

"Overcoming Temptation"

What do you do when you're tempted to sin? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to learn some ways to overcome temptation. So stay tuned.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Life challenges us every day, but God's word provides answers to those challenges. Life's problems can overwhelm us, but God's word can guide us. In a dark world filled with sin, we need the Lord's help! Psalm 119 verse 105 says, that "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." It leads us in the paths of righteousness and away from the dangers that can destroy us. And this is why we listen and study the Word of God. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

From the moment that we're old enough to understand right from wrong, truth from error, and good from evil, we face the temptation to please our selfish desires rather than to please God. Temptations come in many forms, and what affects one person may not affect another. Some are tempted to tell a lie, some to steal, some to take revenge, some to gossip. When we're afraid or hurting, we may be tempted to get angry or to strike out. When we're greedy or jealous, we may be tempted to take what is not ours or to put down others. The devil strives to make sin attractive; but sin is offensive to God.

With the Lord's help, you can overcome Satan's schemes and his tricks to lead you astray. With the Lord's help, you can find strength to overcome sin. With the Lord's help, you can control your desires and live a righteous life. Don't doubt that people can change. With the Lord's help, you can become a new person who lives in righteousness. You can't change the past, no, but you can change your future. With the Lord's help, you can rise above your past and be the person you always wanted to be!

If you want to know more, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have our materials free on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 10, verses 6 to 13, and we'll learn how to overcome temptation.

Our reading today comes from the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 10, verses 6 to 13. "Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful that whenever we stumble that You're able to lift us up, and when we're weak

You make us strong, and when we have questions You give us the answers. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

The apostle John describes the three appeals that Satan uses to draw us toward the world and away from God. 1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Every temptation comes in one or more of these three forms. And the devil uses our desires to lead us astray from God.

James warned in James 1 verses 13 to 15, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it's full-grown, brings forth death."

Satan appeals to the flesh, the eyes, and pride when he tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Genesis tells how Satan tried to get Eve to doubt what God said and appealed to her desires. Genesis 3:1 to 5 says, "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.''" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Well the devil first tries to get people to question God. He wants to make them think God is trying to withhold some blessing from them. Now once Satan gets people to be self-centered rather than believing in God, he's able to tell them lies that contradict God. Jesus told some Jews who did not believe in Him in John 8 verses 44 and 45, that "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me."

The devil urges people to trust in their own judgment rather than listen to God. Of course, trusting your own judgment will lead you to give in to your desires. Satan tempted Jesus to use His powers to make food. You remember in Matthew 4 verses 1 to 4 the Bible says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus said no to the devil, because Jesus knew His relationship to God was important! God helps us overcome temptation by teaching us who we are in Christ. We don't belong to ourselves but to Him, to Christ, who purchased us with His blood. God also helps us by giving us His Word to teach us how to live and how to avoid sin. The more we rely on God's teaching, the more we're able to avoid temptation.

Solomon advised his son in the book of Proverbs: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3 verses 5 to 7). The Word of God, the Bible, can give you strength and can help you through those struggles that you face with

the devil and with the world. The Word protects us in times of trouble. The psalmist said, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119 verse 11).

Sometimes the devil appeals to the sinful desires that are inside of us. The Lord Jesus warned us to be careful what we look at. And Jesus said in Matthew 5:27 to 29, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

Society glamorizes sex. And the desire for sex has led many young men and women away from God into sin. The consequences of sin are always greater than people think. Sexual immorality can lead to an unwanted pregnancy or a disease. People who get involved in sexual activities outside of marriage often feel great guilt for what they've done and wished that they had never violated God's will.

Christians must be careful what they look at. They should turn their eyes away from the things that tempt them sexually, so that they may remain pure in their thoughts. Young men who love the Lord learn to control their eyes and avoid temptation. Young women need to consider how they dress, so that they might not tempt young men or send the wrong message. We all must be careful not to tempt others to sin. A young woman who dresses in a sexually provocative way shouldn't be shocked that boys will see her as willing to be sexy. Young women who profess godliness should dress modestly (1 Timothy 2 verses 9 to 10). When people, and that's either male or female, dress modestly, they can avoid many embarrassing situations and temptations. The devil loves to appeal to the eye; and that's why every Christian should pay attention to how he or she appears to others. Our clothing and appearance reveal much about our character.

