

# How to Overcome Sin

contents

Telling the Truth..... 3

The Process of Overcoming Sin and Changing ..... 6

Steps to Overcoming Sin ..... 6

The Steps Explained ..... 7

Step 1: Ask Forgiveness ..... 7

Step 2: Let Jesus In..... 8

Step 3: Let Jesus Do

Whatever It Takes..... 10

Step 4: You Do Whatever

It Takes ..... 13

The Journey of Change ..... 16

How to Count Success..... 18

What about People Who Overcome Sin without God's Help? ..... 19

Jesus Saves You from Sin in Three Ways ..... 20

continued →

The Cost of Sin ..... 22

What You Plant is

What You'll Harvest ..... 22

The Path to Addiction ..... 25  
 Have Some Maggot Stew ..... 26  
 Sin, the Relational  
 Wrecking Ball..... 27

Temptation ..... 28  
 To Fear (Revere and Respect)  
 the Lord ..... 32  
 Prayers to Pray ..... 33

List of Scriptures..... 34

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:11-14*



**Sin is any lack of conformity, active or passive, to the moral law of God. This may be a matter of act, of thought, or of inner disposition or state.**

# THE <sup>telling</sup> TRUTH



What sin do you wish to overcome?

What cost do you see that you are paying to do this sin?

What relationships are affected and how?

How is your work or school affected?

How is your relationship with God affected?

How are you being affected?

---

 A prayer to pray: "God, reveal what this sin is costing me and others."

---

Mark the statements that express how you think about this sin.

- 1. I know I shouldn't do this, but I keep on doing it.
- 2. I know I shouldn't do this, but I really don't see why I should stop.
- 3. I don't think it's wrong or harmful, but I'm willing to find out what the Bible teaches.
- 4. I know I shouldn't do this, but I don't want to stop now.
- 5. I want to quit, but I have not been successful in stopping.
- 6. I want to quit, and I am willing to do whatever is necessary to do so.
- 7. I have had some success in stopping this sin, but I continue to have lapses.
- 8. I know I shouldn't do this, but I feel out of control.
- 9. I can stop anytime I decide to, but I'm not ready to decide now.
- 10. I know it's wrong, but I'm the only one it is affecting.

If you marked #1, 5, 6, 7, and/or 8, then study **The Process of Overcoming Sin and Changing** in this notebook section.

If you marked #2, study **The Cost of Sin** in this notebook section.

If you marked #3, study the **Repentance Checklist** in the **Moral Inventory** section.

If you marked #4, 9 and/or 10, study **The Cost of Sin**. Also, would you be willing to say this to God: "I know I shouldn't be doing \_\_\_\_\_, but I don't want to stop now. Show me what this looks like to you and how it is affecting me and those I care about. Have mercy on me."

# the process of OVERCOMING SIN AND CHANGING

When you sin, what is your usual response to God?

**"I feel guilty. I don't want to ask forgiveness again. I find that I distance myself from God. I feel like a loser."**

When you struggle with sin in your life, Satan adds his torment. He attacks your self-esteem, your security in Christ, your self-worth, and the hope of a better way of living. You feel frustrated, down on yourself, hopeless, and out of control. Satan says, "It's all over. Don't you dare come back to God!"

**Satan is a liar!**

God loves you and will forgive you!

## Steps to Overcoming Sin

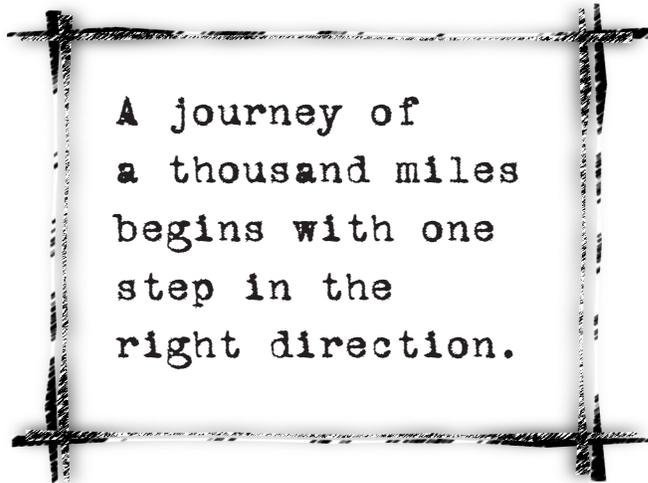
When you sin, do these four things:

**Step 4.** Tell God YOU will do whatever it takes to change; you will obey the next thing He tells you to do.

**Step 3.** Give Jesus permission to do whatever it takes to change you. Give Him full rights to clean and rearrange this room in your life.

**Step 2.** Open the door and let Jesus into the room in your life where the sin is.

**Step 1.** Ask forgiveness for the deed and gain cleansing and God's divine amnesia.



# The Steps Explained

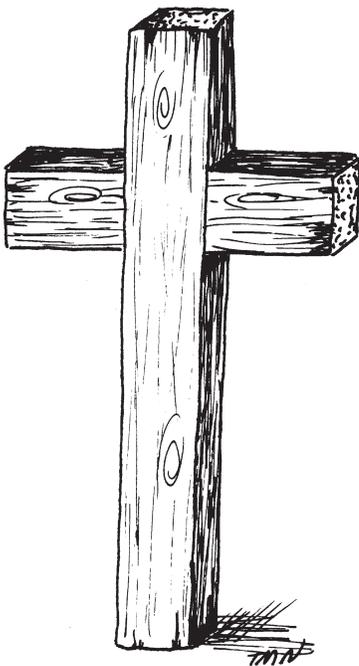
## Step 1 Ask Forgiveness

**Ask forgiveness for the deed and gain cleansing and God's divine amnesia.**

Read and meditate on these verses:

*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*

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Psalms 103:12 This is divine amnesia: God forgets when He forgives.*



Forgiveness is there for you, but there was a great cost to God -- Jesus' precious blood. Don't take it for granted. *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:12*

Don't run away from God. Instead, run to His forgiveness. Each time you repent gives God an opportunity to change you. Notice these ingredients in the definition of grace above: mercy, pardon, God strengthening and improving you. Run to where the grace is.

### **what is grace?**

**Grace is a God-given miraculous ability and provision. It is God's good will and favor, kindness, mercy, pardon, and love.**

**It is the influence of God operating in people to strengthen and improve.**

**Do you need some of this?  
YES!**

## Step 2 Let Jesus In

Open the door and let Jesus into the room in your life where the sin is.

➤ Read Revelation 3:17-20.

In this passage, in what condition is the room that Jesus wants to enter?

The people in this Scripture are not admitting to God the condition of their room, even though Jesus is calling them to repent.

