Overcoming Temptation and Sin

From Eden to Victory in Grace

What sin and temptation are, how Jesus and others overcame, and the simplicity of walking free by believing God's word.

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Anchor Passage

> **1 Corinthians 10:13** *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.*
>
> **Galatians 5:16** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Introduction

A. A Question Every Believer Asks

Sooner or later every believer asks the same question: *Why do I still do what I don't want to do — and can it really change?*

Scripture's answer is yes. It does not promise a life in which temptation never knocks. It promises something better: a God who never lets temptation outweigh us, who always provides a way out, and who has given us a new nature and His own word to walk in. The Bible is full of people who faced exactly what we face. Some stood. Some fell and were restored. One — Jesus Christ — was tempted in every way we are and never once gave in, and He showed us exactly how He did it.

In short: temptation will come, but God never lets it outweigh us, always gives a way out, and has shown us in Jesus how to stand.

B. What This Study Covers

This study walks through the whole subject in plain steps:

- **What sin is**, where it began, and how it came to every one of us.
- **What temptation is** — where it comes from, how it works, and why being tempted is not the same as sinning.
- **How God dealt with sin** through the ages, from Eden to the present day of grace.
- **How Jesus overcame**, and how men and women like Joseph, Daniel, Job, David and Peter stood, fell or rose again.
- **The simplicity of overcoming** — what it actually looks like, day by day, to walk free.
- **Common temptations,** one by one, with the word of God for each.
- **When you fall,** and how to get up again.

In short: what sin is, what temptation is, how God dealt with sin, how Jesus and others overcame, how to overcome in practice, the word for common temptations, and how to get up after a fall.

C. The Heart of the Matter, Up Front

Here is the whole study in one sentence: **temptation is overcome not by gritted-teeth willpower, but by believing God's word so fully that the wrong choice is no longer a real option.** Jesus answered every

temptation with three words — “It is written.” Everything that follows unpacks why that works, and how anyone can walk that way.

In short: temptation is overcome by believing God’s word, not by willpower.

Chapter 1: What Sin Is

A. Missing the Mark

The main Bible words for sin all paint the same picture. The Hebrew *chata'* and the Greek *hamartano* both mean, at root, *to miss the mark* — like an arrow that falls short of the target. Sin is not only breaking a rule. It is falling short of what God made us for.

> **Romans 3:23** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

In short: sin means missing the mark: falling short of what God made us for.

B. How Scripture Defines It

Scripture defines sin in more than one way, and together the definitions cover everyone — those who have God's written law and those who don't.

> **1 John 3:4** *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*
>
> **James 4:17** *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*
>
> **Romans 14:23** *...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

Where God has spoken a command, sin is crossing it. Where a person knows the good and refuses it, that is sin too. And underneath both lies the deepest definition of all: sin is whatever does not come from trusting God. That last one matters for everything that follows, because the cure for sin will turn out to be trust — believing God.

In short: sin is breaking God's command, refusing the good we know, and whatever does not come from trusting God.

C. An Act, and a Condition

Scripture speaks of sin in two ways: sins we *do*, and sin as a condition we are *born into*.

> **Romans 5:12** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Here "sin" is singular — a ruling power that entered the world through one man and passed to everyone after him. That is why the answer to sin cannot be only "try harder." A person does not stop being born into a condition by effort. Something has to change at the root — and, as this study will show, God did exactly that.

In short: sin is both what we do and a condition we were born into, so the answer must change us at the root.

Chapter 2: Where Sin Began

A. Before Eden: Pride in the Heart of a Created Being

Sin did not begin with Adam. Two prophets, speaking to earthly kings, describe a greater being behind them — a passage long read as describing the fall of the adversary himself:

> **Isaiah 14:12** *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*
>
> **Isaiah 14:13** *For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*
>
> **Isaiah 14:14** *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*
>
> **Ezekiel 28:15** *Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*
>
> **Ezekiel 28:17** *Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground…*

Notice where the first sin started: in the heart. "Thou hast said in thine heart… I will be like the most High." No one tempted him. Pride grew from within. That same desire — *to be like God, on my own terms* — is exactly what he would later offer to Eve. (When this fall took place is taken up in the published study *Genesis 1:2 and the Gap Theory Revealed*.)

In short: the first sin began in a created being's heart: pride, and the desire to be like God on his own terms.

B. The Fall in the Garden

> **Genesis 3:1** *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*
>
> **Genesis 3:4** *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*
>
> **Genesis 3:5** *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*
>
> **Genesis 3:6** *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

Watch the order of the attack. First, *doubt* God's word: "Yea, hath God said?" Then *deny* it: "Ye shall not surely die." Then *replace* it with a better-sounding offer: "ye shall be as gods." The battle was lost at God's word before it was lost at the tree. Every temptation since has followed the same road.

