

4

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

(This lesson teaches us some facts about temptation and how God empowers us to overcome temptation and live victorious Christian lives).

Overcoming Temptation

We will all face temptation. Temptation is essentially an inducement to sin. It takes us away from God's best for our lives. Continual yielding to a certain kind of temptation brings us into bondage to that and it could become an addictive habit or a stronghold (an area of thought or habit that is controlled by the enemy) in our lives. However, we can overcome temptation and live victoriously in all areas of our lives.

Three Sources of Temptation

Temptations in the world

1 John 2:15,16

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.

The term *world* is often used to describe the community of sinful humanity that possesses a spirit of rebellion against God.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Because of its opposition to God, the world values those things which are contrary to God's will: "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life."

1 John 2:16

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.

The world's temptations to the believer are thus twofold: lust for the sensual and pride in mastery of his own life.

The attractions of the things in the world tempt a believer to become absorbed in the world's system.

James 4:4

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Temptations of the flesh

By “flesh” the Bible means the evil desires of the body and soul (mind, will and emotions). We still live in a physical body and hence will still face these.

Some of these are listed in

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellies, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

James 1:13-16

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 is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Process:

- Drawn by our own desires
- Enticed—our will is weakened. (*Greek* ‘to entrap’)
- Desire has conceived—yielded to the desire. This results in sin.

Having my desire aroused for something wrong and being drawn by my own desire is still not sin. I may even come close to being enticed—and this is still not sin. Only when I have yielded to the desire, it is then that I have sinned.

Many Christians unnecessarily condemn themselves, because of wrong desires being aroused in them. This in itself is not sin. Only when you yield to those desires, either by committing a wrong act or by willfully contemplating along those desires, then have you sinned.

**How can I THINK
of copying.. God
must really hate
me.**



Temptations by satan

Matthew 4:3

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

1 Thessalonians 3:5

For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Satan is the tempter.

Satan tempts us in three realms:

— lusts of the eyes, lusts of the flesh and the pride of life.

Satan's primary method in presenting temptation is deception.

Genesis 3:6

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

1 John 2:16

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.



- Good for food —————▶ "Lust of the Flesh"
- Pleasing to the eye —————▶ "Lust of the Eye"
- Desirable for gaining wisdom —————▶ "Pride of Life"

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Revelation 12:9

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Jesus Faced and Overcame Temptation

Matthew 4:1-11

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.'" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:18

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

A quick look at how the enemy tempts us:

Satan's schemes are really mind games—they have to do with attacks against the mind.

Jesus was tempted in all areas, and in the same way we are tempted.

The only way satan could show Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time was through the imagination.

Jesus was in the wilderness. Therefore the only way satan could have 'taken' Jesus to Jerusalem and placed Him on the pinnacle of the Temple was through the imagination.

We conclude therefore, that satan's primary way of working against us is in the area of the mind—by intercepting our normal thought process with his thoughts, ideas, suggestions, pictures, imaginations and so on.

Satan's thoughts, pictures, imaginations that come into our minds are intended to stir up our own fleshly desires, appetites and passions. When our own desires are stirred up, we are drawn by them, our will to resist is weakened, and if we do not exercise restraint, we yield, which leads to sin.

Having a bad thought, picture or imagination, thrown into your mind does not constitute as sin. Thinking evil or acting on that thought is sin.

You cannot prevent these thoughts from coming, but you can prevent them from staying.

We Can Overcome Temptation and Live Victoriously

1 Corinthians 10:12,13

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Ephesians 4:23,24

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Peter 1:3

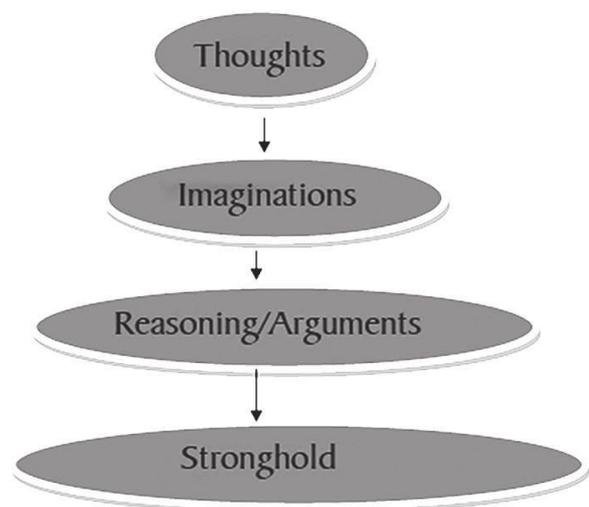
As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

1 John 5:1,4

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

We are a new creation inside and have the life and nature of God. We have been born to overcome.