➤ Read Matthew 9:10-13.

"Righteous" and "healthy" people are those who are unaware of, and feel no need for, Jesus. Jesus came to be with sinners and called them to follow Him. His disciples and the sinners with Jesus knew where they stood in their process of changing; they probably told Jesus or at least they didn't try to pretend otherwise.

Have you come to the place where you can follow their example – you know you need Jesus in order to change?





**Be honest with Jesus. Share your heart with Him and He will help you. Tell Jesus the statements below that express where you are regarding this sin.**

- I know I shouldn't do this, but I keep on doing it.**
  - I want to quit, but I have not been successful in stopping.**
  - I want to quit, and I am willing to do whatever is necessary to do so.**
  - I have had some success in stopping this sin, but I continue to have lapses.**
  - I know I shouldn't do this, but I feel out of control.**
- 



**Jesus will start changing you where you are -- not where you wish you were in this process. Open the door wide. Invite Him into the room the way it is at this moment. Show Jesus the true nature of your wrongs and you are on your way to freedom. Make this into a prayer.**

---

In the next step, you will be giving Jesus full cleaning and rearranging privileges.



## Step 3 Let Jesus Do Whatever It Takes

**Give Jesus permission to do whatever it takes to change you. Give Him full rights to clean and rearrange this room in your life.**

In this step, you will give up trying to change yourself. You will turn your life, your weaknesses, and your sins over to Jesus. You will trust Him to do whatever it takes to change you.

This means you will:

**Relinquish and let go of the privilege of continuing to do this sin.**

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1*

**Relinquish and let go of the privilege of giving up on yourself.**

No more saying, "I'll never change." Or "I'm too bad for God to forgive me." or "I'll never get over this." These things say that Christ's blood was not enough to cover your sins. They say that you're so bad even God does not have enough power to change you.



**Relinquish and let go of relying on your own will power, abilities, and self-improvement plans.**

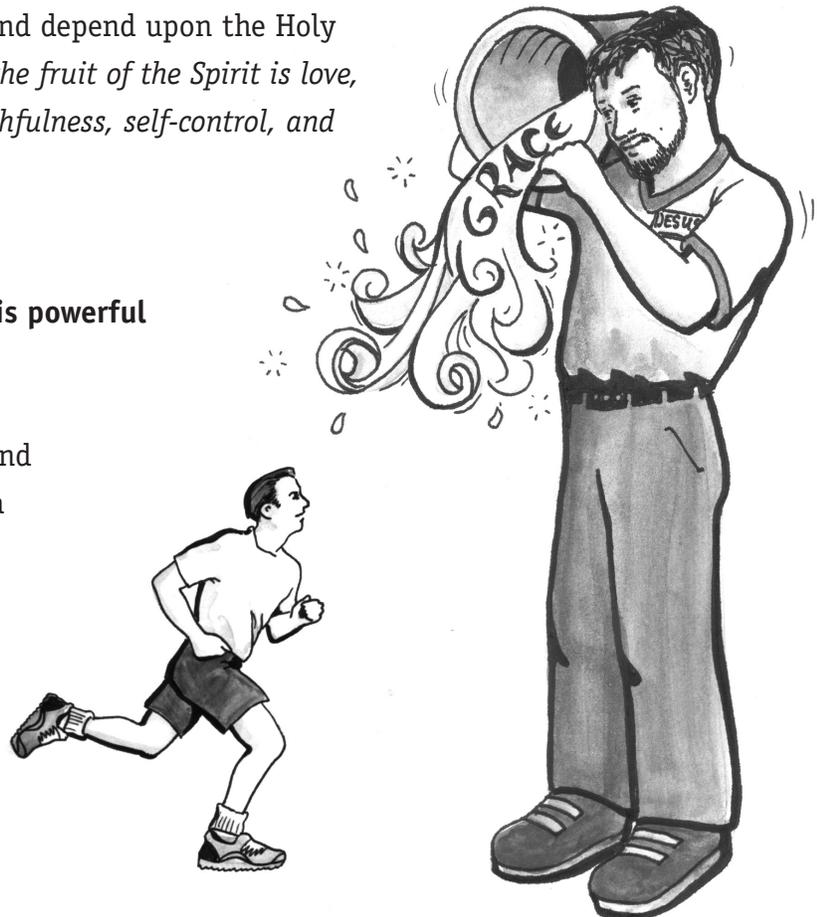
*Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 2 Corinthians 3:5*

*I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Galatians 3:2-3*

Self-control is a character quality that the Holy Spirit helps develop in you. You may not have enough of it yet to resist temptation in this area. Your reservoir of good character is not the solution. But this doesn't give you an excuse to keep sinning. Let go of relying on what you don't have enough of and depend upon the Holy Spirit to give you the grace you need. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, and meekness... Galatians 5:22-23*

**Completely rely on God's ability through His powerful grace to deal with this dirty room.**

Run to the throne of grace where you will find all that you need to overcome sin. Grace is a God-given miraculous ability and provision to do what you cannot do on your own. It is the influence of God operating in you to strengthen and improve.



---

Rely on God's grace, not on yourself. *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16*

