

5 - Dealing With Sin and Temptation

As a new believer in Jesus Christ, it does not take long for the battle against temptation and sin to become obvious. Things that previously did not bother you will now become a problem as the Spirit of God heightens your awareness and intensifies your conscience. Sinful habits from your past life will now cause great pain if you do not work at removing them from your life.

As believers we need to understand how to deal effectively with temptation and sin if we are ever going to become a mature Christian.

Temptation is the initial urge a person feels to commit sin. In itself, temptation is not sin and does NOT come from God. However, if not dealt with correctly, temptation can rapidly become sin with devastating consequences.

James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that we undergo no temptation that is peculiar to us alone. Paul also points out that God always provides a way of escape so that we are able to stand firm without sinning during the temptation. Therefore, we need to look for those ways of escape, they are usually obvious and just need to be acted on.

Some of sin's consequences:

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| ♦ It grieves God | Genesis 6:5-7 |
| ♦ It brings guilt | Psalms 32:5 |
| ♦ It brings separation from God | Isaiah 59:1-2 |
| ♦ It brings judgement | Romans 2:5 |
| ♦ It enslaves | Romans 6:17 |
| ♦ It causes spiritual death | Ephesians 2:1 |
| ♦ It brings lack of hope | Ephesians 2:12 |
| ♦ It corrupts | Titus 1:15 |
| ♦ It condemns | James 5:12 |

SOURCES OF TEMPTATION

The Bible teaches that temptation to sin comes from 3 basic sources:

- a) **SATAN** is shown in the Bible as a source of temptation to sin (Matthew 4:3-11; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Peter 5:8). He is ingenious at masquerading his influence for evil in packaging that looks and feels OK (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).
- b) **THE FLESH** is also a source of temptation. Usually, when the New Testament refers to "*the flesh*" it is speaking of our inherent principle/compulsion for sin. You could say that "*the flesh*" is our *humanness* with its sinful desires. *The flesh* is that facet of us that instinctively gravitates down to the lowest level of sin available at the time. *The flesh* always seeks to lure us away from God and from holiness.

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Our *flesh* is comprised of our uniquely individual qualities that make us who we are. Therefore, one form of temptation may be a major weakness to one person but not to another. Sin expresses itself slightly different in different people's lives, but always with the same intent.

Sin wants to dominate us through our appetites and habits. Our natural desires and instincts are not all bad, but they can become harmful if sin is allowed to take control them (Romans 6:12-13; James 1:14-15).

- c) **THE WORLD** is a source of temptation which involves subtle conformity of a Christian to the attitudes and values of society (Romans 12:2). This can occur in many ways, particularly when society has floating and changing values. A common area of worldly temptation is thinking that security is found in possessions or accomplishments. Viewing life as liveable apart from a relationship with God is another (Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 4:4; Luke 12:15).

VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

- ✓ **Be Alert:** Many Christians are defeated simply because they are not alert to the possibility of temptation. Feeling immune to temptation or thinking that temptation can easily be overcome creates vulnerability to sin. We sometimes fall into a false sense of security and self-confidence with this type of attitude (1 Corinthians 16:13-14; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).
- ✓ **Be Filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit:** A Christian can never successfully defeat temptation in their own strength, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit. This means living according to the guidelines of Scripture (Matthew 4:4; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 5:18; Philippians 4:13).
- ✓ **Know Biblical Escapes:** The Bible's resource for escape is to have Scripture memorised so that you can use it when facing temptation (Psalm 119:11). Matthew 4:1-11 shows us how Jesus used Scripture to overcome the attacks of the devil during 40 days of temptation.
- ✓ **Obey By Faith:** Do as the Bible says whether you feel like it or not. Don't rely on your feelings or motives. Faithfully trust and obey God's Word (Proverbs 3:5-7; 1 John 5:3).
- ✓ **Be Fully Committed:** Half-hearted Christians can only make half-hearted attempts at resisting temptation. Be fully committed to God, to His Word, and to His body which is the Church (Mark 12:30-31; Revelation 3:15; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25).

AVOIDING UNNECESSARY TEMPTATION

- **Share your struggles with a stronger Christian** – all Christians need each other, especially in our battle against sin. Having a Christian friend who is more mature in the faith is essential. As you share the joys and the struggles of life together, you carry each other, pray for each other, and lighten the spiritual and emotional load of each other.

James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another...*

2 Corinthians 13:11 *...comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

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- **Avoid wicked company** - so often believers fall into temptation for the simple reason that they spend far too much time with bad company. A lot of time spent with a worldly living non-Christian friend will gradually cause problems if you aren't making a consistent stand for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:33). Usually non-Christians will progressively wean off the friendship once they realise that you are serious about living for the Lord.

Likewise, spending a lot of time with a worldly living person who claims to be a Christian will wear you down to their level of godless thinking and behaviour.

Proverbs 4:14 *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.*

The Lord wants His children to keep good company. This in itself will help you to grow stronger in Christ. However this doesn't mean that we should avoid unbelievers altogether, otherwise we would never have opportunities to witness or help those in need, our testimony would be damaged.

Psalms 1:1 *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.*

Genesis 39:10 *And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.*

This is **NOT** an excuse to isolate yourself from non-Christians. It is good and beneficial to have non-Christian friends. However, you should choose to be the greater influence with the higher values, living out the character and gospel of Jesus Christ. Never give in to sin.

- **Keep your mind clean** - one of the quickest ways to bring temptation upon yourself is to feed your mind on impure thoughts. What we look at, listen to, and think about has a direct connection with our vulnerability to sin. The internet, and social media can have a dangerous influence on us if we allow it. Avoid all degrees of pornography and sexual temptation. Seek help from a stronger Christian if these issues are present in your life.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.*

- **Remove yourself from the place of temptation** - many times when we are being tempted we stay in the place of temptation and often in our own strength. By moving we could easily get away from the temptation. Better still, try not to allow yourself to get into a place of known temptation (Psalm 1:1).

Genesis 39:10-12 *And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.*

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- **Submit to God** - this is your greatest act of resisting the devil.

Also, instruct Satan to get away from you.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Matthew 4:10 *Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"*

- **Stand firm** - stubbornly, yet graciously, refuse to conform to temptation.

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Memorise conditions for victory, James 4:7 and Psalm 119:11.

Feel free to check out other resources at focusbiblechurch.com

If you would like to ask a question, please use the "Contact Us" page on our web site, <https://focusbiblechurch.com/contact-us/>

NOTES:

Sin will take you further than you want to go; it will keep you there longer than you want to stay; and you will pay a higher price than you want to pay.