

Study Ten



Resisting Temptation

Read the lesson carefully, and fill in the Bible references before coming to the study.

All human beings are tempted to do wrong. What is more, we all have a bias towards wrongdoing. This is what the Bible means by our sinful nature. This sad fact is not altered by our Christian conversion, though we are given a new desire to please God and new strength for the fight. We should realise that there is a battle to be fought against the world, the flesh (our sinful natures) and the Devil.

1. It is Not a Sin to be Tempted

We should distinguish between sin and temptation to sin. We sin when we yield to temptation.

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James 1:14-15

Even Jesus, our pure and holy Saviour, was tempted to sin. He will give us help when it is needed.

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Hebrews 4:15-16

2. Coping With Temptation

Let us be honest; when we yield to temptation, it is because we choose to do so. This fact should keep us humble! There is no reason why we should give way under temptation. We are not the only ones tempted, and God always provides an escape route.

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1 Corinthians 10:13

Having persuaded us to sin, the Devil tells us we are failures. Without excusing our sin, we should keep in mind that we are still sinners, and will be till we die. We should remember that God is rich in mercy if we confess our sins (1 John 1:8-9), and that Jesus speaks up for us.

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1 John 2:1

Now that we are Christians we cannot be content to sin. As we grow in love for the Lord, we find ourselves wanting to be delivered from the effects of sin in the world and the power of sin in our lives. We can appreciate Paul’s struggle.

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Romans 7:23-24

While we remain in this world, we must resist temptation with all our strength. Having joined the Lord’s army we should fight on His side.

3. What You Need to Know

There are certain things you need to be aware of if you are to be successful in your fight against temptation.

a) Know the world. It is not as innocent as it seems.

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1 John 2:16

b) Know yourself – the flesh. We are not as strong as we think.

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Luke 22:33-34

c) Know your enemy – the Devil. He is full of deceitful schemes.

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2 Corinthians 2:11

The Devil is cunning – he sometimes appears “an Angel of Light”.

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2 Corinthians 11:14

d) Know your Bible. This will help you to know yourself and the Devil. It will also tell you of the grace of God, and give you more

encouragement and practical advice than anything else. Familiarity with God’s Word will help you in the fight against sin.

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Psalm 119:9

Jesus used the Word of God to fight the Tempter (Matthew 4:10-11).

4. Strategies for the Fight.

Since the tactics of our spiritual enemies are so deceitful and cunning, we need to adopt the right strategies to conquer them.

a) **Be watchful.** We must be mentally alert to overcome temptation.

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Mark 14:38

b) **Be prayerful** (Mark 14:38 again). Jesus is more powerful than the Devil, so we should ask for His help and stay close to Him.

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Hebrews 2:18

c) **Fill your mind with pure things.** Do not dwell on things that are sinful and sordid.

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Philippians 4:8

d) **Run away from temptation!** This is wise, not cowardly.

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2 Timothy 2:22

e) **Resist the Tempter.** A basic principle, but difficult to perform. We must be resolute and simply say “No” to the Devil’s suggestions.

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James 4:7

Like our Lord, seek the strength of fellowship (Matthew 26:36-38).

5. Conclusion

An old proverb says “You can’t stop birds flying over your head, but you can prevent them building nests in your hair”. Though we cannot get beyond temptations, we can prevent them overcoming us. Finally, remember that you will only be perfect in Heaven!