

# **OVERCOMING TEMPTATION**

**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES  
FOR DAILY VICTORY**

**Ralph B. Lloyd**

# SUMMARY OF REBUILDING STEPS

## A. REBUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

Preventative measures to minimize the severity and frequency of temptations.

***“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”** (James 4:7-8)*

1. **REVERE** God and fear Him.

*“And by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.” (Proverbs 16:6b)*

2. **REPENT** and confess your sins to God.

*“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.” (Proverbs 28:13)*

3. **REMOVE** anything from your surroundings that makes you stumble.

*“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Romans 13:14)*

4. **RENEW** your mind daily in the Word of God.

*“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)*

5. **REKINDLE** a zealous love for the Lord.

*“And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind”. This is the great and foremost commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38)*

6. **REDEDICATE** yourself to God as a living sacrifice.

*“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1)*

7. **REGAIN** the fullness of the Spirit.

*“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)*

8. **RECOMMIT** yourself to full obedience and service to God.

*“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)*

9. **READY** yourself and prepare for temptation.

*“I buffet my body and make it my slave...lest I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27)*

10. **REINFORCE** the defenses with unceasing prayer.

*“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13)*

11. **RECRUIT** an accountability partner.

*“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)*

12. **REST** in the Lord, trust Him completely, and wait patiently for Him.

*“Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him...” (Psalm 37:5, 7)*

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## **Dedication**

To my Lord Jesus Christ, who loved me enough to die and rise again on my behalf, that I might share His holiness and be in His holy presence forever.

To my children and future grandchildren, may God give you the grace and strength to overcome temptation, live lives worthy of Christ your Savior, and bear much fruit for His name.

To God's beloved saints around the world who long for greater freedom from the torment of temptation and bondage to sin. It is my prayer that these exhortations will stimulate you to greater love and obedience to Christ, particularly those of you who struggle with compulsory addictions and passions of the flesh and mind. May the freedom of Christ be yours in fullest measure!

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.  
“And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the Son does remain forever.  
“If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”  
(John 8:34-36)*

*“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;  
seeing that His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness,  
through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.  
For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises,  
in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature,  
having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”  
(2 Peter 1:2-4)*

*“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you  
and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will  
in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,  
so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects,  
bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”  
(Colossians 1:9-10)*

## Introduction

The Christian's success in overcoming sin and resisting temptation is dependent on and proportional to his or her diligence in learning, believing, and obeying the truths of Scripture. We have been given the Holy Spirit, God Himself living inside us and enabling us to obey Him (Romans 8:3-14). We have been given everything pertaining to life and godliness so that we "might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:3-4). We have been set "free indeed" from slavery to sin through our glorious and sinless Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (John 8:31-36). (If you aren't a Christian, please see "For the Non-Christian.")

But though as Christians we have been given the knowledge and resources to walk in victory, we often fail. We fail for many reasons, including ignorance, habit, selfishness, and lack of commitment. Are we wholeheartedly committed to victory and willing to do what God instructs us to do, or are we the kind who give lip service to God while secretly clinging to the sins that are destroying our lives and good conscience before God? Do we really have the will to gain victory over temptation? Christ's power will enable us to be victorious, but we must diligently apply ourselves to it.

The Bible, the living and powerful Word of God, contains the keys to overcoming sin and temptation, and this booklet is an attempt to present twenty four of its principles. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Biblical principles, when followed consistently and diligently, will enable the believer in Christ to walk in freedom from the bondage of sin, enjoy a clear conscience before God, be filled with the Spirit, and manifest the fruit of the Spirit. No sin need have mastery over the Christian in this life; we each can walk in the freedom and victory to which He has called us.

With so many books and resources available, why this one? There are two needs that this resource is intended to meet. First, although there are many good books available that address how to overcome temptation, in my opinion many do not cover the subject in the depth the Scriptures give us. When I was preparing for a men's Bible study on this topic, principles for overcoming temptation began to leap off the pages of Scripture; I kept seeing more and more Scriptures and principles that I had never seen before because I was not looking for them. I began to realize how crucial it is to daily rebuild our relationship with the Lord and draw close to Him. Knowing what to do when tempted is essential, but knowing how to live life in such a way as to avoid the temptation in the first place and be spiritually strong when it does come is equally important. Both principles are presented in Scripture.

To capture these two sets of principles, this booklet is divided into two parts. Section A is entitled, "**Rebuild Your Relationship with the Lord**" and outlines principles related to helping us grow strong in the Lord. These not only enable us to enjoy close fellowship with God and the many benefits that come from walking in obedience to Him, but these rebuilding steps strengthen us and prepare us for temptation as preventative and offensive measures. Failure in these Rebuilding steps leaves the door open to temptation and makes it much more difficult to gain full victory over sin. Section B, "**Resist Temptation When It Comes,**" outlines the defensive or reactionary measures we must apply when temptation comes our way. The order in which we apply these principles is usually not crucial, but a solid grasp of these concepts and their diligent application should enable us to confidently and effectively resist temptation.

The second reason for writing this booklet is to provide a concise, to-the-point resource with minimal verbiage. Being able to quickly refer back to the text and regain the main points is essential because we so easily forget even the most important lessons. Most books don't lend themselves to an easy refresher of the primary points. And many of us are pressed for time and don't make much time for reading. Therefore, this compact, outline format is specifically designed for quick reference and easy review to facilitate making these principles habits in our lives.

In this "adulterous and sinful generation" we must be diligent to employ every principle the Scriptures give us in our struggle against sin in order to live above sin's enslaving grip. We must become sensitive to the Lord and victorious over the lusts of the flesh, walking with a clear conscience before God, free to think His thoughts and do His will. We must develop new habits and thinking patterns that will enable us to avoid sin and please the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:9 and Ephesians 5:7-10). As we practice Biblical principles with diligence and make them a way of life, we will begin to experience the freedom and power that should characterize all who know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. It is my prayer that by God's grace this booklet would assist you toward this goal!

### For the Non-Christian

The non-Christian is at a great disadvantage in overcoming temptation because unlike the Christian, he or she does not have forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14), a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-11), and the intercessory work of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1) all working on his or her behalf. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh (John 1:1-18); He came to set us free from the power of sin and the judgment and eternal damnation that it brings. Consider the following points:

1. God is holy and perfect in every way. In His holiness, God made laws for His creation, to be holy as He is holy and to avoid those things that are reprehensible to Him. The consequence for breaking His laws is to be separated from Him forever, in eternal punishment. Since all have sinned (except Jesus Christ) this presents a crisis for each human being. Everyone whose sin has not been taken away will be cast into the lake of fire.
  - “Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)
  - “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18)
  - “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)
  - “...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord...” (1 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
  - “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds...and if anyone’s name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:12, 15)
  - See also Matthew 15:18-20, 26:41-46, Romans 2:5-6, Ephesians 2:1-3, Hebrews 10:26-31, 39.
2. Jesus Christ, God’s Son and God in the flesh, came into the world, being born of a virgin, for the sole purpose of redeeming mankind, to give an acceptable sacrifice to God so that God would overlook sins committed against Him. The blood sacrifice and death of Jesus on the cross is the only thing that God recognizes as capable of taking away sin. This is why Jesus had to die; His blood is the only appeasement for sin that God will accept. Nothing else will do. And because Jesus was sinless, He rose again from the dead, death having no claim on or power over him, thus becoming the One and only Savior available to mankind.
  - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-18)
  - “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.” (John 14:6)
  - “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)
  - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Romans 5:8-10)
  - “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all

things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;" (Hebrews 1:1-3) "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed by blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22)

- "...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- See also Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 1:1-14, 9:22, 27-28, 10:1-39, 1 Peter 2:21-24, 3:18.

3. How can one be free from sin, given new life in Jesus, and escape the judgment to come? You can receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus by acknowledging to God that you are a sinner and believing that Jesus died and rose again to save you personally. God extends a free gift of salvation to each individual which cannot be earned by any amount money or so called "good works." God makes His salvation free to all, small and great, rich and poor, on the basis of faith, apart from works or human efforts. Cry out to Him for mercy and salvation, confessing you are a sinner and believing in Jesus Christ to take away your sins and make you one of His children. May the Lord bless you and grant you His eternal life as you read and believe His Word and earnestly seek Him!

- "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His Name." (John 1:12)
- "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil." (John 3:16-19)
- "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me shall live even if he dies. And He who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25-26)
- "'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" (Acts 16:30-31)
- "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5) "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)
- "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Romans 10:9-20)
- "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that His is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)
- See also John 3:36, 5:24, 38-47, 6:29-40, 7:37-39, 8:23-24, 20:31, Acts 10:38-43, 15:7-11, Romans chapters 3 and 4, Galatians 2:20-3:14, 22, Titus 3:4-7, 1 John 1:8-2:2, 5:10-13.



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## BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR DAILY VICTORY

### A. REBUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

Preventative measures to minimize the severity and frequency of temptations.

***“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.  
Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.  
Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”***  
(James 4:7-8)

#### 1. REVERE God and fear Him.

*“And by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.” (Proverbs 16:6b)*

The first step in overcoming temptation is to keep in perspective who the Almighty God is. He is our Creator and the Judge of all we do and speak (2 Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 12:3). We fondly think of God as a loving, forgiving Father, and He is, but how much do we ponder the fact that our loving Father is so holy as to create fear and trembling in those who come into His presence (Isaiah 6:5, Revelation 1:17), a God who hates sin and has indignation toward it every day (Psalm 7:11), and a God who will discipline us to make us holy? He will suffer no fools. He is opposed to the proud, and views the proud in heart as “an abomination” (Proverbs 16:5). All unbelievers will spend eternity in the lake of fire because of sin (Revelation 21:8). As Christians, we ought to be more concerned about sin, not less, and we will not get away with sin for He will discipline us (Hebrews 12:5-11). But because God is patient, and because so many around us are “doing it,” we think we can go along in our sin and it’s “okay,” or we fool ourselves into thinking that just because God does not punish or correct us immediately that He doesn’t mind or that He doesn’t really think it’s all that bad or the classic self-placating excuse, “God understands...” — but we are only deceiving ourselves. With a healthy fear of the Lord we will be aware of our sin, grieve over it, and be on guard against it. The first step in overcoming temptation, then, is to see God in His awesome holiness, through eyes of faith, and live our lives from an eternal viewpoint, knowing that “our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29).

