

Grow Your Faith by Dealing with Sin

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

THE TRUTH ABOUT TEMPTATION

We can be led to believe that the temptation (the enticing to do wrong) we experience is unique. But the Bible teaches us that it is common and what you experience is common to all mankind (1 Corinthians 10:13). The reason temptation is common to us all is because it comes from within. It is the distorted desires in our hearts that James 1:14 tells us are the sources of our temptation. Everyone of us are continually presented with opportunities and choices. We are tempted to serve ourselves or make a choice to obey God.

We always have options (look again at 1 Corinthians 10:13) and, as James says, when we choose to give in to the temptation it is sin. It is important to know that temptation itself is not sin. Sin occurs when we choose to give in to the temptation. We know this also from the example of Jesus who was repeatedly tempted (Matthew 4) but never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). Temptation provides an opportunity to show who we serve. When we serve God it leads to life but when we give in to temptation it leads to destruction.

HOW TO DEAL WITH TEMPTATION

Look back at 1 Corinthians 10:13, the good news is that there is a way out. What you focus on when you are in the middle of the temptation will most likely determine the result. Here are three truths to remember and passages you can turn to for help:

Remember that submitting to the temptation leads to destruction. (James 1:15, Romans 3:23)



Remember who our God is. God...

is always with me.	(Psalm 139:7-12)
is full of power.	(Jeremiah 32:17)
is the ultimate Judge.	(2 Corinthians 5:10)
has inseparable love.	(Romans 8:38-39)
is full of mercy.	(Romans 12:1)
is unchanging.	(James 1:17)
is not human.	(Numbers 23:19)

Remember who you are. Ephesians 1:3-14 explains that as a follower of Jesus you have received a new identity that is not based on your performance. You are...

Blessed by God (vs 3)	Chosen by God (vs 4)
Adopted by God (vs 5)	Redeemed by Jesus Blood (vs 7)
Forgiven of your sins (vs 7)	Marked by the Holy Spirit (vs 13)

WHAT IF I NEED MORE HELP?

Talk to someone. Find someone of the same gender that you trust to help you as you deal with the temptation and help you identify key passages that can help you in the fight. Ask them to hold you accountable as you pursue righteousness.

Memorize key scriptures. In Matthew 4 we find Jesus being tempted by Satan and, at every turn, He fights back by quoting the Word of God. Do the same. Take key passages and commit them to memory so that you can fight the temptation when the moment arrives.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I SIN?

Confess. Authentic confession means that we come into the presence of God without any of our usual pretenses and intentionally deal with our sin. We sure spend a lot of time hiding behind our fig leaves—covering up, rationalizing, posturing, and pretending. But the reality is, saints sin (1 John 1:8). That's why we need a Savior. And we have one in Jesus Christ. His blood has the power to forgive every sin in your lifetime (Col. 1:14). Our sin is personal to God (Ps. 51:4), and sincere sorrow is appropriate when we come to God with it (James 4:7-10). Regular confession is one of the greatest acts of faith. It takes a lot to honestly bring the parts of yourself you are least proud of to God. And it takes faith to believe that not only will God forgive you, but will still completely love you—but He does.



HOW DO I CONFESS?

1 John 1:9. One of the hardest realities to face is that saints don't have to sin—they choose to sin (1 Cor. 10:13). Try using 1 John 1:9 as a template for confessing your sin to God. Here's how it works: (1) **Name it:** Name the sin honestly. (2) **Own it:** Take full responsibility for it. (3) **Confess it:** Ask for forgiveness and the strength to forsake it. (4) **Forget it:** Accept the purifying promise of God that when you confess your sin you are clean.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO DO?

Confess to One Another. When you've sinned against someone else, you need to go to them and humbly confess your sin and make it right. This kind of transparency creates a powerful culture of grace. But there are also times when we need to go to another person and ask them to pray for us because we are struggling with sin—and those prayers are powerful as well (James 5:16).

The Purge. Deal with that backlog of sin that weighs you down like baggage. Give yourself some time away from everyone. Read Colossians 2:13-15 about how all of your sin was dealt with at the cross. All means all: past, present, and future. Then recount your sins to God. For some, this is best expressed verbally. For others, you may want to write it down. When you are done, mark the day and the time when you confessed your sin, and received God's forgiveness. You don't have to carry it anymore. Jesus bore your sins on the cross. If you wrote it down, burn it. The record of your sins was destroyed at the cross.

Face Your Blind Spots. We all have blind spots. The thing about blind spots is that everyone else can see them but the person who has them. Take advantage of the insights of others to deal with the sin you cannot see. Ask those close to you questions like, "What do I do that hurts you?" and "How can I love you better?" Accept their responses without being defensive. Ask for forgiveness. By facing your blind spots, you are courageously setting a culture of humility and grace.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