*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4:4*



---

**Tell Jesus that He can do whatever it takes to change you. Give Him full permission to clean up this dirty room.**

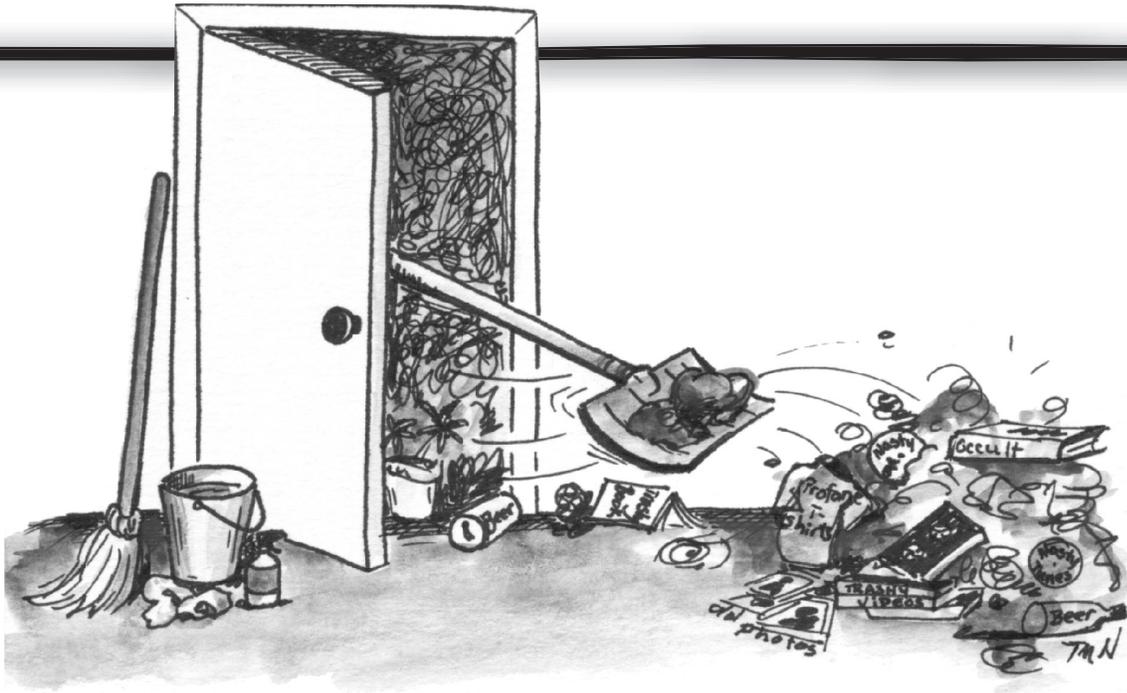


---

**Relinquish each of the things mentioned in this step. You are turning your situation and your life over to God. *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7***

---

In the next step, you will be telling God that you will do whatever He tells you as He leads you out of bondage step by step.



## Step 4 You Do Whatever It Takes

**Tell God YOU will do whatever it takes to change; you will obey the next thing He tells you to do.**

Here are some acts of obedience that will help you find freedom:

**Ask God to show you the things in your home that make it difficult to not sin. Destroy them or get rid of them immediately.**

*Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. Acts 19:18-19*

What do you need to get rid of?

**Living and walking by the Spirit means to obey the next thing Jesus tells you to do.**

***So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***

***Galatians 5:16***

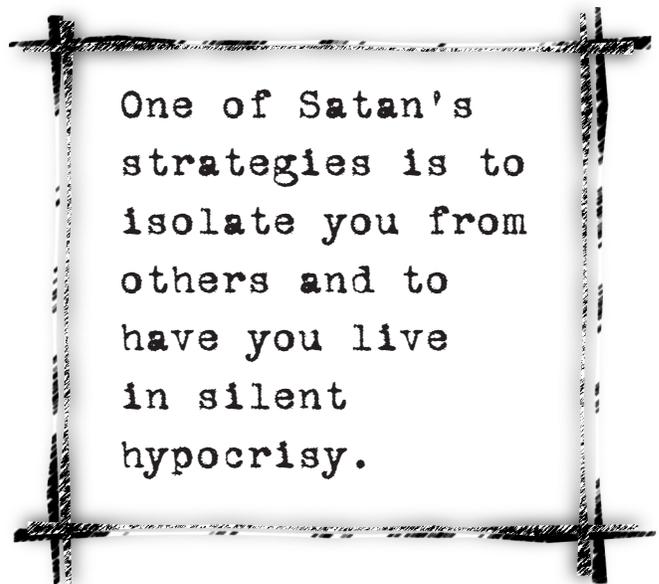
**Confess your sins to a trusted friend who wants to live righteously.**

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16*

Confession humbles you, but that's where grace is. Grace is what you need! ...*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:5-7*

**Be accountable to someone to help you,  
someone you can call when you feel weak.**

When you choose to become accountable to someone, you humbly receive his/her feedback, correction, and help. You admit that you need other Christians to come alongside you in order to overcome sin and destructive habits. You were never meant to walk with Jesus alone; we take the journey of becoming more like Jesus together, walking openly with one another in the light. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:7-9* Walking in the light breaks the power that hidden things have over you.



When you walk in the light with trusted friends (openness and not hiding), what is the result?

Be humble. Call your friends when you feel the pull of temptation. Ask them to work through these four steps with you.

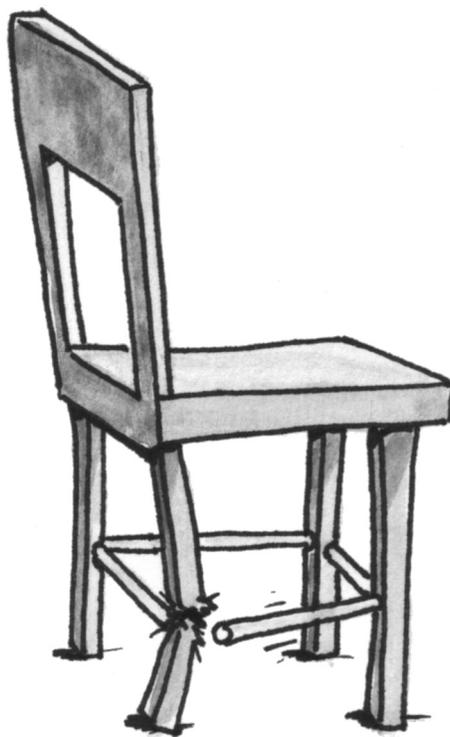
## Deal with past wounds or sins committed by you or perpetrated upon you.

Often there are reasons (not excuses) for sins that are difficult to quit. Don't blame others for your struggles; take responsibility for how you chose to respond to your life experiences. You are **response-able**.

However, past wounds and past habits of sin are like a broken leg on a chair – it keeps breaking in the same place. In order to deal with the past, work through the **Forgiving** and **Moral Inventory** sections of the notebook. Ask your pastor or small group leader to do them with you.



Ask God to show you which of these parts of step 4 you are to do now. Tell your small group leader what God asked you to do and if you obeyed.



# the journey OF CHANGE

Walking with Jesus is a journey where you offer yourself less to sin and more to God, a journey of change. The longer you walk with Jesus and learn to rely on Him, the easier it will be to overcome sin and change. Use the four steps over and over on your journey of becoming more holy.

Here are some pictures of what the process of change looks like. Habits form paths like this in your brain. When you seek to change, you are walking with Jesus blazing a new path in your brain. You and Jesus are in the process of renewing your mind. *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world (the well-worn path to sin), but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind (the new path to holiness). Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2*



The path to sin (stealing cookies) is well-traveled and familiar, though destructive. The path of righteousness is an unbroken trail, covered with thick jungle overgrowth that needs to be hacked through.

