



The New Life in Christ

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature..." II Corinthians 5:17
Course III, Lesson 23

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

Key Verse:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I Corinthians 10:13

In our last lesson we learned of the mighty weapon of prayer which God has placed in our hands. Through prayer, the child of God can conquer all things. But there is one thing which takes the weapon of prayer out of our hands. What is it? It is SIN.

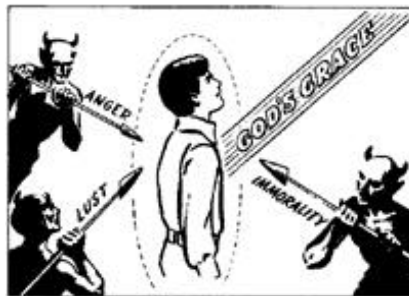
When we are yielding to sin, God will not hear our prayers. Satan knows this, and this is one reason why he works so hard at tempting Christians to sin.

Every Christian must learn how to overcome temptation, because we will be tempted. But, by God's grace, we can overcome temptation. In this lesson we are going to learn how to do this. First, let us answer some questions about sin and temptation.

Can Satan make us sin? No, he cannot. Satan can tempt us to sin, but he cannot make us sin.

Is temptation sin? No, it is not. The Lord Jesus was tempted, and we know that He did not sin. The Bible says that He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

We need to be clear on this point -- TEMPTATION IS NOT SIN. Satan likes to condemn Christians even when they have not sinned. He likes to make them feel guilty for having been tempted by some sin, but it is not a sin to be tempted.



"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation..."

When does sin come in? Sin comes in when we say "yes" to the temptation. We sin when we give in to temptation.

The Bible speaks of some sins which are outward sins, and it speaks of other sins which are inward sins.

By outward sins, we mean such sins as cursing, lying, stealing, immorality, drunkenness, murder. No Christian should be guilty of these sins. If these sins are still in a person's life, there is no evidence that he has been born again.

But, sad to say, Christians, as well as unsaved people, are guilty of inward sins. By inward sins we mean such sins as pride, jealousy, envy, selfishness, unforgiveness,

hatred, lust. These are the secret sins which the eye of man cannot see. But God sees them, and they are hateful in His sight. We must learn how to have victory over them.

Every Christian has a besetting sin. This is the sin that you are most tempted with. Satan knows your weakest point, and this is where he tempts you most. To have victory over this sin and the other sin in your life, you must learn how to overcome temptation.

Overcoming Temptation

To overcome temptation, you must do four things:

1. Count on your death with Christ.
2. Count on Christ's life in you.
3. Arm yourself with the Word of God.
4. Make no provision for the flesh.

Let us consider these four things:

① Count on Your Death with Christ

As Christians, you and I have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness where sin reigns. How were we delivered? We were delivered by our death with Christ. God put us in Christ on the cross. When Christ died, we died with Him; when He was buried, we were buried with Him; when He rose again, we rose again with Him. The Bible says,

"Giving thanks unto the Father ... Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Colossians 1:12,13

What does this mean?

It means that, in Christ, we have been set free from the kingdom of darkness where sin reigns. We are no longer under the authority of sin. This is a great fact, and we are to count on it. The Bible says,

*"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 6:11*

Since we have been delivered from sin's authority, sin has no right to rule over us. We don't have to obey sin any longer.

How do we obtain our freedom from serving sin? By claiming it! The Bible says,

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Romans 6:12

Let us think of a young man who enlists in the army. He is under the authority of the army. He has to work hard and obey his superior officer. The years pass by, and, one day, he receives his discharge from the army.

Later on that same day, he meets his superior officer, and the officer says to him, "Joe, I want you to go back and sweep out the barracks and clean and polish the guns." Joe turns to him and says respectfully, "No more of that for me, sir." The officer says, "What do you mean, Joe? For four years now you have been obeying my orders. Why do you say, 'No more of that for me'?"

"Because," says Joe, "I have my discharge." Joe counted on the fact that he had his discharge and

claimed his freedom from military service.

We have our discharge!

As believers, we have our discharge from serving sin. The Bible says, "He that hath died is freed from sin" -- he has his discharge.

God says to you, "You have your discharge from serving sin. Now, count on this fact and claim your freedom. Don't let sin reign over you any longer."

You must obey God. When sin comes to you, say to it, "I recognize your presence and your pull, but I refuse to obey you. On the basis of God's clear Word, I count myself dead to you through Jesus Christ my Lord. You shall not rule over me."

This is taking God at His word. This breaks the power of sin in your life.

② Count on Christ's Life in You

Temptation comes to us, not only from Satan, but also from within us. The Bible says,

*"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."
James 1:14*

We have within us something which is always trying to pull us down into sin. The Bible calls it "the law of sin which is in our members."