- **Fear God that you may not sin.**  
EXODUS 20:20, DEUTERONOMY 10:12, JOB 1:8, 2:3, PSALM 4:4-5, 33:18, 34:7-9, 130:3-4, PROVERBS 8:13, 14:27, 16:6, 19:23, JEREMIAH 32:39-40, HEBREWS 4:1, 1 PETER 1:17-19
- **Do not provoke God to anger or put Him to the test with your sin.**  
DEUTERONOMY 28:58-59, PSALM 7:12, 76:7, 78:17-33, 90:7-11, 99:8, MATTHEW 4:7, ACTS 5:9
- **Humble yourself before God and tremble at His Word.**  
PROVERBS 3:7-8, 11:2, 14:16, 16:18, 18:12, 29:23, ISAIAH 66:2, DANIEL 4:37, PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13, JAMES 4:6, 10, 1 PETER 5:6

## A. REBUILD Your Relationship with the Lord

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- **Recognize pride and how it makes you stumble. Recognize that God is opposed to the proud.**  
PROVERBS 3:7-8, 15:33, 16:5, 18, 22:4, 1 PETER 5:5-7
- **Recognize that God sees and will judge all thoughts, words, and deeds.**  
PSALM 90:8, ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14, JEREMIAH 17:10, MARK 4:22, ROMANS 2:16, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10, HEBREWS 4:12-13, 1 PETER 4:5
- **Know that God will discipline you to make you holy.**  
PSALM 39:11, PROVERBS 16:5, GALATIANS 6:7-8, HEBREWS 2:2, 12:5-11, REVELATION 3:19
- **Submit to God and to those in authority over you.**  
ROMANS 13:1-7, COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1, JAMES 4:7, 1 PETER 2:13-3:7, 5:5
- **Fear the Lord that you may gain wisdom.**  
PROVERBS 1:7
- **Do not fear or trust in man.**  
1 SAMUEL 15:24, PROVERBS 29:25, ISAIAH 51:7-8, 12-13, JEREMIAH 17:5-8, MATTHEW 10:28
- **Do not trust in yourself.**  
PROVERBS 3:5-6, 16:25, 28:26

## 2. REPENT and confess your sins to God.

*“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.” (Proverbs 28:13)*

Repentance and confession play a critical role in overcoming temptation. God commands that we confess our sins to Him and to one another (1 John 1:6-10, James 5:16) and repent (Revelation 3:19). According to John, denying we are sinners is calling God a liar. Confessing our sins is humbling, and it requires us to think through and articulate exactly what we have done that is wrong. Even though God already knows about our sins, at times it is difficult to acknowledge them to Him and confess and ask His forgiveness. Pride and self-righteousness get in the way, as it is far easier to make excuses or justify our sin to ourselves and others than it is to confess that we are wrong. At other times we sin and don't even realize it, because we are ignorant or forgetful of the Scriptures, or we have become callous. Whatever the reason, sin that is not confessed and forsaken creates a barrier between us and God, hinders our fellowship with Him, and provokes Him (Isaiah 59:2). Repentance, similar to confession, is a turning away from sin, a rejection of sinful behavior and commitment to follow God's commandments. Whereas confession is a one time act after we sin, repentance involves ongoing action to keep ourselves from sin in the future. How to do this is covered in more detail throughout this booklet. Another important aspect of confession is to confess our sins to those we have offended and ask their forgiveness, with all sincerity and without trying to lay blame on anyone else. The next steps we must take to get right with God and overcome temptation are to confess our sins and repent.

- **Confess your sins to God quickly; do not justify them or make excuses for them.**  
PSALM 25:7, 11, 18, 32:5, 38:18, 51:1-19, 79:8-9, PROVERBS 20:9, 28:13, 1 JOHN 1:8-10, REVELATION 2:4-5, 3:3, 19
- **Realize that you have a merciful and sympathetic Advocate, Jesus Christ.**  
HEBREWS 2:17-18, 4:15-16, 9:14, 1 JOHN 2:1-2, REVELATION 3:19-20
- **Receive God's chastening, and give thanks for it.**  
PSALM 94:12, 119:75, PROVERBS 3:11-12, JEREMIAH 5:3, 10:24, HEBREWS 12:5-11
- **God already knows your sin but wants you to acknowledge it yourself. Realize that confession, repentance, and forgiving others are prerequisite to enjoying God's forgiveness and blessing.**  
PROVERBS 28:13, ISAIAH 30:15, JEREMIAH 3:11-14, MATTHEW 6:12-15, 18:21-35, 1 JOHN 1:8-10
- **Confess your sins to others privately or perhaps as a public testimony, so that they may help you.**  
ACTS 19:18, JAMES 5:16

## A. REBUILD Your Relationship with the Lord

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- **Hate sin as God hates it; see evil as He sees it.**  
PSALM 51:3-4, 97:10, 119:104, 128, 163, PROVERBS 6:16-19, 16:5, AMOS 5:14-15, REVELATION 2:6
- **Repent of pride, self-centeredness, grumbling, and hardness of heart.**  
1 SAMUEL 15:23, PSALM 78:7-38, PROVERBS 8:13, JEREMIAH 4:4, LUKE 18:9-14, 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-3, 10:9-12
- **Repent of lust and immoral thoughts and behavior.**  
MATTHEW 5:28, 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11, 18-20, 10:6-8, EPHESIANS 5:3, COLOSSIANS 3:5-6
- **Repent of drunkenness, foolishness, unwholesome words, and wasted time.**  
PSALM 90:12, PROVERBS 14:16, 23:29-35, EPHESIANS 4:29, 5:4, 14-18
- **Repent of a love of money, coveting, greed, and loving the things of the world.**  
EXODUS 20:17, MARK 8:34-38, LUKE 12:15, COLOSSIANS 3:5, 1 TIMOTHY 6:9-11, HEBREWS 13:5, 1 JOHN 2:15-17
- **Repent of anger, fear, anxiety, lying, and all other evil thoughts, words, and actions.**  
EXODUS 20:1-17, PROVERBS 16:32, MATTHEW 5:22, EPHESIANS 4:25-32, COLOSSIANS 3:8-10
- **Take responsibility for your actions; don't blame your sin on God or others.**  
JOB 42:1-6, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13, JAMES 1:13-16, 2 PETER 1:3
- **Realize that when you sin you sin against God.**  
PSALM 51:4

### 3. **REMOVE** everything from your surroundings that makes you stumble.

*“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Romans 13:14)*

We need to remove ourselves from the presence of things or individuals who make us stumble. We need to get away from the things that tempt us. It is extremely difficult to keep one's mind set on the things above when our flesh is being continually enticed by sinful things, including things that may be out of sight but still accessible to us. This is particularly true for substances that our bodies crave and become addicted to, such as drugs, tobacco, alcohol, pornography, immoral habits, etc. We must remove any and all things in our lives that have even the remotest possibility of taking us back to sin, such as drugs and alcohol. Throw out or destroy any and all pornography in every form – movies, books, magazines – and remove any chance of going to pornographic internet sites by using a filtering program, a must for men. Stop going to or watching movies that depict immorality, and cancel your cable television if it is a source of temptation. Remove from your home any occult objects or things that bother your conscience. Don't worry about what it may have cost; no amount of money is worth your stumbling in sin. Don't go to parties or places where there are things that will be a struggle for you. If there are people who are tempting you to sinful behaviors, share the gospel with them and stop associating with them. “Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good morals.” (1 Corinthians 15:33) Find godly Christians to associate with, to build you up. Eve sinned because she was found near enough to the tree to gaze at its fruit. Don't go near the tree, and don't keep its fruit in your possession.

- **Stay away from the tree! Do not gaze at its fruit. Don't go near temptation's door.**  
GENESIS 3:6, PROVERBS 5:8, 7:7-9, 25, 23:29-35
- **Remove from your possession alcohol, drugs, food, magazines, or anything that makes you stumble.**  
ISAIAH 30:22, MATTHEW 5:29-30, ACTS 19:19
- **Set up barriers to sin; make it difficult if not impossible to proceed in the way of sin. Limit and control access to the internet and other potentially harmful things. Make no provision for the flesh.**  
PSALM 141:3-4, JEREMIAH 4:1, ROMANS 13:14

## A. REBUILD Your Relationship with the Lord

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- **Turn off the movies and TV!!!!!! Refuse to set any worthless thing before your eyes.**  
PSALM 101:3-4
- **Do not listen to the counsel of the unrighteous, and do not participate in their deeds.**  
PSALM 1, PROVERBS 5:3-6, 7:10-23, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:33, EPHESIANS 5:6-17,  
1 PETER 2:11-12, 4:3-4
- **Take note of times and circumstances that bring temptation and avoid them.**  
PROVERBS 27:12
- **Restrain your feet from every evil way. Abhor what is evil.**  
PSALM 18:23, 119:101, PROVERBS 4:14-15, 23-27, ROMANS 12:9

## 4. RENEW your mind daily in the Word of God.

*“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)*

Perhaps the greatest way to strengthen our relationship with the Lord and be able to avoid and resist temptation is to spend a lot of time in God’s Word, reading it, meditating on it, studying it, and memorizing it. To the extent this is your delight and you invest time and effort doing it, you will grow strong in faith and be more able to see and avoid temptation. Jesus commands us to abide in Him (John 15:1-7), and He makes the incredible promise that if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we can ask whatever we wish, and it will be done for us (John 15:7). Jesus tells us that those who abide in His word are truly disciples of His and will know the truth and be free. Some of God’s great promises for us in this life are contingent upon meditating on His word day and night (Psalm 1). God’s Word must become our constant desire, with no excuses about not having time (how much TV did you watch today?), and it is a taste that must be developed and nurtured to become a habit. But once spending time with God in His Word becomes a strong desire and habit in our lives, oh what a delight it truly is! If you are bored by or disinterested in the Scriptures, it shows that you either don’t know what you are missing or you have desires for earthly things that crowd out the desires for the heavenly. Make time daily for meditation on and study of the Scriptures – those who do not are not serious about overcoming temptation. God will bless you for it, and temptation will find it difficult to gain a foothold in your mind, thereby making it more easily defeated.

