

Daily repentance - continued conversion

If we do not weed a garden, the weeds will choke out the plants that we want to grow. If cancer in a person's body is not cut out or killed, it will kill the person. The same thing is true of evil thoughts and deeds. Our lives are a daily return to our baptism, through which we have died to sin and made alive in Christ. Paul writes, *"Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life"* (Rom. 6:4). Jesus told His disciples to root pride from their lives lest they perish. *"Truly, I tell you, unless you are converted and become like little children, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 18:3-4). The writer to the Hebrews encouraged believers to *"throw off everything that hinders"* (Heb. 12:1). Paul wrote, *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their sinful natures with their passions and desires"* (Gal. 5:24). He also encouraged Christians to *"put off"* the deeds of the old man and to *"put on"* the deeds of the new man (Eph. 4:22-24).

It is true that a believer cannot keep evil thoughts from tempting him. He still has the old Adam with him. A believer who is tempted has not lost his faith, however. Luther put it this way: *"It is impossible to keep the devil from shooting evil thoughts and lusts into your heart. But see to it that you do not let such arrows (Eph 6:16) stick there and take root, but tear them out and throw them away. Do what one of the ancient fathers counselled long ago: 'I cannot,' he said, 'keep a bird from flying over my head. But I can certainly keep it from nesting in my hair or from biting my nose off.'"*

Believers can't stop temptations from coming into their lives. They can, however, by the power of the gospel, stop sin from taking over their lives. Those who recognise the power of the enemy within each of us (our sinful nature) will not indulge their flesh. Rather, they will crucify it by daily repentance. This has also been called continued conversion.