What is a "law"? A law is something that happens over and

over. For instance, we speak of "the law of gravity." What do we mean by this? We mean that there is a force that always causes an object to fall to the ground when it is released. No matter where you go, this happens; so we call it "the law of gravity."

We have within us a sin principle which is always trying to pull us down into sin. This is why the Bible calls it "the law of sin."

Can we overcome the law of sin by our own efforts? No, we cannot. God must deliver us from sin's power.

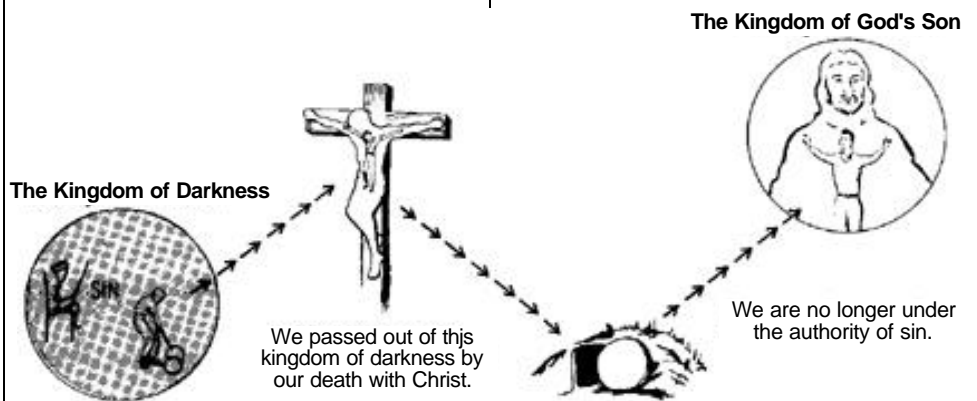
How Does God Deliver Us?

God delivers us by giving us Christ. His life overcomes the law of sin and death in us.

Let us think about the law of gravity again. We know that the law of gravity is always operating. It holds us fast to the ground. We cannot fly without some mechanical device.

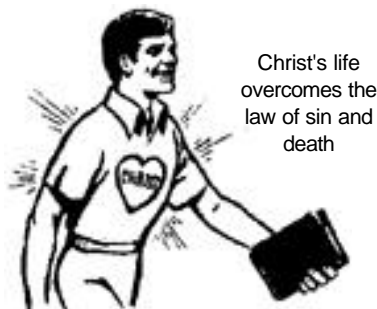
But birds fly. Does this mean that the law of gravity does not operate on them? No, the law of gravity pulls them downward just as it does us. But birds have a kind of life that overcomes the law of gravity. The "law" of a bird's life is to fly.

Now let us come back to our situation. We have "the law of sin in our members," but we also have Christ living in us, and there is a "law" to His life. The law of Christ's life is to overcome sin. His life always triumphs over sin. And his



life in us overcomes the law of sin and death. The Bible says,

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2



This is wonderful, but there is one condition which we must meet if we want Christ's life to overcome sin in us: We must trust Him to do this. We are going to learn more about this in our next lesson.

③ Arm Yourself with the Word of God

We have already learned about the mighty weapon of prayer which God has given us. But God has given us another weapon to use against Satan. This weapon is the Word of God. The Bible says,

"Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Ephesians 6:17

When the Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He used this weapon to defeat Satan. Three times Satan tempted the Lord Jesus, and three times Jesus answered him with the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus used exactly the right verse to meet each temptation of Satan. When Satan tried to get Jesus to worship him by offering Him all the Kingdoms of this world, Jesus did not quote the 23rd Psalm to him. This is a beautiful passage of Scripture, but it was not the weapon to use against that temptation. Instead, Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Lord Jesus defeated Satan because He had memorized the Word of God, and He knew how to use it. Do you see why it is so important for you to memorize Scripture? You must arm yourself with the Word of God.

Here are some victory verses. Learn what they mean. Memorize them. Use them against Satan.



"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

God's Word is the truth. When you know the truth about sin, Satan, and temptation, you can be set free from their power over you.

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14

Sin shall not continue to rule over you. Why? Because you are "under grace," where God's mighty power works in your behalf. Christ lives in you. He will enable you to overcome sin's power.

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7b

Learn to resist Satan. Resist him with the Word of God. Resist Him in Jesus' name. Resist him in the victory of Calvary. Remind him that he is defeated and tell him to leave you alone.