- **Meditate on God’s Word throughout the day; renew your mind in the Word.**  
JOSHUA 1:8, PSALM 1:1-3, 63:6, ROMANS 12:1-2, EPHESIANS 4:23, COLOSSIANS 3:16
- **Abide in God’s Word, becoming Jesus’ true disciple, and be free.**  
JOHN 8:31-32, 15:7
- **Develop an insatiable thirst for God’s Word; make it your delight; love it more than all riches.**  
PSALM 1:2, 19:7-11, 119:14, 16, 24, 47-48, 72, 92, 97, 127, 143, 174, PROVERBS 16:20, 1 PETER 2:2
- **Study the Bible so that you know all that God considers to be sin and can avoid it.**  
EXODUS 20:3-17, 1 SAMUEL 15:22-23, MATTHEW 5:21-7:27, GALATIANS 5:19-21, EPHESIANS 4:25-6:9, 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17
- **Memorize Scripture to help you avoid sin, especially verses pertaining to problem sins.**  
PSALM 119:9-11, PROVERBS 6:23-24, MATTHEW 5:22, 28, 6:24-25, 15:18-19, EPHESIANS 4:25-32, 5:15-18, 1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-7, 1 TIMOTHY 6:10, 17, JAMES 3:16, 4:1-4, 1 JOHN 2:15-17
- **Meditate on God’s Word that you may gain wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, especially the knowledge of His will.**  
PROVERBS 1:7, 2:1-5:23, PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11, COLOSSIANS 1:9-12
- **Believe God and His Word!**  
PROVERBS 3:5-6, 16:20, 30:5, MARK 11:22-24, JOHN 14:1, HEBREWS 10:38, 11:6

### 5. **REKINDLE a zealous love for the Lord.**

*“And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind”. This is the great and foremost commandment.’ ” (Matthew 22:37-38)*

The ultimate goal in overcoming temptation is to get to the point where our love for the Lord motivates us to resist temptation, not just our fear of punishment or getting caught. Loving the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength is the greatest commandment. Our interest in the world and the flesh will diminish proportionately as our love for the Lord increases. This includes concern for His Name, not wanting to dishonor Him with our sin, and wanting to be spiritually strong so we are available for His work. As we love our neighbors as ourselves and as God has called us to love them, we will not sin against them. How can we be impatient and angry with someone if we have an attitude of love for them? How can we lust for another person if we are first and foremost concerned about their eternal destiny? Lust is the opposite of love, as it originates from extreme self-centeredness. When we consistently refuse the enticements of sin because we love and want to please the One who has created us and who has given His life for us and because we love our neighbors as ourselves, then we are well on the way to victory in our struggle against sin.

- **Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.**  
DEUTERONOMY 6:5, PSALM 31:23, MATTHEW 22:35-40
- **Delight yourself in the Lord. Purpose to be a delight to Him, a person after His own heart.**  
1 SAMUEL 13:14, PSALM 37:4, 42:1-2, JOHN 8:29, ACTS 13:22, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9, EPHESIANS 5:10, COLOSSIANS 1:9-10, 1 JOHN 3:22
- **Purify your heart. Be not double-minded. Uproot the love of money and love of the world.**  
PROVERBS 23:4-5, 28:22, MATTHEW 6:19-24, 1 TIMOTHY 6:9-19, HEBREWS 13:5, JAMES 1:5-8, 4:4, 8-10, 1 JOHN 2:15-17
- **Fix your hope on Jesus Christ and His appearing, not on anything on this earth.**  
1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19, 2 TIMOTHY 4:8, HEBREWS 12:1-2, 1 PETER 1:13, 1 JOHN 3:3
- **Set your heart to seek the Lord.**  
DEUTERONOMY 4:29-31, 2 CHRONICLES 12:14, PSALM 27:8, 34:10, 119:2, ISAIAH 55:6
- **Demonstrate your love for God by obedience to His Word. Do not leave your first love.**  
DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13, 11:1, 30:15-16, 1 SAMUEL 15:22-23, JOHN 14:15, 21, 23, 1 JOHN 2:4-6, 3:22-24, REVELATION 2:4
- **Demonstrate your love for God by loving the brethren, other Christians.**  
JOHN 15:12, 1 JOHN 3:10-18, 23, 4:7, 19-21

### 6. **REDEDICATE yourself as a living sacrifice to God.**

*“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1)*

Sometimes we sin because we view ourselves as in control and in charge. Driven by our own agenda about what we want to do, we sin because we have not submitted ourselves fully to the Lord. God calls us to present ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice, something which is given up and consumed for His purposes. This implies that we surrender our plans and desires to the Lord – every aspiration and interest, every goal and pursuit. Selfish ambition is said to lead to disorder and “every evil thing” (James 3:13-16), and yet if we are honest with ourselves, and really ask ourselves why we do the things we do and what motivates us, we will find plenty of selfish ambition, the very thing that will cause us to stumble time and again. The next step, then in overcoming temptation, is to consider yourself as a sacrifice to God, dead to self interests and goals, and then take up your cross daily to follow Jesus. Listen for His leading, and do what He wants done. There are no free people; you are either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:16-20). Rededicate your life to Christ and His service, and surrender to Him all ambitions, goals, and plans. Learn to listen and replace your

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interests and desires with God's. This will help you overcome the many sins which result from self-centeredness and selfish ambition. It's not about you; it's all about Christ.

- **Present your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**  
ROMANS 6:12-14, 12:1-2
- **Consider yourself a slave to God, not free to do as you please.**  
ROMANS 6:15-20, GALATIANS 5:17
- **Submit yourself wholeheartedly to learn and do the will of God.**  
PSALM 40:8, HEBREWS 10:7, 36, JAMES 4:7-8, 1 PETER 2:15
- **Put Christ's interests above your own.**  
PHILIPPIANS 2:20-21
- **Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness with diligence.**  
PSALM 119:4, MATTHEW 6:33, 2 PETER 1:5-11
- **Make it your ambition to please Jesus Christ; be the faithful slave.**  
MATTHEW 24:45-51, JOHN 8:29, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-10, COLOSSIANS 1:10, 1 JOHN 3:22
- **Consider yourself expendable for the Kingdom of God; fight the good fight.**  
2 TIMOTHY 4:6-7

## 7. REGAIN the fullness of the Spirit.

*“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)*

Jesus said that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Yet many times we sin because we are trying to do things in our way with our own strength. God saw fit in His marvelous plan of salvation to indwell each individual Christian with His Holy Spirit, a treasure that the Old Testament believers did not have available to them. God has given us unbelievable resources to walk with Him and know and obey His will. We might look at certain individuals in the Old Testament who sinned and say they should have known better or done this or that. But we have much greater revelation and far greater resources available to us to obey the truth. And yet we likewise fail in similar ways! It seems reasonable that God will judge us more severely, we who have greater knowledge, more Scripture, more examples of faithful individuals to follow, more freedom in society to choose our own paths, and most of all the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit. We have no excuse to not overcome and live fully for Christ; this is required of us. But we need to learn to rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength and not to rely on our own efforts. When we are filled with the Spirit, we will not sin. If we chose to sin, we quench the Spirit and no longer enjoy His fellowship and leading. Pray for God's fullness to indwell you each day. “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the deeds of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). There is no greater power for victory over sin than His indwelling Holy Spirit.

- **Learn what resources you have available to you in Christ and the Holy Spirit.**  
ROMANS 8:1-11, 2 PETER 1:3-4
- **Abide in Christ.**  
JOHN 15:1-8, 1 JOHN 2:6, 28, 3:6, 23-24, 4:11-16
- **Walk in a manner worthy of Christ, by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the deeds of the flesh.**  
GALATIANS 5:16-26, EPHESIANS 4:1-3, 5:18, COLOSSIANS 1:9-10
- **Rejoice, and be thankful; let your forbearing spirit be evident to all.**  
PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5, COLOSSIANS 3:15-17
- **Strive for perfection and Christ-likeness in all things; be holy in all your behavior.**  
MATTHEW 5:48, EPHESIANS 5:1, COLOSSIANS 1:28, 1 PETER 1:14-16
- **Learn to daily put off the old and put on the new.**  
ROMANS 13:14, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, GALATIANS 5:24, EPHESIANS 4:22-24, COLOSSIANS 3:9-10

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- **Learn to daily cleanse yourself from youthful lusts.**  
2 CORINTHIANS 7:1, 2 TIMOTHY 2:21-22, JAMES 4:8, 1 PETER 2:11
- **Learn to restrain your words and bridle your tongue.**  
PROVERBS 10:19, 17:27-28, 18:6-8, 19-21, 20:25, 29:20, EPHESIANS 5:4, JAMES 1:19, 3:2-12
- **Learn to control your anger.**  
PROVERBS 14:29, 16:32, 19:11, EPHESIANS 4:26-27, JAMES 1:19-20
- **Do not grieve or quench the Spirit.**  
EPHESIANS 4:30, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19
- **Be sober-minded; do not be foolish, but understand the will of the Lord.**  
EPHESIANS 5:17, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-8

## 8. RECOMMIT yourself to full obedience and service to God.

*“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)*

Once we have rededicated ourselves to God and are filled with His Spirit, we are now ready to commit ourselves fully to God’s work. Engaging in the Lord’s work gives us a focus and purpose beyond ourselves that lifts us above our circumstances. It takes our eyes off of our own needs and interests, and it helps quench those breeding grounds for sin: self-centeredness, laziness, and worldly interests. The old phrase is often true, “An idle mind is the devil’s playground.” The more engaged we are in doing meaningful work for the Lord, not only will we be accruing for ourselves reward in heaven and building God’s kingdom on earth, we will have less time to engage in activities that might lead to sin. Having preached and ministered to others, we should be even more concerned for the reputation of the Lord and should not want to dishonor Him (1 Corinthians 9:27). But let us make sure we are serving in the Spirit, paying close attention to daily renewing our minds in the word and abiding in Christ; serving the Lord in the flesh can result in arguments and strife and burnout. Doing what we are called to be doing, for the right motives and by the power of the Spirit, is yet one more way in which we can gain daily victory over temptation.

