



OVERCOMING TEMPTATION AND SIN IN OUR LIVES

Vulnerable

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)

Romans 3:23 serves as a poignant reminder of our human condition. It compels us to acknowledge one of the hardest truths for us humans—we are flawed and incapable of measuring up to God's glory. Before delving into discussions about sanctification, the law, or any other aspect, we must first recognize our inherent imperfections. Without this understanding, we risk falling into legalism and projecting a false version of ourselves that fails to align with reality.

Once we accept this reality, we become open to experiencing God's healing grace and freeing ourselves from the weight of sin. It leads us to the profound realization that we cannot navigate this journey alone; we need God and His power within us. No matter how long we have been Christians or how mature we have become, temptation can strike at any time. Recognizing and accepting our vulnerability enables us to approach these situations in a healthier manner, alleviating the burden of guilt and shame.

This verse also reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles. We are not the worst sinners on Earth; all our brothers and sisters have sinned and fallen short of God's glory as well, plus it is not healthy to compare yourself to others, our reference is Christ. It shields us from self-deprecation and the harsh self-judgment that often brings us lower than necessary. We are all sinners, and everyone has faced their own shortcomings and failures at some point in their lives. There is no escape, and we are not inherently worse than anyone else.

God has already prepared your healing in advance

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Mathew 4:4)

Just as healthy eating can prevent various diseases, "eating healthy" in the spiritual sense is key to overcoming temptation. By regularly reading the Bible and spending time with God, we can preemptively ward off sinful thoughts from taking hold of our minds.

However, the Word of God not only acts as a preventative measure but also brings truth into the situation. When our emotions run high, and we find ourselves consumed by sinful desires and inclinations, we can bring to mind the truth that "the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). I know it is not as easy as that, but it is the right starting point.

When the intense inner talk about advantages and disadvantages, ethics involved, and excuses to give in start, if you already have ingrained in you this principle that the most important goal in your life should be obedience to God, you will start the battle with a great advantage.

Emotion X Reason, embracing a comprehensive perspective

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

Emotions are alerts. They make us conscious of realities within us that we may be missing. Basically, we have emotional and physical necessities, and the primitive brain triggers emotional reactions in an instinct to preserve our lives and get us what we need. Our primitive brain is demanding, self-centered, and very determined toward getting what it wants.

Our frontal cortex, on the contrary, thinks ethically, morally, and rationally, tending to make decisions based on what is good in the long term, analyzing pros-cons and consequences in a much wiser way.

As believers, we also have the Holy Spirit in us to help us manage ourselves appropriately. Jesus said: “When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8) and “he will guide you into all the truth” and again, “the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

We can only win temptation if we engage our spiritual and rational selves in the internal battle and we give them the preeminence they should have for being smarter and wiser.

Openness before God

“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away (...) Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity (...) And you forgave the guilt of my sin.” (Psalm 32: 3-5)

God desires a close and truthful relationship with us. He is merciful, loving, caring, and compassionate, and He knows us better than we know ourselves. Confessing and being transparent with God in prayer and meditation is another crucial element in overcoming temptation. In His presence, we can be ourselves, and He understands our struggles, circumstances, pains, and unmet needs better than we do.

Instead of hiding from Him, we should expose ourselves to His healing, comforting, and encouraging presence. He is our friend in times of trouble and our help in times of anguish. So, let us embrace His presence, immerse ourselves in His love, speak to Him about our temptations, center ourselves in Him, and listen attentively. In the midst of this connection, we will hear powerful words whispered softly in our minds. Through Him, we can find emotional stability and tranquility amidst life's storms.

Rely on a mature Christian confidant, pastor, coach, or counselor

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)

You will need to vent! Talking about our feelings brings us clarity and helps us make sense of them. We were not meant to navigate our Christian journey alone. It is crucial to choose someone with proven Christian maturity and trustworthiness as our confidant. Sometimes, it may be more comfortable to open up to a complete stranger, such as a coach or counselor, someone outside of our immediate relationships. Regardless of whom we choose, having an accountability partner can prevent us from making unwise decisions and save us from potential disasters.

Before making any drastic decisions, it is wise to seek counsel from someone else. Their perspective may be clearer than ours, enabling them to make sound judgments and share them with us while strong emotions are clouding our thinking. Friends can truly be lifesavers in such situations.

There is always a new chance to do better each day

“No one who lives in him keeps on sinning.” (1 John 3:6)

Failure is an inherent part of any spiritual journey. However, we have the sweet assurance of God's grace, love, mercy, and compassion. Jesus died for our sins and has already justified us. Does this motivate us to sin? No, if we have the Holy Spirit within us, He will continue to guide and convict us, leading us in the right direction.

Just because we sinned yesterday does not mean we have to sin today. Each day presents a new chance to strengthen our relationship with God and realign our path. Even if there is a long-standing sin in our lives, with the devil holding a stronghold over us, we still have the power to choose who we want to be from the present forward. We can take steps towards healing, righteousness, and peace with God each day.

Closing thoughts

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Temptations are an integral part of our Christian journey. Thankfully, God has provided us with the means to deal with them and overcome the detrimental effects of sin in our lives. Let us embrace our vulnerability, combining it with the Word of God, our intimate connection with Him, Christian counseling or coaching, and attentiveness to the voice of the Holy Spirit within us. As it is written, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). Amen!