

Overcoming Temptation

Sin comes about when we are tempted. Temptations in themselves are not wrong, for the bible tells us that Jesus was tempted (Heb. 4:15) yet, He was without sin. Temptations lead to sin. Temptations often come in the form of "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life" (Jn 2:15-17). Paul described those who gave into temptations to get rich as those who fall into a "snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim. 6:9).

God provides a way out of every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). We must be looking for the way to escape temptation. The Ephesians were told by putting on the full armor of God they could "stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) and to "extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16).

How does a person resist temptation? The bible shows us at least 7 ways to do this.

- 1. Flee.** Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). On another occasion Paul wrote, "flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18). This is what Joseph did in the book of Genesis. The wise father instructed his son concerning how to avoid the harlot, to not "go near the door of her house" (Pv. 5:8).
- 2. Respond with Bible verses.** This is what the Lord did when tempted by the devil in Matthew 4. He used the expression, "it is written" to all three temptations. The wise father in Proverbs 6 encouraged his son to let wisdom guide him (Pv. 6:20-25). When asked how can a young man keep his way pure, the Psalmist answered, "by keeping it according to the Word" (Ps 119:9).
- 3. Rebuke Temptation.** When Peter stood in the way of what Jesus was doing, the Lord responded with these words, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (Mt. 16:23). Speak out against the temptations that

are knocking on your heart. Make a verbal commitment as to whose side you stand on.

- 4. Put Aside Wrong.** In Col. 3:1-10 Paul admonishes the Christians to be renewed in Christ. They were to do this by putting aside or laying aside the sins that they had in their lives. He says to “put them all aside” (v. 8). The Hebrew writer said the same thing when he wrote, “Lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us” (Heb. 12:1).
- 5. Change Your Thinking.** This is exactly what being “renewed in your mind” (Rom. 12:1-2) means. Christians must concentrate and focus themselves upon heaven. They must press on. They must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Let the mind dwell on the pure and good (Phil. 4:8).
- 6. Pray.** This is what the Hebrew writer has in mind when he tells us to come “boldly to the throne of grace.” We can do this because Christ understands. He was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin (Heb. 4:15-16). Pray for help. Pray to find that open door out of temptation. Pray to be strong. When Satan was going to sift Peter as wheat, the Lord prayed for Peter (Lk. 22:32).
- 7. Surround Yourself With Righteous People.** The Bible warns that evil companions corrupt good morals (1 Cor. 15:33). Being around strong, solid Christians can help. We can confess our faults to them (Jas. 5:16). Fellow Christians can give us wise counsel. They can help us.

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