- **Purpose to bear much fruit and glorify the Father.**  
MARK 4:20, JOHN 15:8, COLOSSIANS 1:10
- **Purpose to share the gospel with the lost.**  
PROVERBS 3:6, 11:30, EPHESIANS 6:15, COLOSSIANS 4:3-6, 1 PETER 3:15-16
- **Purpose to serve, not be served.**  
MATTHEW 20:25-28, MARK 10:45, HEBREWS 10:24-25
- **Be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only.**  
MATTHEW 7:24-27, JAMES 1:22-25, 1 JOHN 2:4-6, 3:18
- **Deny yourself, die to self, and take up your cross daily.**  
MARK 8:34-38, JOHN 12:24-26, GALATIANS 2:20
- **Redeem the time; number your days.**  
PSALM 90:12, EPHESIANS 5:15-17
- **Love the brethren and others fervently, in deed and truth.**  
LUKE 10:25-37, ROMANS 12:9-13, JAMES 1:26-27, 1 PETER 4:8, 1 JOHN 3:10-18
- **Use your gifts to diligently serve the body. Be zealous for good deeds.**  
ROMANS 12:3-8, TITUS 2:11-14, 3:8, HEBREWS 6:11-12, 1 PETER 3:13, 4:10-11

**9. READY yourself and prepare for temptation.**

*“I buffet my body and make it my slave...lest I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27)*

Temptation should not take us by surprise. We should expect it to come, and we should be preparing ourselves each day for the battle. We need to “see the evil and hide,” rather than proceeding and paying the penalty (Proverbs 22:3). For example, if you are tempted by lustful thoughts, know that you will be tempted if you go to a movie with lewd content or stare at a person or gaze at a magazine; these images may stay in your mind for days and cause you to struggle with temptation long after the initial exposure is over. This is one of the insidious problems with pornographic materials: the images can stay in our minds for days, weeks, or even years, and cause us to stumble day after day. We must prevent these images from being burned in our minds by simply refusing to look at them to begin with. Avoid movies and television where you expect immoral behavior and images; screen movies before going to them, and avoid movies that contain immorality and nudity. Be prepared to turn off the television immediately if commercials or programs come on that would make you or your children stumble. If you are tempted by alcohol or other things, avoid places where it is available and avoid even looking at pictures of things that tempt you. Men can easily be tempted with lustful thoughts just by passing by a magazine stand or noticing an (increasingly common) immodestly dressed woman, even while minding our own business in a grocery store! Anticipate how and when you will be tempted, and avoid exposing your eyes and mind to it. “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

- **Daily put on the full armor of God. Prepare for the battle.**  
EPHESIANS 6:10-17, ROMANS 13:12
- **“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”**  
PROVERBS 4:23
- **See and anticipate where the evil will come from, and hide yourself.**  
PROVERBS 22:3, 27:12
- **Establish habits of discipline of the mind and body. Run in such a way that you may win.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27
- **Expect temptation to come and continually be on guard; prepare every morning to resist temptation.**  
MATTHEW 6:13, EPHESIANS 6:18, 1 PETER 5:8
- **Plan in advance how you will gain the victory over temptation; envision yourself immediately and completely resisting temptation and saying no to sin; rehearse the Christ-like response.**  
JOB 31:1, PSALM 17:3, 39:1, PSALM 50:14, 76:11, 119:57-59, DANIEL 1:8
- **Prepare to suffer in the flesh and do whatever else is necessary to avoid sin.**  
JOB 13:15, HEBREWS 12:4, 1 PETER 4:1-2

**10. REINFORCE the defenses with unceasing prayer.**

*“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13)*

Jesus teaches us to pray for deliverance from evil and for God to lead us away from temptation. He also commands us to pray at all times and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1). This is the next Rebuild step we need to do daily in our struggle to overcome sin in our lives. Every day we need to ask God to help us avoid sin, to keep us from stumbling. Make this a regular habit, to ask God for help in the morning and throughout the day, for wisdom, for a love for the Lord and for others, for commitment to do what is right, for avoidance of that which causes loss, destruction, pain, guilt, and death – to not even be tempted by those things. Ask God at the start of each day for a day of joy and peace, freedom from sin, and walking in the Spirit. God will honor this request and put a hedge around us, one more powerful line of defense against temptation and sin. If we are praying for deliverance each day, we still may be tempted, but it will not take us by surprise; we will see it sooner and have



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more opportunity to avoid it. Victory will already be on our mind, and with God helping us, we will have great advantage on the battlefield. We will have more strength and power to respond appropriately to temptation and resist it when it comes.

- **Ask daily for protection and deliverance from temptation.**  
PSALMS 17:6-9, 32:6-8, 119:10, 133, 145-147; 141:8-10, MATTHEW 6:13, 26:41
- **Ask God to keep you from sinning in word or deed.**  
PSALM 141:3-4
- **Ask for understanding of your sins and blind spots.**  
PSALM 19:12-13, 139:23-24
- **Ask for complete victory over temptation. Ask God to help you diligently keep His Word and stay on course. Ask God to give you victory over fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.**  
PSALM 119:4, 29, 36-37, 58, MATTHEW 7:7-11, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13, 1 PETER 2:11, 2 PETER 1:3-11
- **Ask for protection for others.**  
EPHESIANS 6:18, COLOSSIANS 4:2, 1 PETER 5:8-9
- **Think, pray, and seek godly counsel before taking action.**  
PROVERBS 19:2, 21:5
- **Pray according to the will of God.**  
MATTHEW 6:10, 26:39-42, 1 JOHN 5:14-15
- **Pray with expectant faith. Believe that God will do it.**  
PSALM 37:5, PROVERBS 3:5-6, MATTHEW 17:20, 18:19, 21:21-22, MARK 11:22-24, PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7, JAMES 1:5-8, 5:15
- **Pray in the Name of Christ.**  
JOHN 14:13-16, 16:23-24
- **Pray persistently; make prayer to God an unceasing habit.**  
LUKE 18:1-8, 11:5-10, EPHESIANS 6:18, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

## 11. RECRUIT an accountability partner.

*“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)*

An accountability partner is someone of the same gender with whom we meet regularly and get to know on a personal level, with whom we pray and share about our successes and needs. This person is not afraid to ask us tough questions or point out our sins to us. Men in particular need an accountability partner, a respected, trusted, spiritually mature, and likeminded man with whom we can meet with on a regular basis, preferably weekly. Although convenient, spouses are not recommended as accountability partners due to fact that they may be greatly offended and personally affected by the struggles you have and may find it difficult to be objective and helpful, firm yet understanding. Personal things shared in these meetings should be kept confidential, for once trust is broken the relationship can no longer function effectively. Spend the majority of the time praying together; pray for one another and the needs of the church, community, and nation. An accountability partner is of great practical value in our struggle to overcome temptation. First of all, our accountability partner can be praying for us in difficult times. This alone is worth the time and effort to meet with someone on a regular basis. Secondly, if we know that our accountability partner will be asking us how we are doing, particularly in the areas of our sin and temptation, it is not only encouraging and motivating to be victorious, but is also will be embarrassing to tell them we failed. So we have real motivation to try harder. Plus, they may very well have good counsel and helpful suggestions for success. Find an accountability partner, and meet regularly with them. The more time you spend in prayer together, the more progress you will see in overcoming temptation.

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- **Confess your sins to another and pray for one another.**  
JAMES 5:16
- **Seek to sharpen and encourage others.**  
PROVERBS 27:17, COLOSSIANS 3:16
- **Solicit and welcome the rebuke and admonishment of others.**  
PSALM 141:5, PROVERBS 27:6, 9, 28:23
- **Do not isolate or insulate yourself from other believers.**  
HEBREWS 3:13, 10:24-25
- **Seek, receive, and do not ignore godly wisdom and counsel.**  
PSALM 32:8, PROVERBS 4:1-22, 5:12-14, 11:14, 12:15, 13:10, 15:22, 19:20-21, 24:6, 27:9
- **Restore others who have stumbled, looking to yourself, lest you also be tempted.**  
GALATIANS 6:1

## 12. REST in the Lord, trust Him completely, and wait patiently for Him.

*“Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him...” (Psalm 37:5, 7)*

How many times do we sin because we are impatient about something, or want someone to change, or want to force something to happen that should be left alone? We want what we want when we want it, and this attitude can easily lead to sin. Saul lost the kingdom because he was too impatient to wait for Samuel (1 Samuel 13:1-14). God wants us to learn to trust matters to Him, to let His power be perfected in our weaknesses. We must learn to overcome the temptation of impatience, of trying to force things to happen or make people do things. We seldom can control our circumstances or the behaviors and choices of others. The real challenge, and joy when we are successful, is to get ourselves under control, and become fully obedient to the Lord in all He has asked us to do. Only then will we begin to see real changes in us and those around us as we see God’s power at work, doing greater and more lasting things than we could ever do ourselves. Rest in the Lord. Learn to trust Him with all cares and difficult circumstances. Learn to wait for His timing and wait for Him to fulfill your needs, and this fulfillment and His fellowship will be far better than a lifetime of anxiety, forcing our will on the situation, and sin.

- **Commit all burdens, concerns, frustrations, and irritations to God.**  
JOB 13:15, PSALM 25:15, 46:10, ISAIAH 30:15, MATTHEW 11:28-30, 1 PETER 5:6-7
- **Purpose to wait for God to act; wait for God’s timing.**  
PSALM 27:14, 37:5-7, 40:1-2, 62:5, 130:5-6, 147:11, PROVERBS 3:5-6, ISAIAH 40:31
- **Refuse to be anxious; refuse to fret or get angry.**  
PSALM 37:7-8, 42:5-11, MATTHEW 6:25-34, PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7
- **Let God’s power be perfected and made known through your weakness.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 1:25, 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10
- **Rejoice in what He is teaching you through your difficult circumstances.**  
PHILIPPIANS 4:4, 12-13, JAMES 1:12, 1 PETER 1:6-9
- **Acknowledge the Lord, boast in God, and make Him your strength.**  
1 SAMUEL 17:37, 45-47, PSALM 20:5-7, 34:1-3, 44:8, 46:1, PROVERBS 3:5-6, JEREMIAH 9:23-24
- **Do not retaliate or take revenge in any way.**  
PROVERBS 20:22, 24:29, ROMANS 12:17-21

# OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

## *BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR DAILY VICTORY*

### **B. RESIST TEMPTATION WHEN IT COMES**

**React quickly and decisively to defeat temptation and avoid sin.**

*“Submit therefore to God. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**  
Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.  
Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”  
(James 4:7-8)*

#### **1. RECOGNIZE temptation; do not be ignorant as to what sin is and how you are tempted.**

*“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows this he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)*

The Rebuild steps, when practiced diligently, will make us much stronger in our walk with the Lord and will put us in a much better position to resist temptation when we are tempted by it day by day. But even the well prepared will be tempted, and so these next twelve principles in overcoming temptation have to do with how we are to respond and resist when we are tempted. The first principle in resisting temptation when it comes is to clearly recognize when we are being tempted and what the sin is we are being tempted to commit. Many Christians habitually sin and either are not aware that they are sinning or have become complacent and have lost consciousness that a particular behavior quenches the Spirit and is sin. Perhaps we have been deceived by ideas like “everyone does it,” “I can’t help myself,” “they make me so...,” “God understands,” “I’m not hurting anyone...” etc. God will hold us accountable for every sin, even every careless word (Matthew 12:36, 2 Corinthians 5:10). We must diligently seek out and root out all behavior that is sin and cease with the excuses and complacency. Yes, God is love, but He also calls us to holiness and a very high standard, even perfection (Matthew 5:48). Not out of a nervous paranoia but from a true yearning for His holiness in our lives, we are to “work out your salvation, with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12-13).

We must get to the point where we recognize exactly when and how we are being tempted to sin; we must be crystal clear about what sin is and how it comes about. An example of this is getting angry. It is all too easy to slip into the habit of allowing ourselves to become worked up, irritated, angry, or frustrated about usually relatively insignificant things. We then compound the issue by saying hurtful things or behaving in a sinful manner altogether unbecoming of a person indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We allow ourselves to grumble or complain or be dissatisfied when in reality we as Christians have been undeservedly blessed beyond our wildest imaginations and should be grateful and thankful at all times for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Not controlling our anger or not having a thankful attitude are examples of sins we need to become conscious of and root out.