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4

Jesus Christ is the One who is in you. Satan is the one who is "in the world." This verse says that Jesus Christ who is in you is greater than Satan who is in the world.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and

of a sound mind."
2 Timothy 1:7

The spirit of fear is from Satan. Don't accept it! God does not give us the spirit of fear; instead, He gives us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6

If you are God's child, God has begun a good work in you. He will continue that work until the day you go to meet Him. You can count on this.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

The Lord Jesus gives me strength to do whatever He wants me to do. Why? Because He lives in me, and He is the One who does it.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Ephesians 6:10

We are not to be strong in ourselves but we are to be strong in the Lord. This means that we are to count on Him and His mighty power to give us victory.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

Child of God, God is for you. You can be sure of this because He says so. Since God is for you, it doesn't matter who is against you.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...." Romans 8:28

Some things taken by themselves may not seem good to us, but we know God is working all things together for the good of the person who truly loves Him. We can know this because God says so.

④ Make No Provision for the Flesh

To overcome temptation, you must not make any provision for the flesh. This means that you must not do things or get into situations that make it easy for you to sin. The Bible says,

*"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."
Romans 13:14*

Here are some suggestions that will help you overcome temptation.

Avoid friends and companions who lead you to do wrong things. Learn how to say "NO!" The Bible says, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Proverbs 1:10

Be careful of what you look at. You cannot help seeing some evil things, but it is the second look that leads to sin.

Guard your thought life. A clean mind is priceless. You cannot have a clean mind if you read dirty magazines and look at dirty shows.

Don't allow evil thoughts to remain in your mind. You may not be able to keep Satan from putting an evil thought into your mind, but you can reject it immediately. As someone has said, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair."

Fill your mind with God's Word. The Bible says, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11

Know your weak points. Guard these areas of your life especially. One of the best ways to handle sexual temptation is to run from it. This is what Joseph did when he was tempted by an evil woman.

Don't go to any place you wouldn't want to be in when Jesus comes.

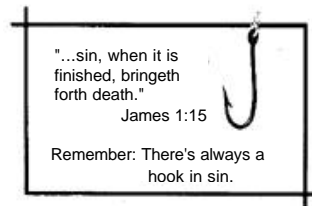
Don't do anything that you would not want to be doing when Jesus comes.

Confess sin immediately. Don't remain in defeat.

Look to the Lord to deliver you from temptation. The psalmist said,

*"Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net."
Psalm 25:15*

Don't be deceived by Satan. The Bible says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." If it is not from God and in God's way, it is sin. Recognize it as such and refuse it.



God's Wonderful Promise

God has given us a wonderful promise in I Corinthians 10:13. Every Christian should memorize this verse:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

What does this verse say? It says that other people are tempted with the same things that tempt you. "But God is faithful." This means that you can count on Him to do what He says He will do. What does God promise here? He promises that He will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able to bear. He promises to make a way of escape for you, so that you don't have to sin.

You can have victory over every temptation. God says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Remember these four things:

1. Count on your death with Christ.
2. Count on Christ's life in you.
3. Arm yourself with the Word of God.
4. Make no provision for the flesh.

QUESTIONS PAGES

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Turn to the Question Page and fill in the answers for this lesson before going on to the next lesson.
2. When you have studied the lessons and have completed the Question Page, carefully detach the question page.
3. Print your name and address in the space provided at the bottom of the Question Page. Also, print your name and return address in the top left corner of the return envelope.
4. Fold the Question Page(s) and return them to the correspondence school. Place a First Class stamp on the envelope and make sure the correspondence school name and address is printed on the return envelope before mailing it back with your question pages.

Don't forget to write in your name and return address

Send in your Answer Sheets only!

Please study the lesson carefully before filling in the answers.

QUESTIONS

1. Can Satan make us sin? _____. Satan can _____ us to sin, but he cannot _____ us sin.
2. Is temptation sin? _____. Was Jesus tempted? _____. Did He ever sin? _____. Sin comes in when we say _____ to the temptation.
3. Two classes of sins are _____ sins and _____ sins. Can we have victory over every sin in our life?_____.
4. To overcome temptation, you must:
 - (1) _____.
 - (2) _____.
 - (3) _____.
 - (4) _____.
5. Has Christ delivered us from the kingdom of darkness where sin reigns? _____. Does sin have any right to rule over us? _____.
6. How do we obtain our freedom from serving sin? _____.
7. God delivers us from "the law of sin and death" by _____. _____ overcomes the law of sin and death.
8. God has given us two mighty weapons to use against Satan. One is _____, and the other is _____.
9. To overcome temptation, you must make no provision for _____. This means that _____.
10. Are other people tempted with the same things that tempt you? _____. Is God faithful? _____. Has He promised that you will not be tempted above what you can bear? _____. Has He promised to make a way of escape for you? _____.

Tell us about yourself.....Please Print!

You must return answer sheet before you get next lesson.

Name_____

Mailing address_____

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Send in your answer sheet only!