Notice too the three appeals of Genesis 3:6 — good for food, pleasant to the eyes, desired to make one wise. The apostle John names the same three thousands of years later:

> **1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

In short: the adversary doubted, denied and replaced God's word, and the battle was lost at the word before it was lost at the tree.

C. Judgment — and the First Promise

God had said, **"in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17)**. And that day something did die. Adam's body lived on for many years, but the spiritual life God had given him was lost that very day: the connection with God that made fellowship natural was broken. That loss is exactly what the new birth restores (Chapter 8). But in the very same breath as the sentence, God gave the first promise of rescue:

> **Genesis 3:15** *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Before Adam and Eve ever left the garden, God promised a coming Seed who would crush the serpent's head. Sin and its answer entered the Bible in the same chapter. That promise — the coming Messiah — is the thread that runs through the rest of this story.

In short: the day Adam sinned he lost spiritual life, and in the same breath God promised the Seed who would crush the serpent's head.

D. Passed Down to Every Generation

> **Romans 5:19** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*
> **Psalm 51:5** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

David wrote Psalm 51 after his sin with Bathsheba, and in it he traced his failure back past the act itself to what he was born into. The very next generation after Eden shows what that inheritance looks like — and it also shows that it can be ruled:

> **Genesis 4:7** *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*

Sin is pictured as something crouching at the door, wanting in. And God tells Cain plainly: *you can rule over it*. From the very first pages, temptation is real — but it is never irresistible.

In short: sin passed to every generation, but from the beginning God said it can be ruled.

Chapter 3: What Temptation Is — and Isn't

A. God Tempts No One

> **James 1:13** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*
> **James 1:14** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*
> **James 1:15** *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

This is the clearest description of temptation in the whole Bible, and it settles three things at once.

First, God is never the source. Whatever else is happening, God is not setting a trap. He is the One providing the way out.

Second, temptation works through desire. The words "drawn away" and "enticed" are fishing and hunting words — a fish drawn out from its hiding place, lured by bait that hides the hook. Temptation never shows the hook. It only shows the bait.

Third, there is a progression — and a gap. Desire *conceives*, then *brings forth* sin, then sin *brings forth* death. Temptation is the knock at the door; sin is opening it and inviting the thing in. Between the knock and the opening there is always a moment, and that moment is where victory is won.

In short: God never tempts anyone to sin. Temptation works through desire, and there is always a gap between the knock and the opening of the door.

B. Being Tempted Is Not Sinning

This is one of the most freeing truths in scripture, and many believers have never been told it.

> **Hebrews 4:15** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Jesus was tempted "in all points" — and He never sinned. So the mere arrival of a tempting thought is not a failure, and it is not proof that something is wrong with you. A thought knocking is not a thought welcomed. Much needless guilt disappears once this is understood, and with the guilt gone, the thought loses much of its grip.

In short: being tempted is not sinning. Jesus was tempted in all points, yet without sin.

C. Where Temptation Comes From

Scripture names three sources, and they often work together.

The world — a whole system of values that runs without God:

> **1 John 2:15** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
>
> **1 John 2:17** *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

The flesh — our own old appetites and habits:

> **Galatians 5:17** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

The adversary — a real enemy with real strategies:

> **1 Peter 5:8** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*
>
> **Ephesians 6:11** *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

"Wiles" means schemes — planned methods. The enemy is not creative. He uses the same few methods he used in Eden, which is exactly why scripture can prepare us for them.

In short: temptation comes from the world, the flesh and the adversary, and the adversary's methods are old and known.

D. God Sets the Limit

> **1 Corinthians 10:13** *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.*

Three promises sit in this one verse. Your temptation is **common** — others have faced it and stood. It is **limited** — never more than you can bear. And it always comes **with an exit** — not sometimes, every time. No believer is ever cornered.

In short: every temptation is common, limited, and comes with a way of escape.

E. Temptation, Testing and Trials

The King James Version uses the word "temptation" in two different senses, and it helps to see them side by side.

The Greek word *peirasmos* means both "temptation" (an enticement to do wrong) and "trial" or "test" (a hard circumstance that proves what a person is made of). James uses it both ways in a single chapter:

> **James 1:2** *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*
>
> **James 1:3** *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*
>
> **James 1:12** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

Here "temptations" means trials, hard things that test and strengthen faith. Then, a few verses later, James uses the same word for enticement to sin, and says God never does that (James 1:13-14). So James does not contradict himself. God allows trials that prove faith; He never entices anyone to sin.

The Old Testament shows the same thing. Genesis 22:1 says **"God did tempt Abraham"**. The Hebrew word, *nasah*, means to test or prove, not to entice to evil. God was not luring Abraham into sin; He was proving his faith, and Abraham's faith was shown to be real (Hebrews 11:17-19).

In short: "temptation" in the King James can mean a trial that proves faith, or an enticement to sin. God allows the first; He never does the second.