## B. RESIST Temptation When It Comes

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We also must consider the effect of our words and actions on others, particularly young people or those with weaker faith. It is common for so called “secret” sins and things that we try to hide to come to light at some point in time; we should count on someone at some time finding out about the hidden things we are doing. We must evaluate all thoughts, words, and actions by the highest of standards. The first priority, then, in resisting temptation when it comes is to clearly know what sin is and when we are being tempted to sin.

- **Learn to recognize all that God considers to be sin.**  
EXODUS 20:1-17, 1 SAMUEL 15:22-23, MATTHEW 5:21-7:27, 15:18-20, ROMANS 12-13, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:6-14, 15:34, GALATIANS 5:19-21, 26, EPHESIANS 4:25-5:18, COLOSSIANS 3:5-25, 1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-8, 5:14-20, JAMES 1:19-22, 3:6-4:17, 1 PETER 2:11-3:7, 4:1-16, 1 JOHN 2:4-6
- **Do not be ignorant of Satan’s schemes or the deceptive words and ways of his servants.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 15:33, 2 CORINTHIANS 2:11, 11:14-15, EPHESIANS 2:1-3, 5:5-10
- **Examine everything carefully, and be willing to ask yourself tough questions about your actions.**  
1 THESSALONIANS 5:21-22
- **Ask, “Am I motivated by jealousy, pleasure, or selfish ambition? Does this thing result in strife and quarrelling? What is the fruit and benefit of this thing?”**  
COLOSSIANS 3:11-14, JAMES 3:13-4:4
- **Ask, “Am I motivated by love for the world, lust of the flesh and eyes or the boastful pride of life?”**  
1 JOHN 2:15-17
- **Ask, “Is it good for my neighbor or could it make someone, especially a little one, stumble?”**  
MATTHEW 18:6-7, ROMANS 14:13-21, 1 CORINTHIANS 8:7-13
- **Ask, “Is this thing lawful, profitable, and edifying?”**  
1 CORINTHIANS 6:12, 10:23-24, JAMES 1:25-27
- **Ask, “Is this thing able to control me?”**  
1 CORINTHIANS 6:12, 9:24-27
- **Ask, “Am I making the most of my time, and do I understand what the will of the Lord is?”**  
EPHESIANS 5:15-17, COLOSSIANS 1:9-10
- **Ask, “Am I able to do this thing by faith, without fear?” Whatever is not of faith is sin.**  
ROMANS 14:23, 1 JOHN 4:18
- **Ask, “Do I manifest the fruit of the Spirit when I do this thing? If not, why not?”**  
GALATIANS 5:22-23
- **Ask, “Am I doing this out of love for the Lord and others?”**  
MATTHEW 22:36-40, JOHN 15:11-12, ROMANS 14:15, 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-8, EPHESIANS 5:1-2, COLOSSIANS 3:12-14, JAMES 2:8, 1 PETER 1:22, 1 JOHN 4:7-12
- **Is this thing being done or said in haste or in anger? Learn to think things through ahead of time and to pause before speaking or taking action. Learn to control your anger.**  
PROVERBS 10:19, 16:32, 17:27-28, EPHESIANS 4:26-27, JAMES 1:19
- **Is your conscience bothered by this thing or trying to warn you not to do or say this thing? If so, STOP and do not do or say this thing. Learn to be sensitive to you conscience and God’s leading.**  
ACTS 24:16, ROMANS 2:14-16, 8:14, GALATIANS 5:16-18, 25, 1 TIMOTHY 1:5, 18-19, HEBREWS 13:18, 1 PETER 3:16
- **Would you do or say this thing if Jesus were with you or your family and friends were with you? Would you be pleased if others knew you did or said this thing? If not, then it may very well be sin.**  
MATTHEW 10:26, MARK 4:21-23, 9:33-34
- **Can you imagine Jesus doing or saying this thing? If not, then STOP and think through why not. Develop the habit of filtering your actions and words by the highest of standards, Jesus Christ.**  
MATTHEW 5:48, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1, PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

**2. REALIZE the potential consequences and opportunity temptation brings.**

*“For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:8)*

All temptation brings about the possibility of negative consequences for those who succumb and blessings for those who successfully resist. The consequences for sinning can be more severe than we ever thought possible and may negatively affect areas of our lives we do not expect, even those areas most precious to us. When we sin, we reject God’s ways and commandments, we ruin our clear conscience before God, and our prayers are hindered. Satan can then more freely advance his many evil causes when Christians choose sin and choose to make themselves “slaves of sin.” Conversely, the benefits of successfully resisting temptation and obeying the will of God are freedom, blessings, and abundant life. We know about men such as Joseph and Job today for the faithfulness they exhibited thousands of years ago in the direst of circumstances, and we see the blessings they enjoyed as a result of their faithfulness. Each time we are tempted we have the opportunity to build up or destroy, to store up blessings on earth and in heaven, or to suffer loss on earth and in heaven. The choice is ours. The second step then in resisting temptation when it comes is to quickly realize the consequence of failure and giving in to temptation, and the rewards for obedience and victory.

- **Realize that when you sin, you become a slave of sin; you give up control. “You cannot eat just one.”**  
PSALM 119:133, MATTHEW 6:24, JOHN 8:34, ROMANS 6:16-20, GALATIANS 5:17
- **Realize that when you choose sin the consequences will be more severe than you expect or imagine; you may pay for it with what is most precious to you.**  
1 SAMUEL 15:22-28, 2 SAMUEL 12:9-14, PSALM 39:7-11, GALATIANS 6:7-8, REVELATION 2:5
- **Realize that when you choose sin you are rejecting God’s blessings and reward, and your prayers may be hindered.**  
PSALM 16:11, ROMANS 2:6-7, 10, 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-15, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10, 1 PETER 3:7, REVELATION 2:7, 10, 17, 25-28, 3:5, 12, 20-21
- **Realize that when you sin you may be causing little ones to stumble, or giving Satan permission to attack loved ones or affect things important to you. You are the first line of defense for those under your care, and you can affect many more than just yourself by your obedience or disobedience!**  
EXODUS 20:4-6, 2 SAMUEL 12:14, JOB 31:9-12, PROVERBS 5:7-14, MATTHEW 18:6-10
- **Realize that when you choose sin you are despising the blood and Name of Jesus Christ, you are mocking God, and you are testing His patience. You are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.**  
MATTHEW 4:7, LUKE 4:12, ACTS 5:9, ROMANS 1:18, HEBREWS 6:1-9, 10:26-29
- **Realize that if you choose sin God’s enemies will use you as an excuse to mock and blaspheme God.**  
JOB 1:9-11, 2:3-6, 2 SAMUEL 12:14, ROMANS 2:17-24
- **Realize that when you successfully resist temptation you are proving you love the Lord Jesus and are a true follower of His. Don’t behave in the same way as the lost and perishing.**  
MATTHEW 7:15-27, 25:41-46, JOHN 14:15, 21, ROMANS 2:25-29, 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10, GALATIANS 5:19-21, 1 JOHN 3:7-10, REVELATION 21:8, 22:15
- **Realize that the temptation may be for your testing, to prove your faithfulness, so God can bless you and entrust more to you (e.g. examples of Joseph and Job). View temptation as an opportunity to grow stronger in Christ and bring glory to God (but of course don’t go looking for it).**  
GENESIS 39, 41, EXODUS 20:4-6, JOB 1:8-12, 2:3-6, 42:10-17, ROMANS 5:3-5, GALATIANS 6:7-8, 1 PETER 1:6-7, 2 PETER 1:9-11

**3. REMEMBER the pain, destruction, wrath, and judgment that results from sin.**

*“Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.” (Romans 6:21)*

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God hates all sin and disobedience (Hebrews 2:2). Hell itself is an example of God's hatred for sin and the ultimate consequences of it. For the Christian whose sins are graciously forgiven, the cross and our Savior's pain and humiliation should serve as a constant reminder of God's wrath toward sin. We must take each and every sin very seriously and remember how terrible God's judgments are against them. We can recall examples of how we or others we know have sinned in the past and have suffered the consequences for that sin. In addition, we have many examples and warnings in Scripture of the pain, loss, and destruction that an individual or an individual's family or nation can suffer as a result of failing to obey God's commandments.

In addition to giving us examples of those who have sinned (1 Corinthians 10:11), the Scriptures graphically compare sin to repulsive things, including a dog eating its own vomit (Proverbs 20:17). One effective technique is to replace in our minds the thing that is tempting to us with graphic images of repulsive things, such as vomit, or seeing the nails begin driven into our Savior's hands and feet, or chewing a mouth full of dirt or gravel, or flies and maggots crawling on a corpse. Associate in your mind a particular sin with a repulsive visual image, and its allure can diminish markedly. It may sound extreme, but part of our problem is that we don't understand how heinous sin really is; we minimize the offense it is to God and the horrible effect it can have on others. It's like firemen taking an hour lunch break while people burn and perish in the flames. How much of a part do you want to have in people's rejection of the Savior and their eternal punishment in the lake of fire? To the extent that we can remember these negative consequences and repulsive images when we are tempted, the allure of temptation will be diminished. Temptation is a very serious issue, and our problem is that we think of it fondly when it ought to repulse and anger us. If Satan is attacking us in our minds and our imaginations, then let us use the power of our imaginations to overcome it. See temptation as God sees it. When tempted, remember and visualize the ultimate consequences. Sin is not worth it.