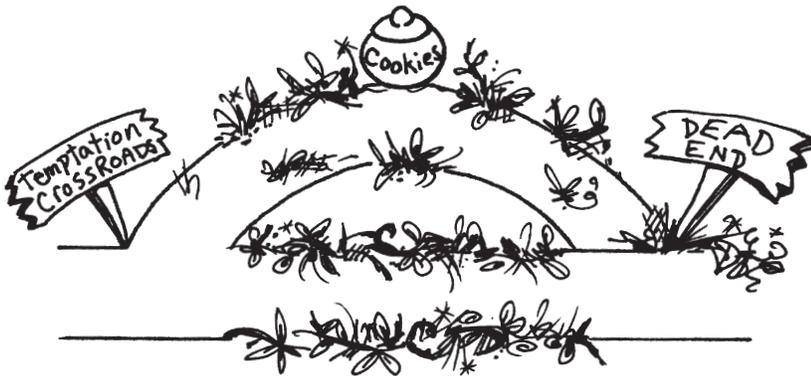
## Renew:

### Reversal through Repetition and Intensity

"I have been changed by the careful, loving hands of the Savior through intense and repeated life crisis, repeated hearing of truth, repeated memorization of Scripture, repeated disciplines of prayer, Bible study, worship, allowing His Word to influence and change my thoughts. He has changed me, not just for my benefit, but for His purpose – that the world may know and see Jesus in me."

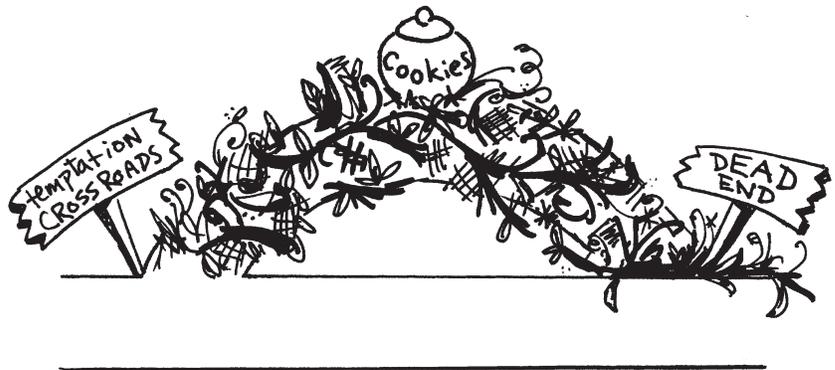
– Lenny Carluzzi

When you come to the temptation crossroads, fling open the door to let Jesus into your situation (Step 2). Relinquish yourself, offer yourself, to Him as you let Him do whatever it takes. (Step 3). Your job is to hold tight to His hand and do the next thing He tells you to do (step 4 – do whatever it takes). In following the four steps, you take Jesus' hand and He carries the machete. He will cut through the jungle growth and take you step by step.



You may feel sometimes that the new path is unfamiliar and awkward. The path is showing some signs of travel but it is not well-worn yet.

Keep holding on to Jesus through the process. Get up after each failure and hold on again, doing the four steps. Offer yourself less to sin and more to God. Someday, the paths will look like this.



*Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. Romans 6:13, 16, 19*

# how to COUNT SUCCESS

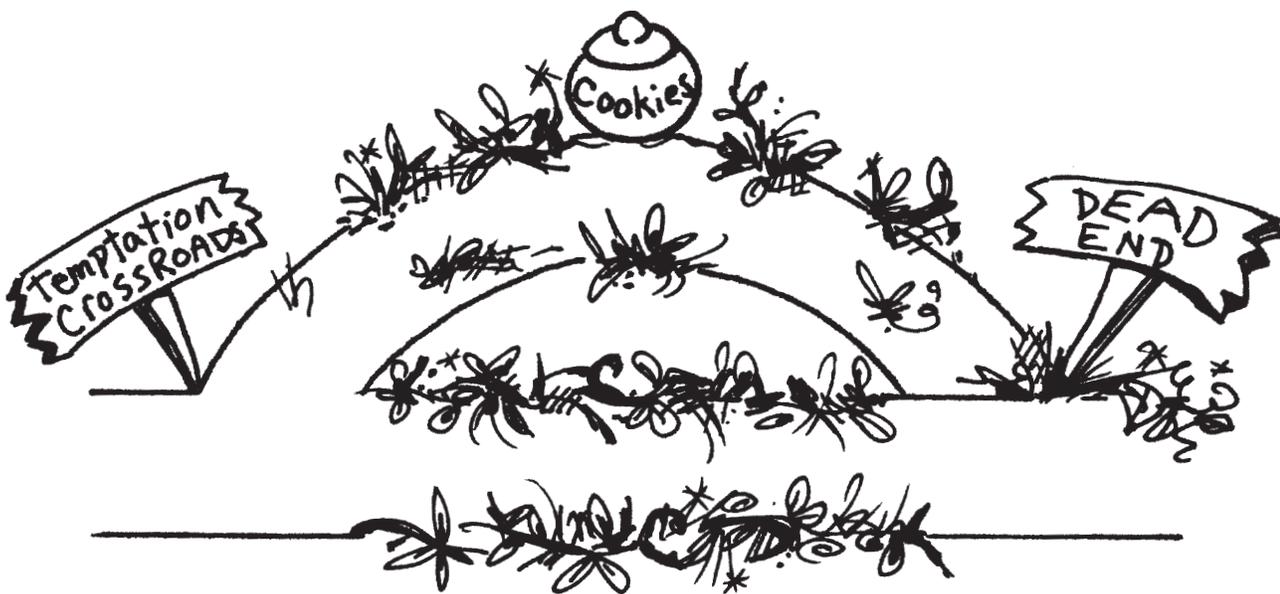
From David Delgatty, Senior Pastor at Christian Center Church, Bozeman, Montana.

There are two levels of success. One is to overcome the sin and be able to live free of it. Obviously, that is the one for which you are aiming. Another level is to count little successes along the journey.

- ➔ Are there longer periods of time between failures? Count that as success.
- ➔ Did you repent more quickly than last time? That is success.

Each point of repentance gives God an opportunity to change your heart to love Him more and hate the sin more. Each place of repentance gives God a chance to change your character toward self-control and integrity.

- ➔ Did you see the temptation coming earlier this time? Even if you failed, next time you'll see the signs and call a friend for help. (Step 4!)
- ➔ Did you make it through temptation without sinning, even though you WANTED to sin? (Maybe you called a friend to come over to help.) You and Jesus just broke trail on the new path. Someday, your desires will fall in line with your choices.



# what about people who OVERCOME SIN WITHOUT GOD'S HELP?

## **Self Control** by George MacDonald

I will allow that the mere effort of will...may add to the man's power over his lower nature; but in that very nature it is God who must rule and not the man, how very well he may mean. From a man's rule of himself ... arises the huge danger of nourishing, by the pride of self-conquest, a far worse than even the unchained animal self -- the demoniac self. True victory over self is the victory of God in the man, not of the man alone. It is not subjugation that is enough, but subjugation by God. In whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably -- or succeed more miserably. No portion of a man may rule another, for God, not the man, created it.... George MacDonald, *George MacDonald An Anthology*, C. S. Lewis, editor, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1947, pp. 68-69. Used with permission.