Chapter 4: How a Fall Happens — Eve, Achan, and David

The Bible records three falls, centuries apart, that follow the very same four steps. Seeing the pattern is half of breaking it.

A. Eve: Saw, Desired, Took, Hid

> **Genesis 3:6** *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat…*
>
> **Genesis 3:8** *…and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

In short: Eve saw, desired, took and hid.

B. Achan: Saw, Coveted, Took, Hid

After the fall of Jericho, God had commanded that none of the spoil be taken for private gain. Achan's confession reads almost word for word like Eden:

> **Joshua 7:21** *When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.*

In short: Achan followed the same four steps, centuries later.

C. David: Saw, Inquired, Took, Covered

> **2 Samuel 11:1** *And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle… But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*
>
> **2 Samuel 11:2** *And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.*

David *saw*, then sent to *inquire* about her (the desire growing), then *took* her (11:4), and then spent months trying to *cover* it — ending in the death of her husband Uriah. Notice where it began: David was not where he was supposed to be. It was the season when kings went to war, and he stayed home, idle, on a rooftop at evening.

In short: David's fall began when he was idle in the wrong place, and followed the same pattern.

D. Where the Chain Breaks

In all three stories the same four links appear:

1. **See** — the eye or the mind lingers.
2. **Desire** — the lingering grows into wanting.
3. **Take** — the wanting becomes the act.
4. **Hide** — the act is covered, and fellowship with God is broken.

The chain is weakest at the first link. It is far easier to look away than to put back what has already been taken. That is why Jesus spoke about the look (Matthew 5:28), why Job made **"a covenant with mine eyes" (Job 31:1)**, and why scripture tells us to keep our hearts **"with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23)**. And the last link — hiding — is the one God always offers to undo. David's story does not end with the cover-up. It ends with confession and restoration (Chapter 7).

In short: the chain of a fall is weakest at the first look, and the last link, hiding, is the one God always offers to undo.

Chapter 5: How God Dealt With Sin Through the Ages

Scripture shows God dealing with sin differently in different ages, or *administrations*: periods in which God deals with mankind under a stated set of terms. The published study *The Seven Administrations of Scripture* sets them out in full: Eden, Patriarchal, the Law, Christ, Grace, the Day of Wrath and the Day of Judgment. Through every one of them runs the same thread: the promised Messiah, first announced in Genesis 3:15.

A. Eden: One Command

In Eden there was no code of law — only a broad permission with a single limit:

> **Genesis 2:16** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*
> **Genesis 2:17** *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

That one command was broken, and the Eden administration ended with the man and woman sent out of the garden (Genesis 3:23-24).

In short: in Eden there was one command, and when it was broken the first administration ended.

B. The Patriarchal Administration: Righteousness by Believing

From the expulsion to Mount Sinai there was still no written law. People knew right from wrong by conscience, as God's words to Cain show (Genesis 4:7), and God's way of counting a man righteous was stated plainly of Abraham:

> **Genesis 15:6** *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

And what did Abraham believe? God sharpened the Eden promise to him: **"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18)**. Paul explains who that Seed is:

> **Galatians 3:16** *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

Abraham's faith was not a vague trust in God's goodness. It was belief in a specific promise — that God would send the Messiah. The patriarchs lived and died looking forward to it:

> **Hebrews 11:13** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

Sin was still real and still judged in this age — the Flood came because **"the earth is filled with violence through them" (Genesis 6:13)** — but the remedy was already taking the shape it keeps for the rest of scripture: not performance, but believing God.

In short: before the Law, righteousness was counted to those who believed God's promise of the coming Seed.

C. The Law Administration: Sin Named, Sacrifice Offered

At Sinai God gave Israel a full written law. Its purpose regarding sin was to show it clearly:

> **Romans 3:20** *...for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*
>
> **Romans 7:7** *...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*
>
> **Galatians 3:24** *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

The Law also gave a system of sacrifices — but scripture says plainly that they could cover sin for a time, never remove it:

> **Hebrews 10:4** *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Every sacrifice was a way of looking forward. Obeying the Law faithfully honored God, who had promised to provide the Messiah who would do what the Law could not. Moses, David, the prophets and the faithful of Israel all lived and died looking ahead:

> **Hebrews 11:39** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

In short: the Law showed sin clearly and covered it for a time, but could not take it away.

D. The Christ Administration: The Standard Raised to the Heart

During His earthly ministry Jesus lived under the Law, upheld it (Matthew 5:17), and raised its standard from the act to the heart. These words, and the other words of Jesus quoted in this study, were spoken to His disciples before the cross, under the Law. They are true and profitable for us, but they belong to that period, which must be held distinct from the Grace administration that began at Pentecost:

> **Matthew 5:27** *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*
>
> **Matthew 5:28** *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Sin, Jesus showed, begins in the desire — exactly where James 1:14 and Genesis 4:7 locate it. No one can reach that standard by outward effort alone. The problem had to be dealt with at the root.