The apostle Paul lived in Corinth in the first century, and so in that time it was a place where people practiced a lot of sexual immorality. And so he advised them in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 18 to 20, "Flee sexual immorality. Now every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; and therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Now when temptation confronts you and you're inclined to yield because no one else seems to be around, remember, God is always watching. Proverbs 15 and verse 3 says, "That the eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good."

Now learning to flee in times of temptation is a great strategy for avoiding sin. Those who linger around sin usually get caught up in it. Paul later warned the Corinthians, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Corinthians 15 and verse 33). So stay away from the things that will harm you spiritually. Paul told Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2 verse 22).

Now whether the devil appeals to the eye, to the flesh, or to pride, he is actually appealing to our selfishness. Our selfish desires can lead us away from God. Luke tells how the devil tempted Jesus: Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give to You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Luke chapter 4, verses 5 to 8).

Now Jesus knew whom He should worship and serve, and it wasn't the devil! And in spite of all the treasures and power He might have received in ruling the world, Jesus knew that he would be a slave to Satan if he had given in to the temptation. Jesus knew that there was only One person to worship and serve, and that's the Father in heaven.

Sin has a high price! Jesus knew that when the pleasure of sin wore off, and they had to deal with the consequences of sin. Romans 6 and verse 23 still says, that "the wages of sin is death." Ananias and Sapphira decided that they wanted to keep back part of what they promised God; and so they lied to God in order to possess some money. They never expected their decision would cost them their lives (Acts 5 verses 1 to 10 tells the story).

Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but it filled him with guilt and regret. Judas went away and hanged himself according to Matthew 27 verses 3 to 5. We must never assume that sin is trivial. Sin was so serious that Jesus bore the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (2 Corinthians 5, verses 19 to 21).

My friend take heart! If the temptation is too strong for us, God will make us the way of escape. 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13 says, that "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." When you feel the temptation is too strong for you, you start looking for the way of escape. As a loving Father, the God of heaven wants to spare us from getting into situations that we can't handle.

The apostle recalled the time that he appeared before Caesar and did not know whether he would live or die: he said, "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 16 to 18)! We need confidence the Lord will also deliver us from every evil circumstance beyond our control. That He will indeed strengthen us or give us the way of escape so that we may remain close to Him as His children.

You don't have to face temptation alone. You have the help of God through His word and through prayer. The Bible stands as God's written word! Ask, and it shall be given you. You have the support of fellow Christians who want to live godly lives too. You have the hope and promise of heaven. Oh with the Lord's help, you can overcome! Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your promises, and we're thankful that You keep Your promises. Father bless us and help us to do Your will on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

Sometimes God allows us to go through trials to test and strengthen us. He's not being mean to us but is helping us to mature and to be able to stand on our feet as Christians. 1 Peter 5 verses 8 to 10 says: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

God always helps His children through their difficulties. When the trial is over, the God of all grace perfects, establishes, strengthens, and settles us. Wherever you are in life, whatever you're going

through, and whatever struggle you face, remember that nothing will ever be bigger than what God and you can handle.

With God's instructions you can change! Romans 6 verses 17 and 18 says, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness." You don't have to stay a slave of sin! Obey the Lord, and He will set you free.

Put your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. With love in your heart, turn from sin in repentance. Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're baptized, the blood of Christ will wash away your sins, cause you to be born again with newness of life, and make you a child of God! Oh do it today!

My friend is temptation and sin ruining your life? Turn to God. Now if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. But if you call us or get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not here to exploit you, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, as always we say that we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching the Word of God, and please tell a friend about the Search program, and encourage them to watch it, it will bless their lives. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.