*This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.*

*But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:5-8*

# Jesus saves you from sin IN THREE WAYS

From Ralph Neighbour, Jr., *Touching Hearts Guidebook*, TOUCH Outreach Ministries, Inc., Houston, TX, 1997, pp. 48-55. Used with permission. For more information about the *Touching Hearts Guidebook* and discipling others through mentoring relationships, call 1-800-735-5865 or write P. O. Box 19888, Houston, Texas, 77224-2888.

Jesus saved you from the **penalty of sin** -- at one point in time.

He will save you from the **presence of sin** -- at one point of time.

He is saving you from the **power of sin** -- throughout your lifetime on earth.

Write the main theme of each passage. Note the three meanings of salvation.

## Free from Sin's Penalty

Christ's payment on the cross guarantees your eternal salvation.

➤ **Colossians 2:13-15**

## Free from Sin's Presence

-- when Jesus returns.

➤ **Hebrews 9:27-28**

The judgment and rewards for your life on earth will come when Jesus returns. If you obey Him on earth, you store up an enduring reward in heaven.

➤ **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**

## **Free from Sin's Power**

The process of overcoming sin and changing is accomplished in close relationship with other believers.

### ➤ **Philippians 2:12-13**

When you decided to follow Jesus, you were immediately baptized into His body - attached to other Christians (His body). You were never intended to walk out your Christianity alone.

### ➤ **1 Corinthians 12:13**

You and other Christians were meant to help one another go through the process of overcoming sin and changing. This can be accomplished in a small group where the members maintain a purpose to coach one another and help one another overcome sin. You come together with the assumption that you are all in the process of changing and you need one another. Read the following verses and write how you are to do this.

### ➤ **Colossians 3:16**

### ➤ **1 Thessalonians 5:11-15**

### ➤ **Hebrews 3:13**

### ➤ **Hebrews 10:24-25**

# the cost OF SIN

## What You Plant is What You'll Harvest

The actions you do that are wrong are like seeds you plant. When you first plant them, there is pleasure; if sin were not pleasurable, you wouldn't be tempted to do it. (Moses) *chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. Hebrews 11:25*

However, you will enjoy the pleasures of the sin-seeds for only a short time. For, much to your surprise, they will produce a harvest of bondage and slavery. The sin-seeds that leave your hand seem benign and pleasurable; you may feel heady freedom while you are planting. But, when planted, they will grow into a monster enslaving you. The more you repeat a sin, the more powerful the harvest of slavery. *...by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they (people who love sin) entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity – for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. 2 Peter 2:18-19* If you find it difficult to stop doing something that is wrong, it has become your master; it is dictating, to some degree, what you are becoming (your harvest).



You sow to please someone, either your own passions and desires (what you want and when you want it), or God's desires. You may not make the connection between what you sow and what you will harvest. *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8* What kind of harvest will the seeds you are now sowing bring you?

Your harvest is the kind of person you become. The more you sow to please your own passions and desires (sinful nature), the more those desires will master you and drive you. You will become increasingly selfish and self-absorbed. Your little world will revolve around getting your needs and wants satisfied regardless of others' needs. You and those you touch will experience the harvest of destruction produced by your selfish choices.



If you sow choices that please God, you will reap a life free from the slavery to selfishness. You will experience the inner freedom of self-control, rather than bondage. You will live an others-centered, God-centered life. People will be drawn to you because of the love and integrity you exude.

If you consider the kind of person you want to become, are you sowing seeds now that will get you there?

Answer these additional questions to evaluate the harvest you are reaping from sin.

What relationships are affected and how?

How is your work and school affected?

How is your relationship with God affected?

How are you being affected?

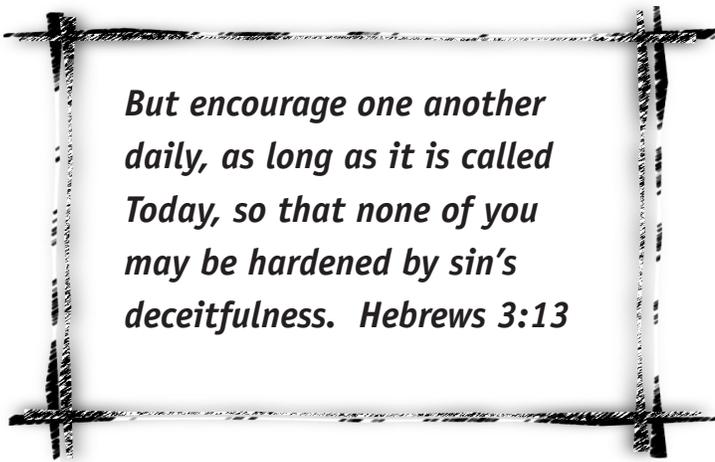


Please pray, "God, reveal what this sin is costing me and others."

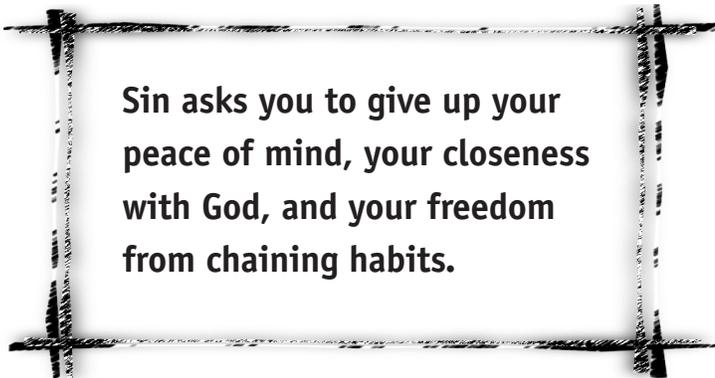
You may not feel guilty about doing a wrong action. You may feel that it is not having a negative effect on you or your relationships. But your heart is deceiving you. *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9* You may have participated in sin long enough that your conscience no longer warns you when you are violating it. *Such teachings (demonic teachings) come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 1 Timothy 4:2*



***Blessed is the man who  
always fears the LORD,  
but he who hardens his  
heart falls into trouble.  
Proverbs 28:14***



***But encourage one another  
daily, as long as it is called  
Today, so that none of you  
may be hardened by sin's  
deceitfulness. Hebrews 3:13***



**Sin asks you to give up your  
peace of mind, your closeness  
with God, and your freedom  
from chaining habits.**

Do not trust your heart, mind, or even your conscience to tell you what is right or wrong. Your heart and conscience can be trained to accept as right what God says is wrong and destructive. *...both their minds and consciences are corrupted. Titus 1:15* God, the most loving Being in the universe, has revealed in the Bible what actions will bring destruction. Avoid them so that you can experience eternal life both now and after you die.