- **Remember the hatred with which God hates sin; remember the cross of Christ; remember that God's judgment and wrath and hell itself will come as a result of sin.**  
MATTHEW 26:57-27:54, ROMANS 1:18, 2:1-10, EPHESIANS 5:6, COLOSSIANS 3:5-6, 1 PETER 2:8, REVELATION 20:11-15, 21:8, 22:15
- **Remember the "benefits" of sin: embarrassment, loss, pain, guilt, destruction, and death.**  
JOB 31:9-12, PROVERBS 5:7-14, 6:26-35, 7:22-23, ROMANS 2:5-9, 6:21-23, 8:6-8, JAMES 1:15
- **Remember that every sin will be brought to light and judged; God hears and sees all words and deeds.**  
2 SAMUEL 12:11-12, JOB 31:4, PSALM 44:20-21, 90:8, 119:168, 139:1-6, ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14, JEREMIAH 16:17-18, MATTHEW 10:26, 12:36, ROMANS 2:1-11, 1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-15, HEBREWS 4:13
- **Remember the pain of God's discipline (even though it is a very good thing He does discipline us!); know that He will certainly discipline us for disobedience in order to make us holy.**  
PSALM 7:12, 39:11, JEREMIAH 17:10, HEBREWS 2:2, 12:5-11
- **Remember that the pleasure of sin is fleeting, the pain is long-lived, and the consequences may very well be permanent.**  
2 SAMUEL 12:10-12, PROVERBS 7:23-27, HEBREWS 11:25
- **Remember the hurt and embarrassment that your family and other Christians will suffer because of your sin.**  
PSALM 69:6, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:26
- **Remember that when you choose sin, you take yourself out of the battle against forces of darkness, out of a position of significant influence with God in prayer, thereby giving Satan an opportunity to advance his evil cause.**  
1 JOHN 3:19-22
- **Remember Biblical examples of those who succumbed to temptation, given for our instruction.**  
GENESIS 3:1-21 (ADAM & EVE), 4:1-15 (CAIN), 19:1-38 (SODOM & LOT), EXODUS 15:22-17:7, 32:1-33:7, NUMBERS 11:1-14:45, 16:1-17:13, 25:1-18, JUDGES 1-21, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13 (NATION OF ISRAEL), 1 SAMUEL 2:12-4:22 (ELI & SONS), 1 SAMUEL 13-16, 22, 28 (SAUL), 2 SAMUEL 11-12

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(DAVID), 1 KINGS 11 (SOLOMON), 1 KINGS 12 - 2 CHRONICLES (THE KINGS OF ISRAEL & JUDAH), MATTHEW 16:21-23, 26:69-75, GALATIANS 2:11-14 (PETER), ACTS 5:1-11 (ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA), REVELATION 2-3 (SEVEN CHURCHES)

- **Remember Biblical illustrations and analogies of sin, e.g. “bitter as wormwood,” “sharp as a two-edged sword,” “mouth filled with gravel,” “fire in the bosom,” and “a dog that returns to its vomit,” and replace the thoughts of the temptation with these and other graphic and repulsive images.**  
PROVERBS 5:4, 6:27, 20:17, 25:14, 18, 19, 26, 28, 26:11, 13-14, 17-21, 2 PETER 2:22

### 4. **RECITE Scripture and rebuke evil in the Name of the Lord.**

*“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’” (Matthew 4:10)*

When tempted in the wilderness by Satan, Jesus responded to each temptation by quoting God’s law as given in the book of Deuteronomy. This is a simple yet powerful way to quench temptation, as it simultaneously energizes our spirits to obedience and reminds us what sin is. Therefore, it is necessary to memorize Scriptures that pertain to the specific sins with which we are tempted. For example, if tempted by anger or lust, recite Matthew 5:21-22 or 5:27-30. The verses must be known by heart for immediate recall at any time to maximize their effectiveness. A vague recollection that something might be sin is not nearly as effective. You must know well the Scriptures that pertain to your sin. After the final temptation, Jesus rebuked Satan and told him to “Be gone!” thus ending the confrontation. This is a very powerful weapon in resisting temptation.

- **Recite Scripture that pertains to the temptation.**  
PSALM 119:9-11, MATTHEW 4:1-11, LUKE 4:1-13
- **Articulate the reasons for resisting.**  
GENESIS 39:7-9, MATTHEW 16:23
- **Recognize and rebuke the demonic influences behind the temptation.**  
MATTHEW 4:10, 16:23, MARK 16:17, ACTS 16:18, JUDE 9
- **Meditate on God’s Word when anxieties and worries increase.**  
PSALM 94:19

### 5. **REFUSE temptation immediately, decisively, and persistently.**

*“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (Romans 6:12-13a)*

For temptation to be effectively repulsed, our response to it must be immediate and decisive. If we respond tentatively or with uncertainty, if we leave the door open in any way to temptation, temptation will keep seeking us out and trying to defeat us. When temptation presses hard, a hesitant or unsure response is as good as an invitation in the front door; a wishy-washy response is like fuel to the fires of temptation. As flood waters press against a house, penetrating every crack and opening not sealed tight, so also temptation will find and exploit any mind that is not completely “sealed” against the possibility of sin. Some might be firm against temptation for a short while, yet they allow for the possibility of sinning, or they keep thinking about the temptation in their minds, or they stay near the source of the temptation. They do not take decisive action to refuse the temptation and make it impossible for them to sin.

For example, if you are tempted by pornography on the internet or lustful images on television, simply changing the website or channel is a crucial first step, but it is not enough because you can always simply go back again. You must close and lock every door and window by turning off the computer or television and getting out of the room, then asking someone else to install safeguards to keep you permanently away from it. Temptation is

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extremely persistent, and any response that is not immediate, decisive, and persistent is simply telling temptation to “come back later.” We will only overcome temptation when we really mean business and take actions accordingly. (A word of caution: taking measures to remove the source of temptation will not permanently keep us from sin, for we can always find ways to undo the things we put in place to help us. Putting in place safeguards against temptation is like putting up a railing at the edge of a cliff; a person can always find a way to jump over the fence if they really want to, but the fence is there to make it more difficult to jump and to prevent the inadvertent slip. Fences are good, but ultimately we must Rebuild our relationship with the Lord and replace the desire for sin with a desire for His righteousness.)

But even when we refuse temptation immediately and decisively, it is not uncommon for the temptation to come right back again, as if our efforts at refusal did no good at all. This can be discouraging if we are not aware of the fact that temptation is often very persistent because the desires within our own bodies for sin can burn intensely at times. To make matters worse, in times like these it may seem like God is very distant and does not care about our crisis. In these situations we must not lose heart and must not give in. Keep resisting firmly, a second, third, fourth, and fifth time and as many times as it takes. God will not resist temptation for us; He requires us to do that, and He wants to test us and train us and prove what we are made of. Your determination and endurance will be tested and stretched, seemingly beyond your abilities. Expect to be tested to the breaking point, and be resolute in resisting. We have God’s promises that He will come to our aid and bring relief; He has promised that if we resist the devil he will flee from us (James 4:7), but the devil is not repulsed lightly or easily. Tie the knot in the end of the rope and hang on. Keep resisting until temptation fades away and that joyous relief comes. The Lord’s fellowship and pleasure are well worth the struggle. Therefore, an essential step in resisting temptation when it comes is to refuse temptation immediately, decisively, and persistently.

- **Develop an immediate reaction against temptation, an automatic reflex away from sin and toward righteousness. Stand firm against the enemy, and he will flee from you.**  
JAMES 4:7, 1 PETER 5:8-9
- **Immediately hold up the shield of faith to extinguish Satan’s flaming missiles, believing in God and His Word. Concentrate on other things, bite your tongue, review Scripture, look away, and do whatever is necessary to prevent Satan’s fiery darts of temptation from hitting you and lodging in your mind. Wage war against the fleshly lusts which wage war against your soul.**  
EPHESIANS 6:14-17, 1 PETER 2:11
- **Do not do argue with your conscience, and do not do the thing if you cannot do it in faith with a clear conscience before God.**  
ROMANS 14:22-23, HEBREWS 11:6, TITUS 1:15
- **Refuse to dwell on or consider temptation; refuse to allow it to get a foothold in your thinking.**  
GENESIS 39:10, JOB 31:1, PSALM 101:1-8
- **Refuse to let sin reign in your body and refuse to be a slave to sin again.**  
JOHN 8:34, ROMANS 6:12-20
- **Refuse to go back to failure, guilt, shame, and despair.**  
PSALM 119:80, EZEKIEL 16:52-54, 62-63, 36:31-32, ROMANS 6:21, HEBREWS 10:26-27
- **Refuse to throw away your confidence before God, which has a great reward.**  
HEBREWS 3:6, 10:23, 35-39, 1 JOHN 2:28-29, 3:21-24
- **Refuse to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit or make Him a partaker of sin.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-20, EPHESIANS 4:30, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19
- **Refuse to “trample underfoot the Son of God” or “insult the Spirit of grace.”**  
HEBREWS 10:26-29
- **Do not give in to the logic and persuasions of sinners.**  
PSALM 1, PROVERBS 25:26, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:33, EPHESIANS 4:17-19, 5:5-12, 1 PETER 4:3-5
- **Take heed lest you fall. Don’t become too self-assured or arrogant, thinking you cannot be tempted. Don’t think you can dabble or play with temptation and remain unaffected.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 10:12, GALATIANS 6:1



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- **Use your imagination to help you resist; picture yourself going to great extremes to avoid sin; imagine yourself choosing great bodily harm rather than this sin; view the old self being crucified.**  
MATTHEW 5:29-30, GALATIANS 2:20
- **Resist, and keep on resisting, even when it seems like too much to bear. Simply refuse to sin. Just say no to sin. Make no allowances for failure. Resist even if it means personal loss and suffering.**  
JOB 1:22, 2:3, PSALM 18:23, 119:112, EPHESIANS 6:10-18, 2 TIMOTHY 3:12, HEBREWS 11:25-26, 12:4, JAMES 4:7, 1 PETER 4:1-2, 5:9-10

### 6. RETREAT immediately from sources of temptation; **FLEE!**

*“Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)*

Quickly remove yourself from the presence of whatever is tempting you. The longer we stay in its presence, the longer we allow ourselves to see the temptation and think on it. We then become more curious and interested and then it will be harder to resist temptation. Cut off the ability for Satan to put his thoughts and images into your head. Turn off the television immediately or leave the room or building immediately if immoral or sinful things are being portrayed. If tempted to lust for a woman or man, or if you are tempted when you see cigarettes or alcohol or other things that have the power to control you, immediately look away; look up, down, or sideways, but **DON'T LOOK**. When we look, we focus attention; when we focus attention, our resolve to resist is replaced by curiosity, comfortableness, interest, and desire. Turn away, and then get away. Physically remove yourself from things that are tempting. Memorize Proverbs 4:23-27 and practice it until it becomes a well ingrained habit. Finally, take whatever precautions you can to ensure that you cannot go back to the things that tempt you. Lock the door behind you. You make it much more difficult to successfully resist temptation if you by choice remain in the presence of the things that tempt you.

