

7 PRACTICAL STEPS FOR OVERCOMING SIN AND TEMPTATION IN YOUR LIFE

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I have had contact from a number of people over the years who have been struggling with sin and temptation, asking for advice in overcoming sin. So I decided to create this page to give practical steps in helping people overcome sin and temptation. We hear a lot of sermons being preached, saying *"have faith, just trust in Jesus."* And they go no further in giving practical advice for overcoming sin. There are many brethren who do believe, but they are still struggling with sin. So it is my prayer that this page will be a helping hand, by God's grace, for those struggling with sin. The following are practical steps to take:

Please note that every step needs to be accomplished **through faith and abiding in Christ**, as we cannot do anything without Christ ... *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."* (John 15:5)

1. **DESIRE TO OVERCOME** - The very first step in overcoming sin is to have a desire to stop sinning and gain the victory. If we have little desire to stop sinning, then it will never happen. But if you do have a desire to stop sinning, then the Lord, through faith, will be ready to help you ... *"In the work of overcoming sinful habits, special grace will be given to all that **sincerely desire it.**"* (Bible Echo, April 1, 1889 par. 9). It is no simple matter overcoming sinful habits and practices. The work can only be accomplished with the help of divine grace. And the Lord is ready to help all who truly desire to overcome.

2. **PRAYER OF FAITH** - This is a most basic but most needed step in overcoming sin and temptation. If you are already praying for help with this, then do not stop sending up prayers of faith to the Lord - and **BELIEVE** that the Lord will answer your prayers. But there is another practical and very important step to take with prayer. When you are tempted, learn to get straight on your knees (if possible) and pray for the Lord's help, and the key is, **don't get back up until you have received the power to resist that temptation.** The apostle Paul tells us to *"pray without ceasing."* (1 Thess.5:17). Many of us fail because we don't spend enough time in prayer. So learn to pray more. Get into a good habit of spending much time in prayer, and as I said above, when you are tempted, remain on your knees (if possible) in prayer until you have the power to overcome that moment of temptation.

Remember Jacob? ... *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day ... And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, **I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.** And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."* (Genesis 32:24-28) - Jacob did not let God go until God blessed Him. We need the same earnest, humble attitude!

*James 5:17 ... 'Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he **prayed earnestly** that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.'*

3. TRAIN THE WILL POWER - This is something that God has given to all of us, and we must learn to exercise our will power. It's like exercising the body, if we don't exercise, we become weak and unfit. The same applies to our will power. When we don't exercise it, the power of our own will becomes weak. But if we learn to exercise it, then it will grow stronger and stronger and we will begin to find that by God's grace, we CAN resist those temptations we so often give into.

"Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith." (Steps to Christ, p.48)

*Daniel 1:8 ... 'But Daniel **purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.'*

Do you see what Daniel did? He '*purposed in his heart.*' In other words, he used the power of his will to say no to the king's food and wine. And through that RIGHT CHOICE God blessed him and helped him increase in faith, knowledge and wisdom (Daniel 1:17).

"The necessity for the men of this generation to call to their aid the power of the will, strengthened by the grace of God, in order to withstand the temptations of Satan and resist the least indulgence of perverted appetite is twice as great as it was several generations ago." (Testimonies to the Church, Vol.3, p.488)

So exercise the will power. **Exercise your power of CHOICE.** Start saying no to temptation and by co-operating with Christ and aligning your will with God's will, divine strength will be imparted to you from heaven to resist.

4. FOCUS YOUR MIND ON CHRIST - This I believe has been the most powerful tool for myself in overcoming sin. The more I have focused on Christ, the more that temptations have faded away and I find I am not tempted like I used to be, because my mind is more filled with Christ. Jesus said in John 15:5 that without abiding in Him, we can do nothing. And this is so true. So we must learn to abide in Christ each day, fixing our minds on Him, and as we do this, **through Bible study, prayer, our thoughts and actions,** our worldly desires start to fade away. It is a miracle that Christ performs in us through the Spirit.

*Romans 12:2 ...'And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'*

2 Corinthians 3:18 ...'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

*"Christ must be our only master, abiding in our hearts by living faith, that we may be laborers together with God. **We should seek to know more of him day by day, dwelling upon his matchless charms, till by beholding, we become changed into his glorious image.** We are to keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our salvation." (Review and Herald, September 27, 1892).*

When we fully submit to Jesus Christ, our hearts are united with His heart. Our will is merged with His will. Our minds become one with His mind, and all our thoughts are brought into captivity to Him (2 Corinthians 10:5), and His life is lived out in us (Galatians 2:20). So let us fix our eyes and our minds upon the Lord every day.

5. REMOVE THE TEMPTATION - Sin is a very serious issue. And we should be willing to do all we can to remove sin from our lives. Jesus even said in Matthew 5:30, that if your *"right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee."* This is how serious sin is. Now Jesus isn't expecting us to literally cut off our hands and pluck out our eyes. He is simply saying *"remove the temptation that causes you to sin."* - Is it the internet that causes you to sin (lust)? Then get off the internet, or contact your internet provider and ask them to block the websites that tempt you. REMOVE that temptation. Is it a certain place you go to? Then stop going there. Do certain people tempt you? Then stop spending time with them. Make active steps in removing these temptations from your daily life.

6. STAY ACTIVE - Many of us fall into temptation and sin because we are idle. And who will find something for us to do when we are idle? Satan. It is when we are idle that we fall into diverse temptations. So the key to this is to stay active. But not active in ourselves. We need to be active in the Lord and His work. There is much for us to do in these closing scenes of earth's history. We must study like never before. We must seek to save the lost through sacrifice and labour for the Lord. There is much work to be done for the kingdom. But there are also innocent activities that we can be employed in to keep us busy. Walking, gardening, growing our own food, etc. There is no excuse for idleness. But if we are willing and place ourselves in a position where the Lord can use us, then He will guide us and show us what to do.

The Lord has given us all 'talents' to use for His kingdom (Matthew 25:14-30). So let us use those talents and stay active for the Lord.

7. SHARE YOUR BURDENS WITH THE BRETHREN - The apostle James says - *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* (James 5:16) - There is much help in sharing our burdens and seeking the prayers of our brethren. This is one reason why the Lord brings His people together, so that we can help one another. There is no shame in seeking the help of our brethren. We are all in need of help. But most importantly, seek the help of our Brother Jesus Christ. Our earthly brethren can help to a certain degree, but Jesus has the power to change us and give us the VICTORY!

I pray that taking these steps will help you overcome your sin in Christ Jesus. And if you have any more helpful steps that are not listed above, then please get in touch via email and I will add any more helpful steps you have to this page.