In short: Jesus, under the Law, showed that sin begins in the heart, so it must be dealt with at the root.

E. The Cross, the Resurrection, and the Ascension

> **2 Corinthians 5:21** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*
>
> **1 Peter 2:24** *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*
>
> **Acts 2:32** *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

> **Acts 2:33** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

Everything before this had named sin, judged sin, or covered sin. Here sin was dealt with. At the cross Jesus bore sin's penalty. In the resurrection God proved death defeated. In the ascension Jesus was exalted to God's right hand, and from there He poured out the promised gift of holy spirit at Pentecost. All three together opened the way to the new life believers have today.

In short: at the cross sin's penalty was borne, in the resurrection death was defeated, and from the ascension the gift of holy spirit was poured out.

F. The Grace Administration: Sin's Rule Broken

The present administration, which opened at Pentecost, deals with sin in a new way altogether:

> **Romans 6:14** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Under grace sin is not only forgiven case by case. Its rule over the believer is broken. Chapter 8 shows what that means.

In short: in the Grace administration sin's rule over the believer is broken.

G. The Day of Wrath, the Day of Judgment, and the End of the Story

Sin will run its course. Scripture describes a final "man of sin" in the Day of Wrath (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the adversary bound when Christ returns to reign (Revelation 20:2), and the last judgment. The story that began with pride in one created heart ends with God's own victory — and a new heaven and a new earth **"wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13)**.

In short: sin will run its course and end in God's victory and a new heaven and earth.

Chapter 6: Jesus Overcame — and Showed Us How

A. Two Adams, Two Tests

> **1 Corinthians 15:45** *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

The first Adam was tested in a garden, surrounded by plenty, with every need met — and fell. The last Adam was tested in a wilderness, after forty days without food, alone with wild beasts — and stood. Where the first man lost, the second man won, and He won in a way every believer can follow.

In short: the first Adam fell in a garden; the last Adam stood in a wilderness.

B. The Wilderness

> **Matthew 4:1** *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

> **Matthew 4:2** *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*
>
> **Matthew 4:3** *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*
>
> **Matthew 4:4** *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

The first temptation aimed at the body — a real, legitimate hunger, offered an illegitimate way to meet it. Notice the opening words, too: "*If* thou be the Son of God." God had just declared at His baptism, **"This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17)**. The first move, as in Eden, was to question what God had said.

> **Matthew 4:5** *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*
>
> **Matthew 4:6** *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*
>
> **Matthew 4:7** *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

The second temptation used scripture itself — quoting Psalm 91, but leaving out the words "to keep thee in all thy ways." The adversary can quote the Bible. Jesus did not argue about the verse; He answered with more of the word — "It is written *again*." Scripture rightly understood always answers scripture twisted.

> **Matthew 4:8** *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*
>
> **Matthew 4:9** *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*
>
> **Matthew 4:10** *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*
>
> **Matthew 4:11** *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

The third temptation offered a shortcut: the kingdoms Jesus would one day rule, handed to Him now, without the cross, for one act of worship. Jesus sent the tempter away with a command and a verse.

In short: Jesus answered three temptations, to the body, to presumption, and to a shortcut, each with "It is written."

C. What Jesus Did — and Didn't — Do

Look at what Jesus did *not* do. He did not reason with the tempter, bargain, or wrestle with the offer. He did not use any power that is unavailable to us. He answered all three temptations the same way: **"It is written."** All three answers came from one book, Deuteronomy (8:3, 6:16, 6:13) — words He had already hidden in His heart before He ever reached the wilderness.

The victory was won by a settled mind. Jesus already knew what God had said, He believed it completely, and so each offer simply had nowhere to land. That is the model for every believer.

> **Luke 4:13** *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

"For a season." Temptation returned throughout Jesus' life, and it returns in ours. Overcoming is not a one-time event. It is a way of walking.

In short: Jesus did not argue or bargain. A settled mind, full of the word, left temptation nowhere to land.

D. Gethsemane: Watch and Pray

On the night before the cross, Jesus faced the heaviest test of all — and told His disciples how to face theirs:

> **Matthew 26:39** *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*
>
> **Matthew 26:41** *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Jesus prayed; the disciples slept. Within hours Jesus stood firm before His accusers, and Peter — who had slept — denied Him three times. "Watch and pray" is not a small piece of advice. It is the difference between those two outcomes.

In short: Jesus prayed and stood; the disciples slept and fell. Watch and pray.

E. He Knows, and He Helps

> **Hebrews 2:18** *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*
>
> **Hebrews 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

The One who overcame is now at God's right hand, and He knows exactly what temptation feels like. We do not go to Him afraid. We go boldly, and we find help "in time of need" — which is the very moment of temptation.

In short: Christ knows what temptation is, and helps us in the very moment of need.

Chapter 7: Others Who Stood — and Some Who Fell and Rose Again

Scripture gives us more than instructions. It gives us people.