- **Flee from the sources of temptation whenever it is possible to do so. Get out of temptations' reach.**  
GENESIS 39:12, 1 CORINTHIANS 5:11, 6:18, 10:14, 15:33, 1 TIMOTHY 6:10-11
- **“Tear it out” and “cut it off”; remove the things from your life that make you stumble. Remove any provision for sin, any crack for temptation to get through.**  
MATTHEW 5:29-30, ROMANS 13:14
- **Restrain your feet from every evil way. Don't go there! Take immediate steps to avoid temptation when you see it coming. Plan your way and avoid situations you know will be tempting.**  
PSALM 119:101, PROVERBS 4:23-27, 5:7-8, 7:6-9, 19:16, 27:12
- **Be sensitive and obedient to God's prompting**  
ROMANS 8:12-14
- **Don't “gaze into the cup,” don't stare at those things that tempt you; remove yourself so you are not ensnared by the deceitful appeal of sin. If you inadvertently see something that tempts you, immediately look away, and do not look at it again.**  
2 SAMUEL 11:1-4, PROVERBS 6:25, 23:30-35
- **Look for and take advantage of the way of escape that God always provides.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 10:13
- **Run to the Lord. Find refuge in Christ. Call upon His Name. Find protection in His Word.**  
PSALM 31:1-5, 19, 61:1-4, 91:1-4, 9-16, 119:114, 121:7-8, PROVERBS 6:23-25, 18:10, 30:5, MATTHEW 11:28-30, JOHN 8:31-32
- **Learn from situations when temptations come; observe the patterns of temptation; learn to anticipate where and when temptation will appear and avoid it in the future.**  
PROVERBS 22:3

**7. RECKON yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God.**

*“For the death that He died He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so, consider [KJV “reckon”] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:10-11)*

Our behavior is a direct reflection of our beliefs. And our beliefs are a direct reflection of what we know and how strong our faith is in what we know to be true. If we doubt that the Bible is the Word of God and that Jesus will judge all men and bring all things to light some day, we will find it more difficult to overcome temptation. Perhaps the doubter never will gain the victory since he is constantly undermining his own progress (James 1:5-8) and has never really settled for certain what side he wants to be on. If a person doesn't fully trust the Bible, which says that Jesus has set Christians free from sin and that through Him we are dead to sin, we may begin to give in to the idea that we will never be able to escape sin's grasp, that it is hopeless for us, that we can't help ourselves when we sin, or that it doesn't matter. Many lies can be introduced when we do not know or believe the truth. But to those who doubt the reliability of the Scriptures as the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17) I would ask, “How do you know with confidence your alternative true?”

I used to be an atheist and a committed believer in evolution. I used to say the Bible was full of errors and could not be trusted. But was my basis for unbelief truly founded on a thorough study of the facts and data, or was I just believing and repeating what I had heard? Unfortunately, I simply believed what I had been told by the ignorant and biased, and I did not have the facts or inclination to evaluate other alternatives. Now I believe the Scriptures to be the most trustworthy source of ancient history and information about man that is available to mankind. I believe, as some scholars have convincingly argued, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most well established facts of ancient history. Darwinism and naturalism are soundly refuted by the scientific facts available, in spite of the misplaced faith and arrogant claims of many atheist scientists. When I am tempted to doubt the Scriptures, I remember the unbelievable number of staggeringly improbable events that would have had to occur in extremely rapid succession for life to have been formed by chance collisions of atoms. (What are the odds of a person winning the mega jackpot or lottery a million times in a row? Yet the ideas the atheist stakes his eternal destiny on have far less probable odds than that.)

I recall the unbelievable complexity of life's chemistry, much of which man still does not understand, and the extreme diversity between different life forms at not only the visible level but also the chemical and genetic level, and it becomes clear that only an amazingly intelligent and powerful Being could have created life. And the fact that anyone could say life has arisen by natural processes apart from God, and yet not be able to show any credible evidence that there are such processes at work today nor in the past is proof to me that Satan is alive and well and in control of many people's thinking. (Note: variation between species has been observed for centuries and is nothing new; Darwinism assumes but has never demonstrated that these variations can give rise to new species such as bats from rodents and whales from cows. Scientific experiments have shown that there are certain genes that can vary to a limited extent, giving rise to variations within a species that we observe, but that changes in the genetic information that governs the organism's body plans earlier on in its development do not occur. Nor can proteins, extremely complex and specialized molecules, change very much without ceasing to function; therefore the notion of huge changes in the external shape and chemical compositions of organisms occurring by gradual incremental changes in molecular structure have not only never been demonstrated or observed but have been soundly refuted by the scientific evidence. Fossil evidence likewise is full of gaps and devoid of any real proof of evolution, and the claims of the textbooks otherwise have long been refuted by scientists themselves. Evolution is a set of religious beliefs, even though atheistic, and is not science but rather the best example the world has ever seen of the Emperor with no clothes.)

Why do I go into all of this? Because I believe that much sin in the world and temptation comes from individuals that have been persuaded that evolution is true, the Bible is false, and that there is no such thing as right and wrong, no such thing as sin, no God in heaven, and no judgment to come. This thinking has hijacked peoples' worldviews and infected Christians and Christ's church at every level. Unbelief is rampant, immoral behavior has reached epidemic levels, and as Jesus said, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.” (Matthew 24:12)

Studying the facts related to the truth of God's Word, the numerous amazing fulfilled prophecies, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a sure way to strengthen our confidence in the Word and give us a solid basis for our faith when temptation comes. And if the Lord Jesus really was raised from the dead, as the Scriptures

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clearly attest (1 Corinthians 15:1-20), then the truth about the Christian being crucified with Christ to make us dead to sin must also be trustworthy. We must then respond in faith and obedience, believing what the Scriptures say about our victory over sin through the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming judgment of mankind.

- **Believe that you already have the victory over sin, through Jesus Christ.**  
1 JOHN 5:4-5
- **Believe that your body is a temple of the Lord, with the Holy Spirit living inside you. Believe that you can overcome temptation by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Believe that “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”**  
JOHN 14:16-26, ROMANS 8:9-14, 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17, 6:15-20, 1 JOHN 4:4
- **Believe that as a Christian you have already been given “everything pertaining to life and godliness.” Believe that Jesus and His truth can set you free. Believe you have all the resources and power necessary to resist temptation.**  
JOHN 8:31-35, 2 PETER 1:3-4
- **Believe that if you are in Christ, no temptation can overcome you without your consent.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 10:13
- **Believe that God is ‘able to make all grace abound to you’ to enable you to overcome.**  
2 CORINTHIANS 9:8
- **Believe that in Christ you are a new creation, “the old things passed away, behold new things come.”**  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17
- **Believe, or reckon, yourself dead to sin, like a corpse is dead to the world, so be dead to sinful desires. Understand and believe that you have been crucified and raised up with Christ in order to render sin powerless.**  
ROMANS 6:1-11, 7:1-6, GALATIANS 2:20, 5:24, COLOSSIANS 3:3
- **Believe that as a Christian sin has no hold or claim on you, no right to rule over you. Sin only has power in the Christian’s life if we choose to let it. Take full responsibility for your behavior, choose victory rather than defeat. Never let sin have control.**  
JOHN 8:31-32, 36, ROMANS 6:12-18, 8:1-17
- **Believe that without faith you cannot please God.**  
HEBREWS 11:6
- **Believe that as a Christian you have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ; you are not your own but rather are a servant of righteousness. As a Christian it is your obligation to walk in a manner worthy of Jesus.**  
ROMANS 6:15-22, 8:12-13, 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20, GALATIANS 2:20, 5:17, COLOSSIANS 1:9-14, 1 PETER 1:18-19

## 8. REQUEST God to help you.

*“For my eyes are toward Thee, O God, the Lord; In Thee I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity.” (Psalm 141:8-9)*

It is impossible to fully overcome temptation by our own strength. We must have at our disposal God’s power and wisdom and help to overcome temptation. We must abide in Christ and be filled with His Spirit, as has already been discussed in the Rebuild section. He will come to our aid if we truly want victory over sin. But often we forget to simply ask for God’s help. God will give us additional strength, a critical push, an open door, bit of insight, more determination, a renewed sense of purpose, and whatever is needed He will provide in times of need if we ask Him. When temptation seems too much to bear, get in the habit of praying and crying out to God for help. Do not lean solely on your own understanding and strength (Proverbs 3:5-6). Pray to God and ask His help when temptation comes.

## **B. RESIST Temptation When It Comes**

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- **Cry out to the Lord for deliverance from sin and temptation.**  
PSALM 18:6, 28:1-3, 31:1-5, 34:4-7, 15-18, 39:8, 57:1-6, 61:1-4, 69:13-19, 77:1-6, 116:1-11, 119:58, 94, 173, 176, 141:1-4, 8-10, 143:9-12, MATTHEW 6:13
- **Ask God to show you the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.**  
PSALM 116:8, PROVERBS 18:10, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13,
- **Confess your sins and desire for sin to God.**  
1 JOHN 1:7-10
- **Ask God to give you wisdom, make obvious the right way from the wrong, His will versus sin.**  
PSALM 119:33-39, JAMES 1:5-8
- **Take concerns and anxieties immediately to God.**  
PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7
- **Know you have a sympathetic and victorious High Priest who comes to the aid of those who are tempted.**  
HEBREWS 2:17-18, 4:14-16, 7:23-28, 1 JOHN 2:1-2
- **Pray for the spiritual and eternal benefit of those who are the source of your temptation. Retaliate in prayer and pray for the destruction of Satan's strongholds. Choose a bold and difficult prayer request that, if God granted it, would do significant harm to Satan's agenda; pray for that request when temptation comes.**  
MATTHEW 5:44, LUKE 23:34, 2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

## **9. RESOLVE to overcome at all costs.**

“A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil.” (Psalm 101:4)

Resisting temptation and avoiding sin is first and foremost work that every Christian must undertake, a work that has direct bearing on every aspect of our lives, even our prayers (“the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” James 5:16 and “grant her honor...that your prayers may not be hindered” 1 Peter 3:7). God neither tempts us (James 1:13-14) nor will He resist temptation for us, nor will He stop us from sinning if in our hearts we really want to sin. Resisting temptation and keeping ourselves from sin therefore should be the first priority for every Christian. While we cannot overcome temptation solely on our own strength, God wants us to expend every effort in overcoming temptation. He may allow us to go through times of temptation that may seem impossible to overcome in order to see how badly we want victory and what we are willing to do to achieve it. Overcoming difficult temptations may very well require much concentration, determination, and effort on our part. And not just once but many times we may face the battle of temptation and very strong desires to sin. In these instances we must will to win; we must never give up or lose heart. We must set our hearts and minds on victory, no matter what we have done in the past, no matter how many times we have failed. God will come to our aid, and Satan will eventually flee (James 4:7). But it very well may take everything we've got in terms of determination and will power. Over time, we can replace sinful habits of the flesh with godly habits of self-control, but this will take repeated successful victories. Expect that success will not come easily and don't be discouraged by failure. Be encouraged and stay the course; in Christ there is no sin over which we cannot gain the victory.

