

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

A **MANNAHOUSE** RESOURCE



INTRODUCTION

The Christian is in a unique position in this present life. We are members of the kingdom of God. We have been adopted into God's eternal family. We have a high calling in Christ.

Yet we are still living in a world that is hostile to the God we serve. It is ruled by Satan, the prince and power of the air.

Because of this, we must face temptations that work to destroy our Christian commitment. These temptations come in many different forms that the believer must identify if he is to have a victory over them.

In this booklet, we will study this subject of temptation and see how God has provided for our victory.

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THE HIGH CALLING

In Philippians 3:14 the Apostle Paul proclaims, “**I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (KJV).

Just as an Olympic runner gives himself to those disciplines that are necessary to win the race, so **Paul was willing to do whatever was required to live up to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.** He exhorts others to have this same determination in I Corinthians 9:24 when he says, “*Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*”

Being a member of God’s family is both a privilege and a responsibility. We have a new life and destiny. We are to live up to the calling of being sons and daughters of the living God.

WHAT DOES THIS CALLING INVOLVE?

- It involves **both doing God's will**, and **expressing His likeness** in our character:
- "**As servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart**" (Eph. 6:6).
- "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His son***" (Rom. 8:29)

It is impossible for us to fulfill these two conditions in our own strength. God has given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfill this calling. However, we still encounter many temptations along the way that can cause us to compromise this high calling in God. **We must identify these and know how to deal with them.**

WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

Temptation is being enticed to do wrong through the promise of pleasure or gain. The Christian is tempted when he is enticed to do something that would hurt or hinder God's purpose in his life.

There are many things in this life that could offer us a temporary pleasure or gain that must be resisted since they are contrary to the will of God. **Giving in to these temptations will hurt or destroy us spiritually.**

We must **choose the spiritual gain and reward** that obedience to God's will brings us rather than the temporary pleasures of sin. Moses chose "*rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin*" (Heb. 11:25). The scriptures further say that he did so because "*he looked to the reward*" (Heb. 11:26).

THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

The scriptures identify Satan as a major source of temptation. He deliberately works against the purposes of God. He is called “*the tempter*”, “*your adversary*”, and the father of lies (I Thess. 3:5; I Pet. 4:8; John 8:44). **He is a master deceiver** who initiated the first temptation in the garden of Eden.

Not all temptation, though, is a direct attack by Satan. The fall resulted in all of mankind receiving a sin nature. **This fallen nature is filled with lusts or evil and excessive desires.** The born again Christian still contends with the desires of the old nature (see Gal. 5:17). **Most of our temptations are a result of these desires being enticed.**

IN WHAT AREAS ARE WE TEMPTED?

“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 John 2:16).

There are many different forms of temptation. However, **all temptations will fall into one of these areas:** the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. These areas are of the world and not of the Father.

Satan is called “*the god of this world*” (II Cor. 4:4, KJV). He seeks to set man’s fulfillment above the will of God. Human pride and fleshly desires are a normal part of the spirit of this world.

Temptations works upon these three areas of the old nature to bring us into sin and bondage.

Let’s examine each of these areas more closely.

1. THE LUST OF THE FLESH

The lust of the flesh has to do with our bodily appetites. God gave us our appetites and the pleasure associated with them, but He has also made His will clear in regards to the use and control of these appetites.

Sin has perverted these into excessive and selfish desires. Sexual immorality, drunkenness, gluttony, and drug addiction are some of the sins of the flesh.

Most of us were given over to these areas of fleshly lusts before our conversion to Christ. **We must resist the temptation to give in** to these areas anymore. We are told in Galatians 5:24 that *“those that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”*

2. THE LUST OF THE EYES

The lust of the eyes is an excessive desire for the things of this world. The world appeals to this area like a Christmas tree enchants a small child. It attempts to capture our attention, getting us to **put material things in the place of God.**

There is nothing wrong with money or possessions in themselves. It is our relationship to them that causes problems. Matthew 6:33 commands us to **“seek first the kingdom of God.”** I John 2:15 warns us to **“not love the world or the things in the world.”**

Failure to *“set your affection on things above”* (Col. 3:2, KJV) will make you vulnerable to many temptations. **Covetousness, greed, idolatry, love of money, and financial dishonesty are a result of the lust of the eyes.**

3. THE PRIDE OF LIFE

The pride of life is the desire for self-glory. It comes from the self-centered tendency of our old nature.

We have each been given gifts, talents, and abilities by God. **The pride of life would use these apart from God,** or fail to give Him the glory for them.

The pride of life is tempted by worldly honors, reputation, and position. To achieve these, the world usually requires a compromise in our standards.

The Christians should **use his gifts and abilities for the glory of God,** remembering that “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 1:31).

JESUS OVERCAME TEMPTATION

In Hebrews 4:15 we find that Jesus ***“was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*** Because of this, He was able to say to His disciples, *“Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

At the beginning of His ministry, He was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness. There He was tempted by the devil for forty days. **Satan enticed Him in all three areas:** the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In each case, **Jesus resisted him and countered with the Word of God.** On the following page, we see the temptations He faced and how he responded.

THE LUST OF THE FLESH

→ **Temptation:** Having not eaten for forty days, Satan tempted Christ to turn a stone into a loaf of bread.

Jesus Responded: *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God'"* (Luke 4:4).

THE LUST OF THE EYES

→ **Temptation:** Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of this world if He would worship him.

Jesus Responded: *"It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve'"* (Luke 4:8).

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

→ **Temptation:** Satan tempted Christ to jump off the temple in Jerusalem to prove that the angels would protect Him.

Jesus Responded: *"It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'"* (Luke 4:12).