> **1 Corinthians 10:11** *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 10:12** *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

A. Joseph: He Refused, He Reasoned, He Kept Away, He Ran

> **Genesis 39:7** *And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*
>
> **Genesis 39:8** *But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;*
>
> **Genesis 39:9** *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*
>
> **Genesis 39:10** *And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.*
>
> **Genesis 39:12** *And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.*

Joseph was young, far from home, a slave with no one watching, and pressed "day by day." Four things kept him:

- **He refused at once.** He did not entertain the offer.
- **He knew why.** "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" His decision was already settled by whom he belonged to.
- **He kept his distance.** He would not even "be with her."
- **When cornered, he ran.** He left his coat and got out. Sometimes the way of escape God provides is simply the door.

In short: Joseph refused at once, knew why, kept his distance, and when cornered, ran.

B. Daniel: He Decided Before the Test

> **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.*

Daniel, a young captive in Babylon, "purposed in his heart" before the plate was set in front of him. He settled the question ahead of time, and then acted wisely and respectfully. A decision made before temptation arrives is far easier to keep than one made in the middle of it.

In short: Daniel settled the question before the test came.

C. Moses: He Weighed It Rightly

> **Hebrews 11:24** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*
>
> **Hebrews 11:25** *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

Scripture is honest: sin has pleasures. But they are "for a season." Moses looked past the moment to what would last, and the choice became clear.

In short: sin's pleasures are only for a season, and Moses chose what would last.

D. Job: A Covenant With His Eyes

> **Job 31:1** *I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*

Job guarded the first link of the chain — the look. And when everything he owned was taken from him, **"in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22)**.

In short: Job guarded the first look, and did not sin even in loss.

E. David: He Fell — and Was Restored

David, of whom God said, **"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart" (Acts 13:22)**, fell badly (Chapter 4). When the prophet Nathan confronted him, David stopped hiding:

> **2 Samuel 12:13** *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*
> **Psalm 51:10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*
> **Psalm 51:12** *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

David's sin had real and painful consequences. But the moment he confessed, he was forgiven. The same man later wrote the verse every overcomer needs:

> **Psalm 119:11** *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

In short: David fell badly, confessed, and was forgiven and restored.

F. Peter: He Fell — and Strengthened Others

> **Luke 22:31** *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*
> **Luke 22:32** *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

Peter was confident he would never fall, and he denied Jesus three times that same night. Then **"the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter… And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61-62)**. But Jesus had already prayed for him, and had already planned his restoration: "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." After the resurrection Jesus restored him personally (John 21:15-17), and weeks later Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and preached to thousands. A fall is not the end of the story for anyone who comes back.

In short: Peter fell, was restored by Jesus, and went on to strengthen others.

G. Paul: From "Wretched Man" to "No Condemnation"

> **Romans 7:24** *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*
> **Romans 7:25** *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord…*
> **Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Paul knew the frustration of fighting in his own strength. He did not stay there. His question — "who shall deliver me?" — has an answer, and the answer is not a better effort but a Person, and the new life that Person makes possible.

In short: the answer to “who shall deliver me?” is not a better effort but a Person.

H. Israel in the Wilderness: A Warning

Paul lists Israel’s failures in the wilderness — lusting, idolatry, fornication, tempting God, murmuring (1 Corinthians 10:6-10) — and says they were written “for our admonition.” They had seen the Red Sea parted and ate manna every morning, and they still fell, because they did not believe what God had said (Hebrews 3:19). Miracles did not keep them. Believing would have.

In short: Israel saw miracles and still fell, because they did not believe what God said.

Chapter 8: A New Life — Freedom in Grace

A. A New Creation

> **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
>
> **1 Peter 1:23** *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

The believer is not an old sinner trying harder. He is a new creation, born of incorruptible seed. The change is in what he *is*, not only in what he does.

In short: the believer is a new creation, born of incorruptible seed.

B. Dead to Sin, Alive to God

> **Romans 6:6** *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*
>
> **Romans 6:7** *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*
>
> **Romans 6:11** *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

“Reckon” is an accounting word: count it as true, because it is. Sin is no longer the believer’s master. The freedom is already accomplished; the believer’s part is to believe it and live from it.

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

In short: the believer is dead to sin and alive to God; his part is to reckon it true and live from it.

C. Grace Is Not Permission to Sin

> **Romans 6:1** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*
>
> **Romans 6:2** *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

“God forbid” is Paul’s strongest no. Grace does not keep us from sin by threatening us, the way the Law did. It changes who we are. A new creation is not oriented toward what the old nature wanted. Grace even teaches us:

> **Titus 2:11** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*
> **Titus 2:12** *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

In short: grace does not permit sin; it changes who we are, and teaches us to live godly.

D. Walking in the Spirit

> **Galatians 5:16** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

This verse is a promise, not a maybe. "Walk" is an everyday word — the way you live, step by step. And the result is stated without qualification: the lust of the flesh *will not* be fulfilled.