In some cases, God miraculously removes the power of temptation from our lives; certain sins simply are no longer a temptation for us. If this is true for you in some area, then give thanks to God, and make certain that you do not go back to that sin. One individual reported an instantaneous freedom from a smoking habit immediately after coming to Christ. But this individual over time gave in to temptation and began smoking again, and now they are enslaved all over again with no special grace to overcome. This habit will now take much more effort and determination to overcome in the future. Once you have won a series of struggles with temptation, make sure you never go back there again, or you may find it all that more difficult overcome sinful habits again. Yet this too can be done, for with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27). Therefore, another important step in overcoming temptation is to determine to never give up or give in to it. Set your mind on victory – give yourself no other options or excuses – and by God's grace and power He will bring it about.

## B. RESIST Temptation When It Comes

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- **Resolve to overcome and master temptation.**  
GENESIS 4:7, PSALM 17:3-5, 57:7, 101:4, JAMES 4:7-8
- **Do not nurture a desire for sin. Do not look at things that tempt you or think about them. Do not be double-minded; hate the false way.**  
1 KINGS 18:21, PSALM 78:8, 36-37, 119:104, 113, MATTHEW 6:22-24, JAMES 1:5-8, 4:8
- **CONCENTRATE on the things above; do not lose the battle for the mind.**  
ISAIAH 26:3, PHILIPPIANS 4:8, COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, HEBREWS 12:1-2, 1 PETER 1:13
- **Do not allow your heart to harden toward God or be angry or resentful toward Him, even during times of temptation, testing, and difficulty.**  
JOB 1:22, 2:13, PSALM 95:7-11
- **Keep your eye on those who have been faithful through temptation, and imitate their faith.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 11:1, HEBREWS 11:1-12:3, 13:7
- **Resolve to resist sin, even if it brings personal loss, persecution, and bodily harm.**  
JOB 13:15, PSALM 119:87, 95, PHILIPPIANS 1:29-30, 2 TIMOTHY 3:12, 1 PETER 4:1, HEBREWS 12:4
- **Look for God’s reward, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive relief and God’s blessings for your obedience.**  
MATTHEW 4:11, MARK 10:29-31, ROMANS 2:4-11, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-10, HEBREWS 10:36, 12:1-2, 1 PETER 1:13
- **Apply all diligence, and in you faith supply moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Resolve to be diligent to practice these things and make certain about His calling and choosing you, that you may not stumble.**  
2 PETER 5-11
- **Ask, “What would Jesus do?” Envision Jesus in your situation; respond as He would respond. Imitate the faith and habits of those who have been victorious before you.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 11:1, HEBREWS 6:11-12, 13:7, 1 JOHN 2:6

### 10. REPLACE fleshly thoughts with spiritual thoughts.

*“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6)*

Temptation must persuade our minds to think, speak, or do something that is contrary to God’s commands. Our bodies don’t move or speak without the express direction of our minds, nor can we be proud in heart without our minds thinking proud thoughts. Temptation has to win the battle for the mind or it cannot succeed in making us sin. Therefore, we must carefully guard our minds and what we allow our minds to think. But simply telling ourselves not to think about a particular thing can be very difficult, like telling a person to not think of a pink elephant; the conscious effort of trying to not think about something can be counterproductive. Much more effective is the practice of filling our minds with thoughts opposite that of the temptation, that is, filling our minds with the “things above,” with spiritual thoughts and God’s truth. Since Satan’s strategy is to get into our faces with the temptations and lies and fill our minds with thoughts of them to make them seem appealing and irresistible, and since his strategy is to crowd out any opposition to his lies, so must our strategy be to replace his lies with spiritual thoughts and push out any and all opposition to God’s truth. Force temptation out of your mind by filling it overflowing with God’s Word, fixing your mind on the things above. As you do this repeatedly and habitually, you will find that temptation no longer has the power or appeal it once had, and it will be much more difficult to sin when your mind is fixed on the things above. The next principle then to resisting temptation when it comes is to replace sinful thoughts with spiritual thoughts.

- **Set your mind on the things above, not the things on the earth; renew your mind.**  
ROMANS 12:1-2, EPHESIANS 4:23, COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

## B. RESIST Temptation When It Comes

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- **Fill your mind with Scripture, and keep the Word of God in the forefront of your mind.**  
JOSHUA 1:8, PSALM 1:2, 18:21-23, 119:9-11, JOHN 8:31-32
- **Dwell on the things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and praise worthy.**  
PHILIPPIANS 4:8
- **Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; look forward to God's reward.**  
2 TIMOTHY 4:8, 1 PETER 1:13, HEBREWS 11:26
- **Replace a negative, fearful attitude with trusting faith and boldness.**  
MATTHEW 14:26-33, MARK 11:22-24, JOHN 14:1, REVELATION 21:8
- **Believe His Word and promises to be true!**  
HEBREWS 11:1-40
- **Keep on praying; pray without ceasing.**  
LUKE 18:1, COLOSSIANS 4:2, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17
- **Seek God with all your heart. Present your members to Him as instruments of righteousness.**  
PSALM 63:1, 119:2-3, 10, ISAIAH 26:8-9, 55:6, ROMANS 6:13
- **Proactively pursue righteousness, hasten to keep God's commandments, sow to the Spirit, do the things that help others and further God's kingdom.**  
PSALM 119:59-60, MATTHEW 6:33, ROMANS 14:19, GALATIANS 6:8-9, 2 TIMOTHY 2:22

## 11. **REJOICE** and give thanks for all God's blessings.

*"Rejoice always...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16,18)*

Many temptations stem from a lack of contentment or dissatisfaction with our current state. We want more of that or better of this, so we lust, envy, and covet. We don't like thinking of ourselves as inferior, so we invent reasons why we are better than others, we find fault with others, we become proud in heart, and we treat others with contempt. Drill down until you get to exactly what it is in your life that makes you vulnerable to a particular temptation, what needs there are that are not fulfilled, and ask Christ to meet those needs and give you thankfulness for what you are and have. Are you tempted to get angry with someone? Rejoice and give thanks for them and pray for them, even if they are your enemy, and you will find it much harder to be angry. Do you desire something or are concerned about something you lack? Give thanks for what you have, think through all that God has given you, and the temptation to lust or crave for more will fade away. We think others are the problem or our circumstances are that problem, but in reality, we are the problem. Rejoicing and giving thanks, singing praises with thankfulness to God, have amazing power to quench temptation. Trust the Lord for every desire and unmet need rather than trying to take things into your own hands or nurturing sinful lusts. Learn to be content with and thankful for what you have, with who you are, and with others in your life, and temptation will lose much of its appeal. Rejoicing always is the next principle in resisting temptation.

- **Exult in Jesus Christ; praise Him for what He has done for you, and rejoice in Him.**  
PSALM 2:11-12, 35:9, 95:1-2, ROMANS 8:31-39, COLOSSIANS 3:15-17
- **Be a thankful, grateful person. Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you.**  
EPHESIANS 5:20, COLOSSIANS 3:17, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18
- **Remember all the good things God has done for you and given you. Don't focus on what you think you lack. Forget none of God's blessings.**  
PSALM 103:1-5
- **Rejoice always!**  
PSALM 34:1-3, 35:28, PHILIPPIANS 4:4, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

## B. RESIST Temptation When It Comes

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- **Sing praises to God with a steadfast heart; do not neglect His praise.**  
PSALM 9:1-2, 22:22-24, 40:1-4, 63:3-5, 77:6, 108:1-6, ISAIAH 12:5, EPHESIANS 5:19, COLOSSIANS 3:16
- **Give thanks for difficult circumstances, weaknesses, and trials.**  
ROMANS 5:3-5, 8:28, 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10, JAMES 1:2-4, 1 PETER 1:6-9

### 12. **REVERSE** the fleshly momentum; reorient your life in the Spirit.

*“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:14-16)*

There are times, particularly when we are tired, when we are especially vulnerable to temptation. Lust, irritability, anger, laziness, and other sins seem to feed off tiredness or a lack of sleep. In these situations the best remedy is simply to get a good night’s rest. And we should ensure that we are getting sufficient rest on an ongoing basis. There may be other times when we may be in the presence of certain individuals who know how to “push our buttons” so to speak; and because of past habits of responding in an ungodly way, we quickly fall into the old habits of sinful actions or responses. One thing leads to another, perhaps an argument has started, and things proceed from bad to worse. Or perhaps we have sinned in some way and are now tempted to sin even more because of the first sin. Its like we’ve started the ball rolling downhill, toward sin, and it quickly gets worse and worse. Whatever the situation, we need to reverse the momentum that has been started toward sin. We need to radically change direction and go the opposite way. Whether that involves sleep, or being bold in sharing the gospel, or speaking out against sin, we need to reverse the momentum of sin in our lives and reorient our lives in the Spirit. The final step, then in responding to temptation when it comes is to reverse the momentum that we have allowed to build in sin’s direction. We should read the Bible, get a good rest, and diligently practice the Rebuilding steps to reorient our lives in the Spirit and reverse the fleshly momentum.

- **Order your life so that you regularly get good rest, getting to bed early and rising early to meet the Lord.**  
PSALM 4:8, 119:147-148, 127:1-2, PROVERBS 3:21-24, 8:34
- **Run the race to win. Evaluate your schedule and eliminate unnecessary tasks; maximize your time; reduce entertainment-oriented activities. Turn off the television and make productive use of your time.**  
1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27, EPHESIANS 5:15-17
- **Reduce fleshly desires by fasting, listening to Biblical teaching, praising God, fellowshiping with other believers, exercising, etc. Devote yourself to the Word of God and prayer.**  
MARK 2:20, ACTS 6:4, COLOSSIANS 3:16, HEBREWS 10:24-25
- **Purpose to be holy in all your words, thoughts, and deeds.**  
MATTHEW 5:48, 1 PETER 1:14-16
- **Rebuild your relationship with God; diligently practice the REBUILD steps.**

**NOTES**



# SUMMARY OF RESISTING STEPS

## B. RESIST TEMPTATION WHEN IT COMES.

React quickly and decisively to defeat temptation and avoid sin.

*“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7-8)*

1. **RECOGNIZE** temptation; do not be ignorant as to what sin is and how you are tempted.

*“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows this he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)*

2. **REALIZE** the potential consequences and opportunity temptation brings.

*“For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:8)*

3. **REMEMBER** the pain, destruction, wrath, and judgment that results from sin.

*“Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.” (Romans 6:21)*

4. **RECITE** Scripture and rebuke evil in the Name of the Lord.

*“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’” (Matthew 4:10)*

5. **REFUSE** temptation immediately, decisively, and persistently.

*“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (Romans 6:12-13a)*

6. **RETREAT** immediately from sources of temptation; **FLEE!**

*“Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)*

7. **RECKON** yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God.

*“For the death that He died He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so, consider [KJV “reckon”] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:10-11)*

8. **REQUEST** God to help you.

*“For my eyes are toward Thee, O God, the Lord; In Thee I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity.” (Psalm 141:8-9)*

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