

## A Way Out – Living By The Spirit

How do we overcome temptation that we all face at times in our lives as believers? There may be a reoccurring temptation you are facing in your life that seems to plague you and no matter what you do, you can't stop doing something:

We say things like:

“Well, I just had to.”

“I didn't have control.”

“I just can't stop.”

“I've prayed about it and nothing happened, I've tried and I cannot stop doing such and such.”

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 “**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** [way of escape] so that you can endure it.”

You may be tempted to:

- **Complain** – but there is always a way out.
- **Compare** – you're dissatisfied, envying others, jealous. There's always a way out.
- **Overspend** – there's always a way out.
- **Worry** – Social media [hooked on it], Gambling, Gaming, Smoking/drinking something, looking at something inappropriate – GOD IS FAITHFUL, HE WILL NOT LET YOU BE TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT YOU CAN BEAR, AND HE WILL PROVIDE A WAY OUT SO YOU CAN ENDURE IT.

The challenge is when we try to stop doing what we know we should not be doing:

- I need to stop doing this.
- I need to not do the wrong thing.
- I need to not focus on the wrong thing.

Scripture teaches us to not think on the wrong thing as a plan of attack against temptation; but it also tells us to think about the good thing.

Philippians 4:8 “Whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report: if there is any virtue/excellence, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

- In our effort not to think about the wrong thing, we end up thinking about the wrong thing.

Experiment: Trust me and close your eyes.

- Don't think of a PINK ELEPHANT.
- Open your eyes, and what do you see?



- When you try to not think of something, your mind tends to go to the negative thing.

The scriptures teach us that rather than trying to think of not doing the wrong things, we do the right things.

Galatians 5:16 “I tell you, live the way the Spirit leads you. Then you will not gratify the evil things your sinful self wants to do.”

- Focus on the right things, and you won’t fulfill the desires of the flesh that lead you to sin.

Desires of the flesh: It is the cravings of the sinful nature we all deal with on various levels.

- There is a war going on between what the Lord wants you to do and what our sinful nature wants to do.
- If you walk by the Spirit, you will not be as tempted to do the wrong things.

v. 17 “For **the flesh [sinful nature] desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other,** so that you are not to do whatever you want.”

- Romans 7:15 Paul speaks of this dilemma when he says “I don’t understand why I act the way I do. I don’t do the good I want to do, and I do the evil I hate”
- We can all relate to this:
  - You want to read the Bible everyday – so you read for 3 days and then quit.
  - You know you need to pray and have fellowship with God – so you start, but you don’t keep your time with God.
  - You want to stop overspending, but the shoes were on sale! You had to save some money.
  - You want to exercise, but there’s a 10% chance of rain.
- I want to do the right things:
  - I don’t want to get mad at my husband, but I just threw those new shoes at him.
  - I don’t want to sleep with my boy/girlfriend again, but it just happens.

I don’t want to do these wrong things, I want to do the right thing – but the wrong just keeps happening. It’s too powerful for me.

### **Why is the flesh such a struggle?**

What you **feed** grows – what you **starve** dies.

- When you feed your fleshly nature, your desire to sin grows. It never stays the same.

- Sin is uncontrollable. It always gets out of hand.
- It is said that: **“Sin will always take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”**

When you feed your spirit, you grow stronger in your intimacy with God and you experience power to overcome the desires of the flesh.

Instead of thinking NO, NO, NO, we also must feed our spirit so we can be strong to overcome the desires of the flesh.

### **How do we overcome the wrong sinful desires – with the help of the Holy Spirit?**

- The Holy Spirit is given to us to empower us in getting free from the sinful desires that we end up giving in to.

How do we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to overcome the temptations:

Depend on the **power** of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit, next to receiving the gift of salvation, is the greatest gift from our Heavenly Father.
- Jesus said, I’m going to send you someone better: John 14:16 “I will pray the Father, and He will give you ANOTHER Comforter, that He may abide with you forever;”
- If you are a follower of Jesus, the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead lives in you – Romans 8:11 “The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.”
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit:
  - Convicts us of our sin
  - Comforts us
  - Counsels us
  - Guides us
  - Prompts or nudges/leads us
  - The Holy Spirit is not an “IT” He is a He, God in Spirit form who lives in you.
- Good News: **When you are battling temptation, you don’t have to do it on your own.**

Romans 8:12-13 “You have **no obligation** to do what **your sinful nature urges you to do**.

- **No obligation** to do what **your sinful nature urges you to do**.

v. 13a “For if you live by its dictates, **you will die**.”

Really? I’ll die if I live by the dictates of the flesh! Is it that serious?

**Question:** How many of you would agree that sin is fun for a while?

- Those not willing to agree are either lying or you didn’t do the sin right!
- Someone has said: “**Sin thrills and then it kills**.”  
“**Sin fascinates and then it assassinates**.”

As you feed your flesh and its habits, the desire for sin grows and it eventually begins to show outwardly.

Sin grows in the dark until it manifests full blown into destruction and death.

Sin first thrills and then it begins to kill.

When we don’t confess and get free, it grows in darkness: It kills:

- Marriages
- Intimacy with God
- Your children/family/friendships
- Your testimony
- Your finances
- Your ability to have credibility

## **SIN KILLS**

v. 12-13 “You have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, **you will die**.

**But if through the power of the Spirit** you **put to death** the deeds of **your sinful nature**, **you will live**.”

- It’s not through your self-power, but by the power of the Spirit – God’s divine powerful Spirit living in every born again believer.
- Through the power of the Spirit – you are starving what is flesh and feeding what is Spirit.
- Through the Spirit, you will put to death that which has been starving you.

Today, you can have a breakthrough when you admit that you are powerless over something and need help from the Spirit of the Lord.

- You need a power greater than you have.
- This is what the Holy Spirit has come to do in your life.
- **TODAY**, IF YOU WILL ALLOW HIM TO HELP YOU – you can be set free from being controlled by fleshly desires in whatever form they are in.

**Here is a prayer for you today:**

“I admit that I’m powerless over \_\_\_\_\_.  
I believe that the power of the Spirit of God will heal, deliver and make me whole.

What goes in your blank?

- I admit I need deliverance from the power of **food**.
- I admit I need deliverance from the power of **materialism**.
- I admit I need power from **worry**.
- I admit I need power from **sexual addictions**.
- I admit I need power from **substance abuse**.
- I admit I need power from **prescription meds** I am abusing.

You have to be willing to call it what it is!

**YOU ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS YOU ARE HONEST – ADMIT IT!**

- For some its dope in various forms, marijuana, pills, meth, cocaine, tobacco, lust, dip, pain meds.

**Because sin grows in darkness, you need to bring what you are powerless against out into the light and confess it to the Lord.**

John 3:19-21 “This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness instead of the light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed. **But whoever practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be made known that their deeds have been **accomplished** [done with God’s help, in dependence on Him] in God.**”

1 John 1:9 “**IF** we confess our sins [agree with God about them] **He is faithful** and **just to forgive us and cleanse us** from **ALL** our unrighteousness.”

You may be drawn to the Lord today to surrender to Him, but **you have to be willing to give up your sin** in order for the Lord to deliver you.

Today is your decisive moment for you to get honest with yourself and the Lord.

-0-