God has given us weapons to overcome.



A quick look at the progression in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Crucify the Flesh, Renew the Mind

As believers our biggest battles are with our flesh—ungodly bodily desires of the body and mind.

We are to crucify the flesh and renew our mind continuously to live victoriously.

Weapons to Successfully Overcome Temptation

***Whatever you tolerate
will DOMINATE!!!***

A. Power of the Cross

On the Cross, Jesus not only paid for us sins, but He also destroyed sin's power over our lives.

Romans 6:6,14

Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Through Christ's work on the Cross, the Christian is delivered from the results of sin and from the power of sin.

Acknowledging and recognizing and yielding to this truth is the basis of living victoriously.

"I acknowledge that sin and sinful habits have no power over me. I am free from the dominion of sin!"

B. Power of Consecration

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

In Christ we have been sanctified.

Sanctification (set apart, made holy) is what God has already done for me in Christ.

Consecration is what I do to sanctify myself so that I can walk in the natural, what has already been completed in the spirit.

God respects our wills. He will not override our wills. (e.g. Adam and Eve).

My will is involved. I align my will to God's will.

Just like your physical muscle, your will is your "emotional" muscle. You can strengthen your will in the same way you can strengthen your physical muscle. Your will to resist something can be strengthened by the Word, the strength of the Spirit, through prayer, through declaration and through constant practice.

Ephesians 4:27

... nor give place to the devil.

Give the devil no entrance. Keep all doors closed.

Colossians 3:1,2

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Choose to set your affections on godly things.

For example: I pray and say, "God I consecrate my mind, my emotions, my desires, my sexual appetites, all to you." I am thus making a declaration stating that my mind, my emotions, my desires, my sexual appetites are all consecrated to God.

Consecration in daily life:

Stay away

If you don't take the first bite, you won't want another one.

Fasting will shut down your bodily appetites for a few days. But living the fasted life, keeps ungodly desires continuously shut down.

- Keep away from obvious areas of temptation

Psalm 101:3

I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.

- Guard your eyes

Matthew 5:27-30

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. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off 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.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

Abstain from every form of evil.

Self-defence strategy

Set some boundaries to protect yourself.

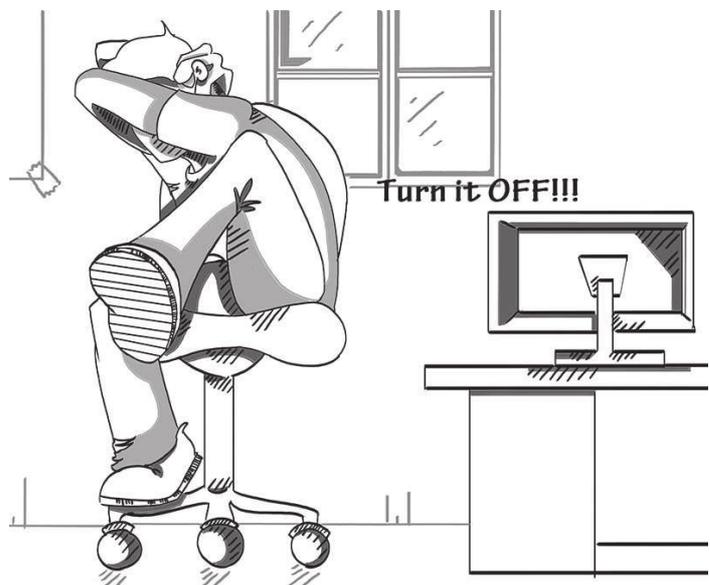
Amputation

If something sinful is on, deal with it severely. It may be painful for a time, but the wound will heal.