IS TEMPTATION SIN?

*"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**" (James 1:14,15).*

We are tempted when the world entices us through the flesh to do something against the will of God. Temptation is common to every believer.

Temptation, itself, is not sin. Jesus, Himself, was tempted. **When lust conceives, it brings forth sin.** This happens when our will acts in agreement with the temptation.

Temptation endeavors to capture our will and bring us into sin. Once this occurs, we give ourselves over to sinful thoughts, words, or deeds.

CAN I LIVE WITHOUT SINNING?

1 John 1:8 states that **"if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** The flesh is the seat of sin. Therefore, total freedom from sin will have to wait until we shed these mortal bodies and *"shall have put on immortality"* (1 Cor. 15:54, KJV).

However, the scriptures teach us that **"sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace"** (Rom. 6:14). A life lived *"under grace"* gives us the desire to live for God, and the power to resist sin. If we should sin, God's forgiveness is available so that we would not be overcome with condemnation (see Rom. 8:1).

Each Christian should be growing in his victory over temptation and sin. We are *"more than conquerors through Him who loved us"* (Rom. 8:37).

YOU CAN OVERCOME TEMPTATION

“And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (I Cor. 10:13, NIV).

God’s Word promises us a way to triumph over every temptation.

Temptation is always begins in our thoughts. The key to victory is to resist it right there. **We must not give in to entertaining sinful thoughts.** If we do, we must repent and receive forgiveness (see I John 1:9).

However, as long as the battle is kept in our minds and we do not sin in our actions, we are on our way to victory. **As we continue to resist, the temptation will lose its power.**

On the following pages of this booklet, we will see how we can triumph over temptation.

1. BUILD A STRONG SPIRITUAL LIFE

*“Finally, my brethren, **BE STRONG IN THE LORD**, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).*

Building a strong spiritual life is “preventative maintenance” when it comes to resisting temptation. Jesus could resist all temptation because of His vital relationship to the Father.

Temptation can be compared to rocks in a stream bed. The water is like our spiritual life. If the level of the water is low, the rocks stick out and are easy to bump into. When the water is raised, the rocks are submerged and the boat easily floats over them.

A strong spiritual life keeps us from being susceptible to many temptations. We build this strength through consistent prayer, worship, Bible reading, and fellowship.

2. AVOID HARMFUL INFLUENCES

“Do not love the world or the things in the world” (1 John 2:15)

Human beings can be subtly influenced by what they are exposed to. Knowing this, **we should protect ourselves from what would adversely affect us.**

Much of the music, literature, television, and movie programming in our society is polluted. We should control as much of this influence as is reasonably possible. We can do this by setting standards for the kind of entertainment we will participate in.

3. STAND ON THE WORD

“For **THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND POWERFUL**, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12).

Jesus responded to every temptation in the wilderness by taking His stand on the Word of God. **Our commitment to God’s Word allows us to rise above the influences of this world.**

I John 5:4 says “*and this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith.*” Where our faith is placed determines our response to temptations.

Therefore, we must be familiar with what the Bible teaches. We should **memorize scriptures** that apply to areas we are tempted in. As soon as temptation enters our thoughts, we should **counter with the Word of God.**

4. FLEE FROM TEMPTATION

“**FLEE ALSO YOUTHFUL LUSTS**; *but pursue righteousness*”
(I Tim. 2:22).

There are occasions when the **best way to handle temptation is to get away from it**. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar’s wife to commit adultery, it says that he “*fled and ran outside*” (Gen. 39:12).

Likewise, if our job, living situation, or other activities are causing us to stumble, we need to make a change.

God will always care for us if we are making choices in accordance with His will. We are told to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Matt. 6:33).

5. RESIST THE DEVIL

“Therefore submit to God. **RESIST THE DEVIL** and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Satan will continue to press us until he is convinced that our commitment to God will not waver. **Once he sees that we will not give in, he will flee from us.**

He usually will not leave the first time you quote him a scripture. Instead, **he will test your commitment to the Word.**

Temptations often involve periods of time. We are told that “blessed is the man who endures temptation” (James 1:12), and that “the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth” (I Pet. 1:7, KJV). **Through these temptations, our faith is enlarged** and we learn how to draw from God’s strength.

WHAT IF I FALL?

"IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" (1 John 2:15).

The sincere Christian takes sin very seriously. We want to live for God. If we do fall into temptation, our hearts are grieved.

However, **God makes provision for the fall.** If we confess and repent of our sin, **He will forgive us and cleanse** us from all guilt.

We then must forgive ourselves and go forward. Proverbs 24:16 says, "for a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again."

We must not fall under the condemnation of the devil who is called "*the accuser of our brethren*" (Rev. 12:10). He will attempt to drown you in discouragement and a sense of failure.

CONCLUSION

Christians are called to be overcomers. We are given a promise in Revelations 2:7: *“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*

Though we may experience occasional falls and temporary setbacks, as we yield ourselves to God, He will help us to become overcomers. **Rewards for our obedience will be great.**

For a brief summary of the main points of this booklet, read the words in bold print on each page.

ASSIGNMENT

Memorize a scripture that declares God’s will in the area you are being tempted in. Use it to counter any attacks of the enemy.



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9200 NE Fremont St
Portland, Oregon 97220

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Tigard, Oregon 97223

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Vancouver, Washington 98684

EUGENE CAMPUS

89780 N Game Farm Road
Eugene, Oregon 97408

ONLINE SERVICE

[live.mannahouse.church](https://www.live.mannahouse.church)
Youtube and Facebook

WWW.MANNAHOUSE.CHURCH 503.255.2224



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WRITTEN BY: TERRY D. EDWARDS

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