The next verse is often read as a picture of endless, hopeless struggle:

> **Galatians 5:17** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

But read in its place, right after verse 16's promise, it describes an opposition that is real — and that loses when the believer walks in the Spirit. It is not a tug-of-war stuck at a draw. Verse 18 confirms the direction: "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." And the life that grows from that walk is described as fruit — something that grows, not something manufactured:

> **Galatians 5:22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*
> **Galatians 5:23** *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

"Temperance" is self-control. In God's plan, self-control is not the root of the victory. It is the fruit.

In short: walk in the spirit, and the lust of the flesh will not be fulfilled. Self-control is the fruit, not the root.

Chapter 9: The Simplicity of Overcoming

Everything so far leads here. For all the depth of the subject, overcoming temptation is not complicated. It is simple — not always easy at first, but simple.

A. Believe What God Says

> **John 6:63** *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

Jesus spoke these words to people who had taken "eat my flesh" literally. But the principle reaches further: the flesh profits nothing. Straining against a desire by sheer force does not produce a changed life. God's words do. When His word is truly believed, it carries more weight in the moment than the pull of the temptation, and the struggle loses its power.

That is not a special feat of spiritual strength. People do it every day about ordinary things:

- **No one needs to be struck by a train** to stay behind the yellow line on a subway platform. They were told once, they believed it, and staying back is no longer a decision at all.

- **A pilot flying through thick cloud** cannot trust his feelings. His body may tell him he is flying level when he is turning, or climbing when he is diving. So he is trained to trust his instruments over his feelings, every time. The instruments are right, and his feelings are wrong, and his life depends on knowing which to believe.
- **A man named Joe Smith** cannot be talked out of his own name, even with a bribe. Offer him a thousand reasons and a cash reward to insist his name is something else, and he will not seriously consider it — not by willpower, but because he owns his name as settled truth.
- **A driver changing lanes** glances at a small mirror. It is only a reflection, a few inches of glass, yet he trusts it with his life at highway speed, and he acts on what it shows him without a second thought.

In every case, something trusted and fully believed does the work that painful experience would otherwise have to do. If a man will stake his life on a reflection in a mirror, how much more can a believer trust and act on the word of the living God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2)? **This is exactly how God's word is meant to work with temptation.** When a believer is fully persuaded of what God says — about sin, about himself, about God's love — the wrong option is simply no longer on the table.

In short: believe God's word as fully as a pilot trusts his instruments or a driver his mirror, and the wrong choice is no longer on the table.

B. Fill Your Heart With the Word

You cannot answer "It is written" with a verse you do not know.

> **Psalm 119:9** *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*
> **Psalm 119:11** *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
> **Colossians 3:16** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom…*

Jesus did not go looking for verses in the wilderness. He already had them. Read the word, learn the verses that speak to your own particular battle, and keep them close enough to speak aloud.

In short: you cannot answer "It is written" with a verse you do not know.

C. Answer the Way Jesus Answered

> **Ephesians 6:16** *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*
> **Ephesians 6:17** *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

When the thought comes, do not debate it. Answer it with what God has said: *It is written.* Faith is the shield that stops the dart; the word is the sword that sends the tempter away.

> **James 4:7** *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Notice the order: submit to God first, then resist. And notice the promise: the devil *will* flee — as he left Jesus in the wilderness.

In short: answer temptation with what God has said, submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee.

D. Guard the First Look

The chain of a fall (Chapter 4) is weakest at its first link.

> **Proverbs 4:23** *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 10:5** *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Notice where a thought is heading, and turn it before it arrives. Like Job, make "a covenant with your eyes." What you do not linger on, you will not desire; what you do not desire, you will not take.

In short: turn a thought before it arrives; what you do not linger on, you will not desire.

E. Make No Provision — and Take the Exit

> **Romans 13:14** *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*
>
> **2 Timothy 2:22** *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

Don't plan for failure. Don't keep the bait within reach. David's fall started with being idle in the wrong place; Joseph's victory ended with him running out the door. The "way to escape" of 1 Corinthians 10:13 is often very practical — close the screen, leave the room, end the conversation, change the route home.

In short: don't keep the bait within reach, and take the way out God provides, even if it means running.

F. Watch and Pray

> **Matthew 26:41** *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
>
> **Matthew 6:13** *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil…*

Jesus taught His disciples to pray about temptation *before* it comes. "Lead us not into temptation" does not mean God leads people into sin; James 1:13 says He never tempts anyone that way. It is a prayer to be kept away from temptation and delivered from evil, and scripture often speaks of God as doing what He only allows. (The published study *God: Deliverer, Not Destroyer* explains this way of speaking.) Know your weak moments — tired, alone, angry, idle — and pray ahead of them.

In short: pray about temptation before it comes, and know your weak moments.