Be extra cautious in moments of vulnerability

In moments of great crisis, or great triumph, in moments of depression, loneliness, pain, hurt, of great need, etc. you are vulnerable. Your

If you start playing with fire, you are likely to get burnt..



reasoning is warped. What was once wrong suddenly seems alright. Your will is at its weakest. So be on double guard during such moments.

Know when you are weak and refuse to make any important decisions during such moments and do not expose yourself. Satan's deceptions are strongest during such moments. It is easy for a lie to appear as truth in such moments.

2 Samuel 11:1

It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

C. Power of the Word

Psalm 17:4

Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer.

Psalm 119:9

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

The Word is like fire—it purifies.

The Word is like a hammer—it breaks the hard and difficult parts of me.

The Word is like water—it washes and cleanses me.

... and much more ...

Renew your mind with the Word of God.

Romans 8:5-8

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The carnal mind desires the things of the flesh—but a renewed mind pursues the things of the Spirit.

Mind

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Women

Matthew 5:27-30

“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. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off 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.

Use Scripture verses to guard your mind.

Defend your mind against evil thoughts.

I meditate in the Word concerning the area of my struggle. I confess the Word.

Proverbs 6:25

Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

D. Power of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23 (self-control)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

2 Timothy 1:7 (self-control or discipline)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The Holy Spirit empowers me to have self-control or discipline, self-governing ability. He gives me all the strength I need to master and manage my body.

Romans 8:1-13,26

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, [a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live,

Romans 8:26

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I put to death the ungodly desires of my body.

The Holy Spirit takes ahold of us together against the works of the flesh

Galatians 5:16,24,25

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh, and those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Walk—regulate your entire life—yielded to the Spirit of God.

A small prayer that I have prayed many times: "Holy Spirit, please help me!"

Stay calm at all times. This is important to stay yielded to the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God is like fire—His presence burns up the uncleanness in me. So I ask for more of the fire of the Spirit to burn in me.

Matthew 3:11

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Malachi 3:2-4

"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord, an offering in righteousness. "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years.

- * The anointing breaks the yoke and removes burdens.
- * You are set free in an instant—but you must continue to walk in these spiritual realities to stay free.
- * Prayer aligns our wills to God's will



Hebrews 5:7-9,

Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

Matthew 26:38,39,42

Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless[a] I drink it, Your will be done."

As with Jesus, so also in our lives, very often, we may enter into a time of prayer where our wills are not totally given to doing His will. And as we go through a time of prayer in the Father's presence, very often we emerge, having our wills perfectly aligned to His will. We come from our time of prayer saying "Your will be done." Prayer helps align our wills to the Father's will, so that we are ready to carry out His purposes on the earth.

Romans 8:26,27

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Through the deep intercessions of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit takes a hold of together with us against the works of the flesh. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Declare what the blood of Jesus has done for you.

During His temptation, each time Jesus responded by saying "It is written ..."

The spoken Word is the sword of the Spirit, which we must wield.

E. Power of Declaration

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

1 Peter 5:8,9

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Submit to God. Be strong in the faith. Resist temptations and the powers of darkness bringing those temptations by speaking the word of God. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 3:3-6

Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a



little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

Understand the power of the tongue. The tongue is like a ship's rudder, or a horse's bridle.

Speak the desired outcome of holiness and purity.

Speak to your body declaring it as sanctified and holy. Speak over your emotions, your sexual appetites and bodily desires declaring them to be sanctified and holy unto God.

F. Power of Positive Influence

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

Ephesians 5:11

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

1 Corinthians 5:11

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

The words you hear, the reasoning of those around you, their standards, behavior and choices—also influence you.

Have as role models those who are way ahead of you—those who will challenge you to be better than what you are.

You can break free from long-standing sins that have been controlling you. When faced with temptation—apply these truths to fight it—victory does not come automatically, without a fight.

Some areas of 'bondage' (sinful behavior, addictions) will need additional help to overcome. Speak to your Life Group leader, pastor or mentor to get help to break free.



KEY MEMORY VERSES

1 John 2:15,16

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.

1 Corinthians 10:12,13

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Ephesians 4:23,24

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