## The Path to Addiction

From "AIDS of Another Kind" an article about addiction by Lenny Carluzzi, <http://members.aol.com/lionprayer>

Sin is an addictive substance.

Satan is out to destroy you. He looks for a legitimate need or desire such as significance, belonging, identity, or approval. And he looks for a place of pain in your life such as loss, hurt, rejection, disappointment, boredom, loneliness. Then, Satan tempts you to try to meet those needs outside God's loving boundaries.

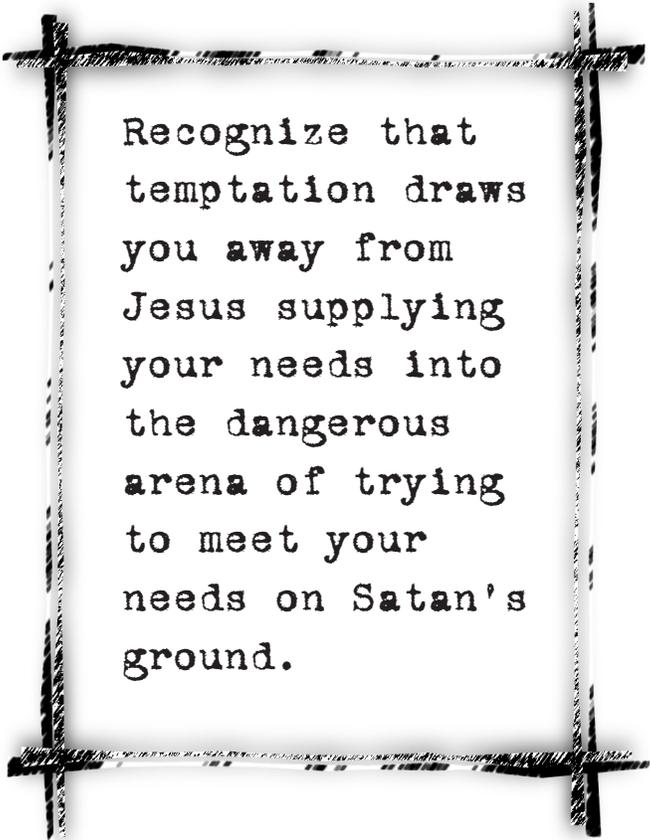
Meeting those needs outside God's boundaries (sinning) opens you up to feelings of self-doubt, fear, self-hatred, anger, shame, and frustration. Satan plays off of these emotions to entice you to sin again as you try to find relief from pain.

When sinning becomes a pattern of numbing yourself against your unmet needs or personal pain, your character is being twisted and destroyed. The pattern is destructive, yet familiar and even comfortable. You have entered the lifestyle of addiction. Sin is your master.

You are running further away from Jesus and into the "arms" of the addiction for comfort. Devotion to Jesus is the only satisfaction for your needs and healing for your pain. Sin will demand an ever-higher price from you for satisfaction. Abandonment to Jesus will deeply satisfy.

What need or desire does this sin seek to fill?

Does it work? At what cost?



Recognize that temptation draws you away from Jesus supplying your needs into the dangerous arena of trying to meet your needs on Satan's ground.

## Have Some Maggot Stew

From Jeff Alexander, Chi Alpha, Ohio State University,  
Columbus, Ohio.

Read Genesis 25:29-34 and Hebrews 12:16-17 where Esau can't wait for gratification. He doesn't look at the long-range implications of selling his inheritance. He wanted what he wanted and he wanted it now. Was it worth it?

Your needs scream loudly. But Esau would not have died if he had waited, or even gone without food that evening. You will not die either if you deny self-gratification.

What are some of the things that are your inheritance as a son/daughter of the Father? (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, to name a few, besides a close relationship with Jesus now and eternity with Him.)

Choosing to sin, instead of delaying gratification, is selling your inheritance for a pot of maggot stew. It won't nourish you but, instead, will simply infest you, bringing death into your life.



## Sin, the Relational Wrecking Ball

From Jeff Alexander, Chi Alpha, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

When you sin, your relationships become more shallow. You are less open. You trust less, and are trusted less.

When you sin, you often end up hurting other people. You misuse, manipulate, or lie to others to get what you want.

When you sin, you hinder the pure and loving use of your gifts and talents. For example, you are oblivious to how your "telling the truth" rips people up.

When you sin, your relationship with the Father is hindered. Hearing His voice becomes more difficult if you keep ignoring His conviction. Soon, you won't be able to know His guidance to find your way on life's journey.

Jesus' blood was shed to give you relationship with God. To sin and not repent of your sin is a rejection of this blood. It will result in you being an object of God's wrath. God wants to have a relationship with you, but that relationship is based on repentance and turning from sin to God continually.

➡ **Read Ephesians 1:7 and 2:13 and Hebrews 9:12, 14.**

What does God want?

What was He willing to pay for it?

Would you be willing to repent of sin and come into a closer walk with your loving Father?