G. Think On These Things

> **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.*
>
> **Philippians 4:8** *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

An empty mind does not stay empty. Replace the wrong thought with the right one. Over time, this is how belief moves from something you agree with to something that governs your moments.

In short: replace wrong thoughts with what is true, and let the mind be renewed.

H. Walk With Others

> **Ecclesiastes 4:10** *For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.*
>
> **Hebrews 3:13** *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Temptation loves secrecy. Fellowship with other believers brings it into the light, where it loses much of its power.

In short: temptation loves secrecy; fellowship brings it into the light.

I. Love, Not Fear

A believer does not resist temptation in order to avoid being punished. He resists it because he is loved. John writes:

> **1 John 4:18** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*
>
> **1 John 4:19** *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Obedience driven by fear is weak; it does what it must while it thinks it is being watched. Obedience that flows from love is steady, in private as in public. Joseph's question, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?", was not the question of a man afraid of getting caught. It was the question of a man who loved God and would not hurt that relationship. The published study *The Love of God* develops this in full.

In short: a believer overcomes not out of fear of punishment, but out of love for the Father who loved him first.

J. Remember Why

These are the reasons that make the simple way a joyful one:

Love. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). **"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)**. Obedience that grows from love is not a burden; it is love returned.

His presence. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Temptation thrives on the feeling of being unwatched and alone. The believer never is.

His faithfulness. "God is not a man, that he should lie" (Numbers 23:19). Trusting His word over a passing feeling is not a leap in the dark. It is the most reasonable thing a person can do.

Hope. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Temptation always trades on *now*. The hope of Christ's return puts the real weight back on the scale.

Forgiveness already given. "Having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13); **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7)**. A believer who lives under constant guilt is weaker against temptation, not stronger. Living from settled forgiveness is not license (Chapter 8); it is freedom to walk without carrying a weight God already lifted.

In short: love, His presence, His faithfulness, hope and forgiveness already given make the simple way a joyful one.

Chapter 10: Common Temptations, and the Word for Each

Chapter 9 said: find the scriptures that speak to your own battle, and keep them close enough to say aloud. Here are some to begin with. Each temptation below is named plainly, with a few verses to answer it, the way Jesus answered with "It is written."

A. Lust and Sexual Temptation

- **"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1)**
- **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)**
- **"Flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18)**
- **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)**

In short: guard the eyes, flee, and remember whose temple your body is.

B. Anger

- **"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27)**
- **"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20)**
- **"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1)**

In short: be slow to speak and slow to wrath, answer softly, and settle anger the same day.

C. Greed and the Love of Money

- **"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5)**
- **"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6)**
- **"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15)**

In short: contentment, not more, is the answer to greed, because God will never leave you.

D. Pride

- **"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6)**
- **"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18)**
- **"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)**

In short: everything you have was given to you. God gives grace to the humble.

E. Fear and Worry

- **"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)**
- **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6)**
- **"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7)**

In short: fear is not from God. Bring every care to Him in prayer, with thanks.

F. Bitterness and Unforgiveness

- **"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32)**
- **"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15)**

In short: you have been forgiven much. Forgive in the same way, before bitterness takes root.

G. The Tongue

- **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29)**
- **"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3)**
- **"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14)**

In short: let every word build up. Ask God to guard your lips.

H. Drunkenness and Other Dependencies

- **"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)**
- **"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12)**
- **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36)**

In short: be filled with the spirit, not with anything that would master you. The Son makes free indeed.

I. Envy and Jealousy

- **"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30)**

- **“Charity envieth not” (1 Corinthians 13:4)**
- **“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15)**

In short: love does not envy. Rejoice when others are blessed.

J. Discouragement and Giving Up

- **“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9)**
- **“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31)**
- **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13)**

In short: do not grow weary. God renews the strength of those who wait on Him.

Chapter 11: When You Fall, and When the Struggle Runs Deep

A. When You Fall, Get Up

> **1 John 2:1** *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*
>
> **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
>
> **Proverbs 24:16** *For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again…*
>
> **Micah 7:8** *…when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.*

God’s goal is that we “sin not.” But He planned for our failures too. When a believer sins, he does not stop being God’s son. Sonship rests on the new birth, which cannot be undone. What sin breaks is fellowship, the closeness of walking with the Father. Confession, made as often as it is needed, restores that fellowship, and God’s forgiveness rests on His own faithfulness and on Christ, who is **“the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2)**. Don’t hide as Adam and Eve did; don’t cover as David tried to. Confess it to God, receive His cleansing, and keep walking — as David did, and as Peter did. The fall is not the end of the walk. Staying down would be.

In short: if you fall, confess and get up. Sonship is not lost; fellowship is restored.

B. When the Struggle Has Deep Roots

It would not be honest to pretend that every believer experiences temptation the same way, or that long-practiced patterns always vanish the moment a person first believes. Some habits were built over years, reinforced by repetition, hurt, or simply never being taught the truth. Scripture does not promise that a habit will never again feel like a fight. It promises a new nature, a way of escape every time, and a mind that can be renewed.

