials arise, God will always provide a way out (1 Cor. 10: 13-16).

Believers' Strategies in Facing Temptation to Fight Sin

Every believer needs to understand that temptation can come at any time, in any form, and can enter through any of the senses. However, the most important thing for believers is to be aware of every temptation and respond to it positively to resist sin. MacArthur and Mayhue (2017, p. 196) stated that believers must learn to face every temptation or test with the right attitude.

Based on the diagram of the pattern of the fall of man, the main focus that believers should be to keep their minds and hearts aligned with God's will. The key factor of response that determines whether someone sins or remains faithful lies in the human heart. The heart and mind are the centers of decision-making, where "desires" and "wills" arise. What kind of desires and wills are produced? When desires stem from one's own will, temptation leads to sin. However, when desires align with God's will, temptation becomes a test of faith (James 1:2-4).

For humans to avoid sin, their hearts must be led by the desires of the Holy Spirit, which align with God's will. The psalmist teaches that humans can keep their lives clean, pleasing to God and free from sin, by living according to His Word (Ps. 119:9-11). The human heart must be filled with the Word of God so that every response to temptation is in line with His will rather than the desires of the flesh. The process of sanctification should continue to grow daily until the perfection in heaven. In other words, the Word of God must reign as king in the heart of every believer. During His life as a human, Jesus also faced temptation, but He always overcame it. He responded to every temptation with "*it is written*", pointing to the authority of God's Word (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). This demonstrates that a heart filled with the Word of God will grant wisdom to believers, enabling them to face temptation (James 1:5). Moreover, it cultivates a life

that fears God and avoids sin (Prov. 1:7). As Jesus said, “if the tree is good, it will produce good fruit” (Matt. 7:15-20).

Jesus' statement shows that a good heart will produce something good, whether in words or actions. However, what about His statement in the same book, Matthew 15:11-19, which states that out of the heart come all evil things and that they defile a person? These two passages may seem contradictory, but if we examine their contexts, we see that in both, Jesus uses the same allegory or expression of a tree or plant (Matt. 7:16-20; 15:13). In chapter 7, Jesus states that people who do not do the will of God do not produce good fruit as they are not known by God. Likewise, in chapter 15, people whose hearts continually produce evil are those who are not planted by God. This indicates that there are two types of hearts: those that have believed in God and those that have not. A heart that believes in God has the ability to produce good fruit as it is enabled by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a heart that does not believe in God produces impurity.

Therefore, the preventive strategy that believers can implement is to continually fill their hearts and minds with the Word of God. A practical approach is to use the senses of sight and hearing to receive the Word of God, bringing it into the mind so that the believer understands and comprehends it. This understanding and comprehension then enter the heart, allowing the believer to feel and believe the truth of the Word of God. As a result, what is understood and believed will be manifested in actions led by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in their heart.

Furthermore, the curative strategy is to respond to trials positively—viewing them as a means to test faith. The necessary action is to resist following the desires of the self (flesh) and instead pursue the desires of the Spirit. There is an ongoing conflict between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit. Humans have the choice to either love themselves (leading to greed and dissatisfaction) or love God (leading to gratitude). When a believer loves God, they will live according to His will, who prioritize self-love will deviate from His will and fall into sin. This is where believers face the choice between their own will and God's will—living by the Spirit versus living by the flesh (Rom. 8). Meanwhile, the repressive strategy is to maintain a heart that is willing to be restored. God is both loving and just, so anyone who has fallen into temptation and sinned can realize their wrongdoing, confess and repent, allowing themselves to be increasingly sanctified by God (1 John 1:9).

So, in order to face temptation effectively, overcome sin, and grow in faith, a believer must have a will, mind and feelings that are in harmony with God. This is only possible when the heart is filled with the Word of God and led by the Spirit of God. In this regard, Hendi and Aruan (2020) stated that such a condition can occur when a person has experienced a new birth. As a result, believers are empowered to overcome the desires of the flesh and the world, living according to God's will and becoming more like Christ—victorious person in God. Sugianto (2024) stated that believers must continually strive

against sin and live in holiness so that God's presence becomes increasingly real in their lives each day until they reach perfection.

CONCLUSION

Through the discussion above, it can be concluded that the pattern of human fall into sin begins with temptation. Temptations can originate externally, entering through a person's senses or internally, arising from within the heart. External temptations are received through five human senses, serving as an entry point that brings them into the human mind and heart. Meanwhile, internal temptations already exist directly in their heart. The human heart and mind, which are inclined toward sin, process temptation and produce fleshly desire, which, when acted upon, lead to sinful behavior. If sin continues to be nurtured, it ultimately results in eternal death. In relation to this, believers who have been saved by Jesus Christ still have the potential to fall into sin. Therefore, they must remain vigilant against temptation, striving for sanctification until Jesus's second coming. The strategy believers can adopt is to fill and guard their hearts with the Word of God so that the hearts, minds, and wills align with God's will, leading them to act for His glory.

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