# temptation:

**SOME ROADS ARE  
BETTER LEFT  
UNTRAVELED**



**It's one thing to have the bird of temptation fly over your head.**

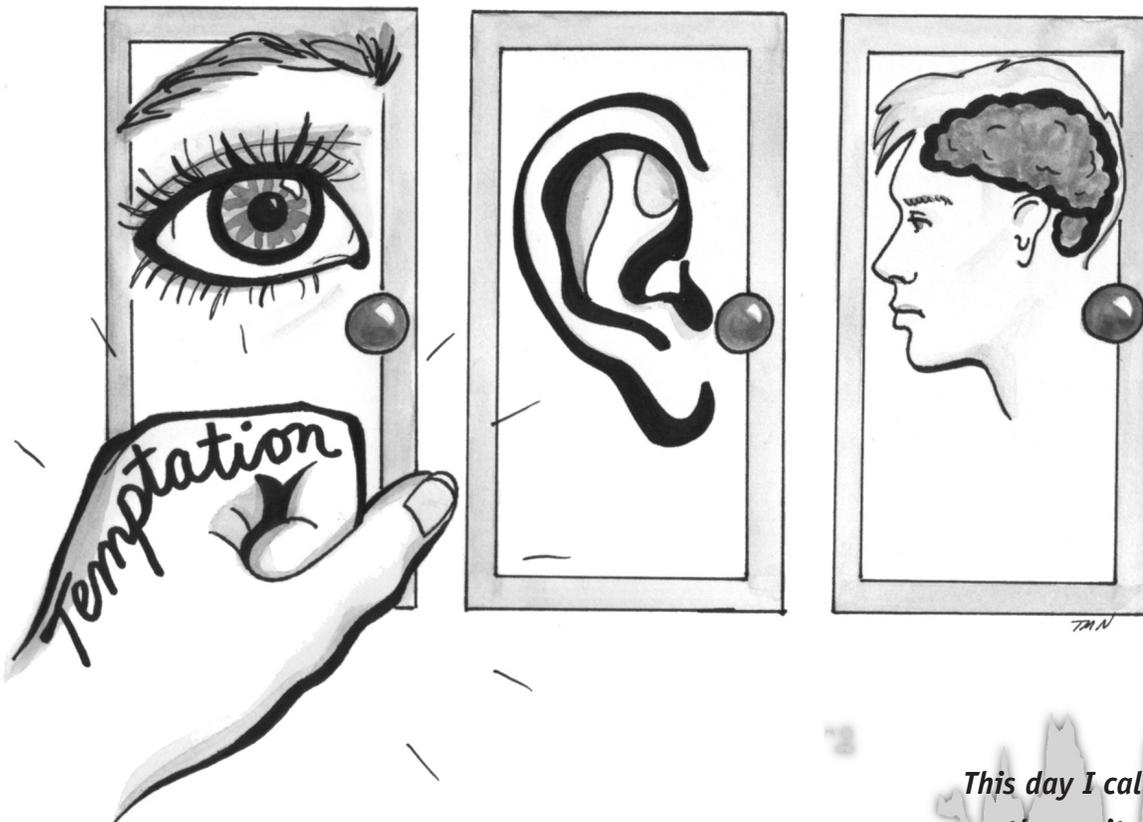
**It's quite another if you let it build a nest in your hair.**

Read James 1:13-15. *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15*



What is the progression that begins with giving in to temptation?

How does this relate to the bird illustration?



Temptation to sin will knock at your eye-door, ear-door, and mind-door.

You will hear the knock, but you don't have to open the door.

Jesus heard the knocks of temptation. But, He did not open the door. He was tempted and did not sin. Temptation is not sin. If you open the door, or let the bird build a nest, then you sin.

*This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him....  
Deuteronomy 30:19-20*

### **A Progression and Its Implications**

**Sow a thought, reap an action.**

**Sow an action, reap a habit.**

**Sow a habit, reap a character.**

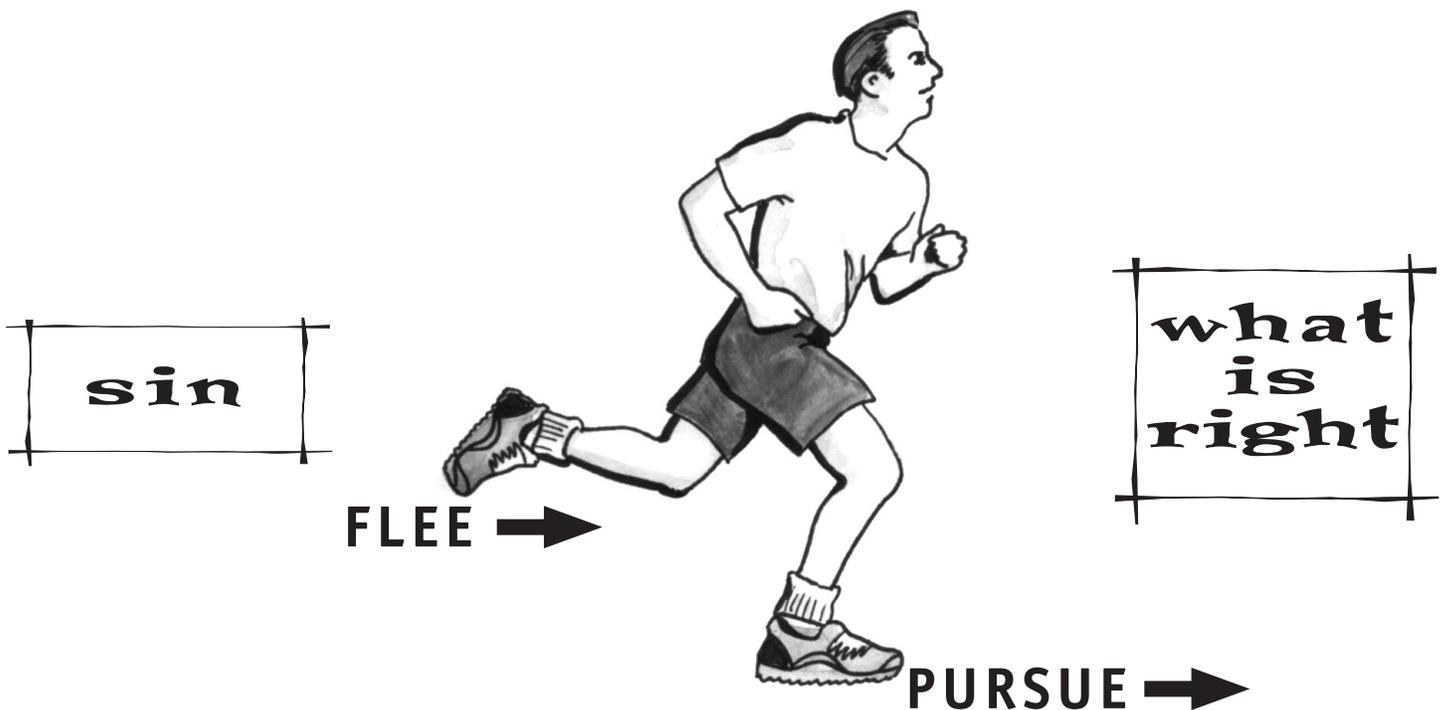
**Sow a character, reap a destiny.**

How do you keep the door closed or keep the bird out of your hair? Circle the verbs in the following Scriptures that answer that question.

*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22*

*But you, man (or woman) of God, flee from all this (temptation to be eager for money), and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11*

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. (Idolatry can be anything to which you sacrifice integrity, conscience, the important things in your life.) 1 Corinthians 10:13-14*



How to Overcome Sin  30

## Where do you flee?

Don't trust your will power to withstand temptation. Flee and run to Jesus where the grace to overcome is flowing. Right in the midst of temptation, turn your mind to focus on Jesus. Call to Him to help you. Then, do whatever He tells you to do, whatever comes to mind as an escape – call a friend, leave the premises, go work out. Do whatever it takes to flee temptation.