For these harder cases, the answer is not more willpower. It is more of what produces belief: the word taken in, fellowship with believers who can speak it into your situation, and the gift of holy spirit already given at the new birth. Any teaching that treats every struggle as proof of weak willpower, or every

failure as proof that grace has run out, only piles on guilt — and guilt makes temptation stronger. The struggle, where it lingers, is a renewing-of-the-mind matter worked out over time. It is not a verdict on whether God's grace is real in your life.

In short: deep-rooted struggles are overcome by the renewing of the mind over time, not by more willpower or more guilt.

C. One Last Route to Deliverance

I felt it necessary to include the following, because God does not want anyone to continue to suffer in sin. There are times when a Christian's past has left a deep-seated sin, and a temptation to it, that does not neatly fit anything shared above — a genuine struggle to overcome. If that is the case, there is nothing to be ashamed of. God wants healing and deliverance for everyone.

> **John 8:31** *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*
> **John 8:32** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*
> **John 8:36** *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Continuing in God's word makes one a disciple indeed, and by doing so you will know the truth — and **it does not just set you free, it makes you free.** If one is only set free, he can be imprisoned again; the one the Son makes free is "free indeed." This is God's promise even in the most difficult captivity to temptation and sin. The answer is to find the scriptures dealing with your particular circumstance and make them your own by prayer and believing, until you are made free. If that is not enough, it may be necessary to involve another trusted believer, seasoned in the word, to help with teaching, encouragement, prayer, and possibly ministering the power of God by way of the gift of holy spirit. Your heavenly Father loves you just as much as all who are His.

In short: continue in the word, and the truth will make you free; and if needed, ask a mature believer to help.

Chapter 12: Closing — A Peaceful Walk With the Father

A. The Whole Story in Brief

Sin began with pride in a created heart and entered the human race when Eve and Adam doubted God's word. It passed to every generation. God named it through the Law, covered it through sacrifice, and promised all along a Messiah who would deal with it for good. Jesus Christ was tempted in every way and never sinned; He bore our sin on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to God's right hand, from where He poured out the gift that makes us new. Under grace, sin's rule is broken, and the believer is free to walk in the Spirit.

In short: sin entered by doubting God's word, and is overcome by believing it, through what Christ has done.

B. Overcoming at a Glance

- **Know that temptation is not sin.** Jesus was tempted and never sinned.
- **Know that God has set a limit** and always provides a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- **Believe what God says** until the wrong choice is no longer on the table (John 6:63).
- **Hide the word in your heart** (Psalm 119:11), and answer as Jesus did: *It is written.*
- **Guard the first look** (Job 31:1; Proverbs 4:23).
- **Make no provision** for the flesh, and take the exit — even if it means running like Joseph (Romans 13:14; Genesis 39:12).
- **Decide ahead of time**, as Daniel did (Daniel 1:8).
- **Watch and pray** (Matthew 26:41).
- **Keep a verse ready** for your own particular battle (Chapter 10).
- **Think on what is true** (Philippians 4:8).
- **Walk with other believers** (Hebrews 3:13).
- **If you fall, confess and get up** (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 24:16).
- **Remember why:** He loved you first, He is always with you, His word never fails, and Christ is coming back.

In short: the whole study in a list.

C. The Goal

> **Hebrews 12:1** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*
>
> **Hebrews 12:2** *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The published study *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses: Lay aside every weight* looks at these verses in full.

None of this is a technique for gritting through temptation more successfully. It is what scripture calls it: walking in the Spirit, loving God because He loved first, resting in forgiveness already given, and letting the mind be renewed by what is true. The end scripture points to is not a longer winning streak against sin. It is a peaceful, joyful walk and fellowship with the Father — the very thing temptation was always meant to steal, and the very thing believing His word restores.

In short: the goal is not a winning streak against sin, but a peaceful, joyful walk with the Father.

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Sources Consulted

Scripture. The King James Version (1769 text) is the text used throughout. Every quotation was checked word for word against it.

Language references. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*; Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

Companion studies in this library. *The Seven Administrations of Scripture* (Chapter 5); *Genesis 1:2 and the Gap Theory Revealed* (Chapter 2); *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* (Genesis 2:17, Chapter 2); *God: Deliverer, Not Destroyer* (Chapter 9); *The Love of God* (Chapter 9); *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses: Lay aside every weight* (Chapter 12).

Outside works were used for their language and background facts. Every conclusion in this study was tested directly against the text of scripture itself.

Scripture Index

References are listed in the order of the books of the Bible. “Anchor” is the Anchor Passage; “Intro” with a letter is a section of the Introduction; a number with a letter is a chapter and its section (for example, 2D is Chapter 2, section D); a number alone is the opening of that chapter.

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