

THE IMPORTANCE OF OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

(Part One)

➤ **God has so much in store for every person's life. However the moment we are born, we are immediately engaged in an ongoing spiritual war with the adversary of our soul the Devil and his fallen angels. The Devil will continually try and:**

- **Stop people from coming to Christ to receive the gift of eternal life**
- **To destroy human lives and relationships**
- **To rob all people of all that God has planned for their lives, AND**
- **TO STOP CHRISTIANS FROM FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR THEIR LIFE AND MAKING A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD FOR ETERNITY**

➤ **Jesus made this very clear when He said,**

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

➤ **When God created man he gave man dominion over all the earth. We see this in the book of Genesis**

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
(Genesis 1:26)

“So God created man in His own image: in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:27-28)

➤ **The Devil in the form of a serpent then tempted Eve to disobey God and to take of the forbidden tree along with her husband Adam, to cause man to forfeit their dominion over all the earth so that he could become the administrator of this world**

➤ **We see this in Genesis Chapter Three.**

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

“but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
(Genesis 3:1-5)

- **In this passage of Scripture we see the typical way in which the Devil causes people to disobey God and to make wrong choices in life:**
 - **The Devil caused Eve to question what God had said to them. So too many people have been tempted to question and disobey God’s Word (the Bible) with often tragic consequences**
 - **The Devil made out that God was holding something back from them. So too the enemy will try and convince people that if they live for God they will miss out on something**
 - **He outright lied to Eve when he said that they would not die if they were to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Devil is known as the father of lies and will continually try and deceive people to make wrong choices in life. (There are cemeteries everywhere full of people who have died – The Devil is a liar)**

- **The Devil hinted to Eve that she could be like God if she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Many people are tempted to think that they do not need God and like to do things independent of God and be in charge of their own life**

- **In short Eve and then Adam were tempted to disobey God. So too the enemy will always try and tempt people to do their own thing and to disobey God**

- **Tragically Adam and Eve succumbed to the Devil's temptation**

“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.” (Genesis 3:6)

- **As a result we see the fall of man and sickness, shame, guilt and death entering into the human race AND MAN FORFEITING THEIR DOMINION OVER THIS NOW FALLEN WORLD to Satan who now becomes the administrator of this now-cursed realm**

- **This is the reason why we see in much of this world so much pain and suffering and injustices**

- **So we see in Genesis Chapter Three man forfeiting their dominion over the earth to Satan and seeing the beginning of the struggle that man has been going through ever since**

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” – therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:22-24)

- **AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE NOW PART OF GOD’S KINGDOM AND CAN ENJOY ALL OF THE BLESSINGS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS**

- **The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3)

- **FOR THIS REASON IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE DO NOT ALLOW THE DEVIL TO ROB US OF THE FULLNESS OF WHAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE BY CONTINUALLY SUCCUMBING TO HIS TEMPTATIONS**

➤ **Over today and next week I will be looking at some keys that can help us to remain strong during times of temptation and to help us to avoid unnecessary temptations so that we will CONTINUALLY EXPERIENCE THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT JESUS SPOKE OF**

➤ **Jesus Himself was tempted in every way as we are, but was without sin**

➤ **In the book of Hebrews we read,**

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14-16)

In the gospel of Mark we read,

“Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.” (Mark 1:11-13)

➤ **Overcoming temptations is a great key to living a victorious and overcoming Christian life and to remaining strong in our faith**

Jesus Himself said,

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”
(1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

In the book of James we read,

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” **(James 1:12)**

➤ **God has much in store for every believer's life**

➤ **But all Christians are also in a continual relentless warfare with a very real adversary the Devil**

The Apostle Peter made this clear when he wrote,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” **(1 Peter 5:8-9)**

➤ **The Devil and his fallen angels will continually try and oppose us and bring temptations and discouragement into our life to**

I) **Undermine our faith**

II) **To destroy our lives and families**

III) **To complicate our lives**

IV) **To get us back into slavery to sin and to old addictions and habits, and**

V) **To stop us from following God's plan for our life and from living for the Kingdom cause**

➤ **The Devil knows that every believer has the potential to make a great difference in this world for eternity.**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)**

➤ **For this reason all Christians are in a continual spiritual warfare during their time here on earth**

➤ **In the book of Acts we read,**

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”
(Acts 14:22b)

➤ **Jesus Himself said,**

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

➤ **In His explanation of the Parable of the Sower Jesus said,**

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.” (Luke 8:11-13)

➤ **In fact the more we wish to live wholeheartedly for the Lord the greater the warfare and temptations we will experience in life**

➤ **This has been phrased as, Greater Levels, Greater Devils**

➤ **This is why we must always allow the Lord to develop character in our life so that we can be prepared for promotion in His Kingdom**

➤ **The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy**

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

➤ **Greater levels of Christian ministry will bring greater levels of temptation and warfare**

➤ **We are ALL also living in times of great lawlessness and in a world full of ungodly entertainment and influences as we see the imminent return of the Lord**

➤ **The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

➤ **JESUS HIMSELF ALSO SAID,**

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34-36)

➤ **GOD HAS PROMISED THAT HE WILL ALWAYS MAKE A WAY OF ESCAPE WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“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.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

➤ **Because we have a very real adversary who is out to undermine our faith and to destroy our lives and to rob us of embracing the fullness of all that God has planned for our life, we need to be vigilant and disciplined in our walk with the Lord**

The Apostle Paul knew the importance of remaining strong to the end. He wrote,

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27)

➤ **I WILL NOW QUICKLY LOOK AT SOME CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES THAT CAN HELP US TO LIVE AN OVERCOMING AND VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE**

1. The importance of maintaining our first love for Jesus.

- **Having a lifestyle of worship helps us to keep a soft heart and conscience towards God.**
- **As the song goes, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."**
- **The more time that we spend fellowshiping with the LORD, the more we become like Him.**
- **King David wrote,**

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)
- **Our strength to overcome temptations comes from the LORD**

➤ **The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)

➤ **His strength is made perfect in our weakness**

➤ **More than ever before having an INTIMATE relationship with the LORD is crucial if we are to continually overcome the temptations that come our way in life**

➤ **King David, a man after God’s own heart, wrote,**

“O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.”

“Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.” (Psalm 63:1-5)

2. Choosing our friends carefully and being careful about who we associate with

- **The friends that we have will greatly influence the degree to which we walk in victory as believers**
- **Wrong friends can cause us to miss the best that God has planned for our life**
- **Wrong friends can cause us to stumble back into sin and old habits**
- **We must always be careful to choose our friends wisely**
- **The Apostle Paul wrote,**
“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”
(1 Corinthians 15:33)
- **In the book of Proverbs we read,**
“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” **(Proverbs 12:26)**
- **In Psalm one we read,**
“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.”
(Psalm 1:1-2)