

FOUNDATIONS

Track One : Believer to Disciple

Lesson 04 : Overcoming Temptation

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



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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version.

1. 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 life.

2. Three Sources of Temptation

A, Temptations in the World

I John 2:15,16

The term *world* is often used to describe the community of sinful humanity that possesses a spirit of rebellion against God (I John 5:19). 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" (I John 2:16). Its 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 James 1:27

B, 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.

James 1:13-16

Process:

- Drawn by our own desire
- Enticed - our will is weakened. Greek 'to entrap'.
- Desire has conceived - have 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, have you sinned.

C, Temptations by Satan

Matthew 4:3 1 Thessalonians 3:5 Satan is the tempter.

Satan tempts us in these three realms: lusts of the eyes, lusts of the flesh and the pride of life.

Genesis 3:6	1 John 2:16
Good for food	“Lust of the Flesh”
Pleasing to the eye	“Lust of the Eye”
Desirable for gaining wisdom	“Pride of Life”

Satan's primary method in presenting temptation is deception 2 Corinthians 11:3 Revelation 12:9

3. Jesus Faced and Overcame Temptation

Matthew 4:1-11
Hebrews 4:15
Hebrews 2:18

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, etc.

Satan's thoughts, pictures, imaginations, etc., 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, leading to sin.

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

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

4. We Can Overcome Temptation and Live Victoriously

1 Corinthians 10:12,13

Ephesians 4:23,24 2 Peter 1:3 1 John 5:1,4

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

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

God has given us weapons to over come

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

Thoughts → Imaginations → Reasoning/Arguments → Stronghold

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.

5. Weapons To Successfully Overcome Temptation

#1, Power of The Cross

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

Romans 6:6,14

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!"

#2, Power of Consecration

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

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 will. He will not override our will. (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, 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

Give the devil no entrance. Keep all doors closed.

Colossians 3:1,2

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 make a declaration stating that my mind, my emotions, my desires, my sexual appetites, are all consecrated to God.

Consecration in daily life:

A, 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 “I will set before my eyes no vile thing” (Ps. 101:3).
- Guard your eyes Matthew 5:27-30 1 Thessalonians 5:22

B, Self-defense strategy – set some boundaries to protect yourself.

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

D, 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 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 (a) refuse to make any important decisions during such moments and (b) 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)

#3, Power of The Word

Psalm 17:4 Psalm 119:9

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

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

Application:

Using scriptures to guard your mind. Defend your mind against evil thoughts.

Mind Philippians 4:8, etc.

Women Matthew 5:27-30, Proverbs 6:25, etc.

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

I confess the Word.

#4, Power of The Spirit

Galatians 5:22,23 (self-control) 2 Timothy 1:7 (self-control or discipline)

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

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

Romans 8:26

The Holy Spirit takes a hold of together with us against the works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16,24,25

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, Malachi 3:2-4

Don't quench the Spirit.

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

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.

#5, Power of Prayer

Prayer aligns your will to God's will

Hebrews 5:7-9 Matthew 26:38,39,42

As with Jesus, so also in our lives, very often, we may enter into a time of prayer where our will is 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 will perfectly aligned to His will. We come from our time of prayer saying "your will be done". Prayer helps align our will to the Father's will, so that we are ready to carry out His purposes on the earth.

Romans 8:26,27

Through the deep intercessions of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit takes a hold of together with us against the works of the flesh.

#6, Power of Declaration

Revelation 12:11

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.

1 Peter 5:8,9 James 4:7

Submit to God. Be strong in the faith. Resist temptations and the powers of darkness bringing those temptations by speaking the word of God.

James 3:3-6

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, bodily desires declaring them to be sanctified and holy unto God.

#7, Power of Positive Influence

1 Corinthians 15:33

Ephesians 5:11 1 Corinthians 5:11

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

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

6.Application

- 1, You can live an overcoming life
- 2, You can break free from long standing sins that have been controlling you
- 3, When faced with temptation - apply these truths to fight - victory does not come automatically, without a fight.
- 4, Some areas of 'bondage' (sinful behaviour, addictions) will need additional help to overcome. Speak to your Life Group leader, pastor or mentor to get help to break free.

7.Reflection

- 1, How can you best prepare yourself to overcome temptation
- 2, Think of a 'hypothetical' situation where you are faced with temptation. Work through on how you would fight/resist this temptation (A)at that moment and (B)if it persists
- 3, Are there areas of temptation/sin that you fall into because of the kind of company/friends you have? What changes can you make in order to keep yourself from falling into sin.