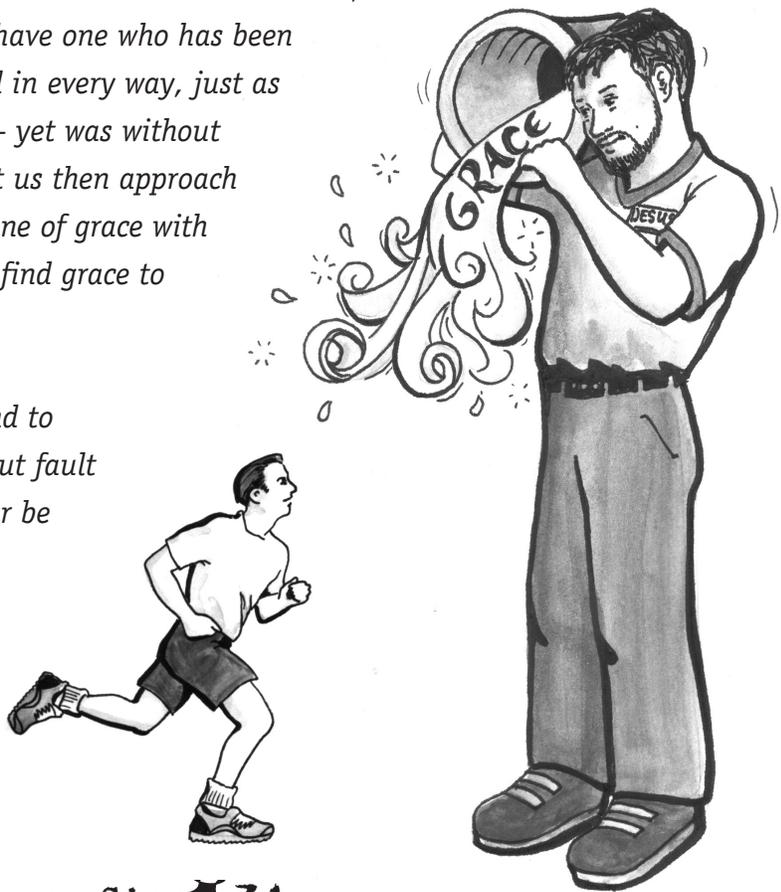
**grace**  
**God-given miraculous**  
**ability and provision.**  
**His influence to**  
**strengthen you.**

*Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. Hebrews 2:18-3:1*

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with*

*confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16*

*To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:24-25*



# To Fear (Revere and Respect) the Lord

To fear the Lord is to hate evil. In other words, you understand the price you will pay to go there. You see sin the way God sees it – very costly. So, then, you hate evil, shun it, flee from it, avoid it because you understand what you'll pay for it.

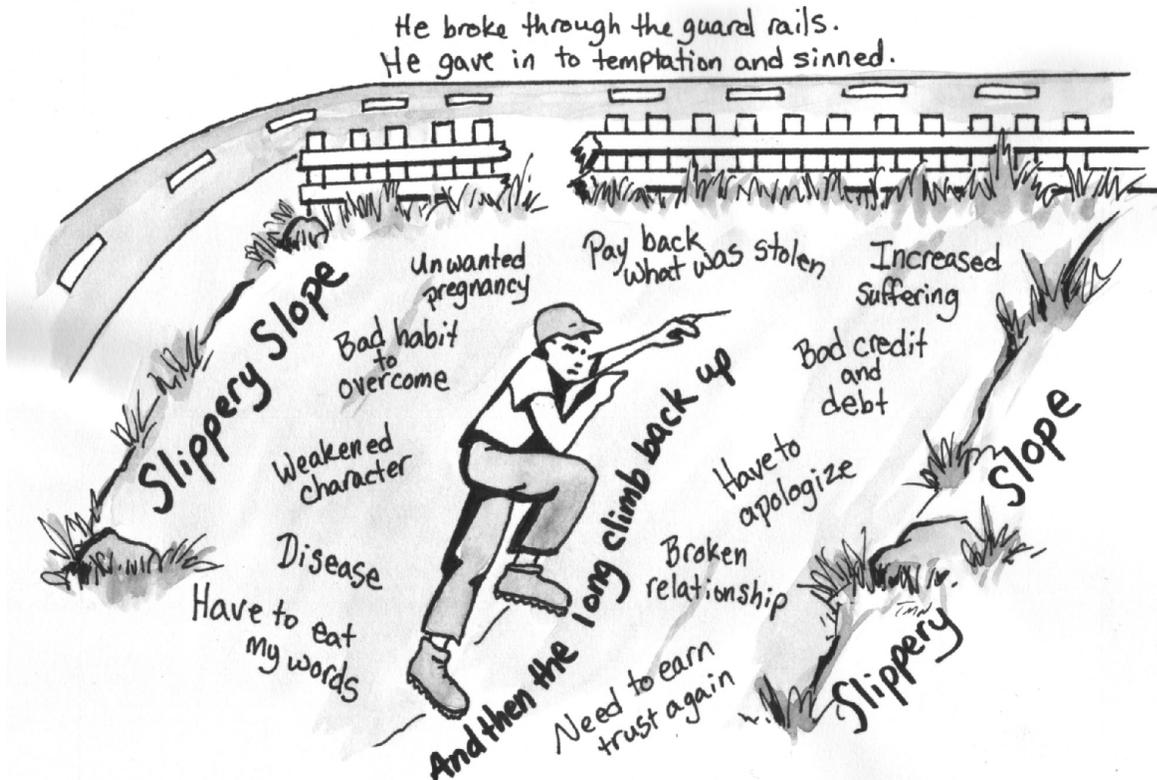
*To fear the Lord is to **hate evil**; I (wisdom) **hate** pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Proverbs 8:13 (emphasis mine)*

*Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and **shun evil**. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Proverbs 3:7-8 (emphasis mine)*

*Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man **avoids evil**. Proverbs 16:6 (emphasis mine)*

The price of breaking through God's loving guard rails is not worth the season of pleasure that is tempting you. It's a long slide down the slippery slope and an arduous climb back up. To fear the Lord means you understand the trade-off and you're unwilling to pay it.

**Pray for an increase of the fear of the Lord: Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. Psalm 86:11**



---

## Prayers to Pray

*“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” Matthew 26:41*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Matthew 6:13*

*Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. Psalm 19:12-13*

*Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies. Let a righteous man strike me – it is a kindness; let him rebuke me – it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it.... (This is welcoming a relationship of accountability with someone.) Psalm 141:3-5*

*But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge – do not give me over to death. Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety. Psalm 141:8-10*

### Sources

Jeff Alexander, Chi Alpha, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Lenny Carluzzi, “AIDS of Another Kind,” <http://members.aol.com/lionprayer>.

David Delgatty, Senior Pastor at Christian Center Church, Bozeman, Montana.

George MacDonald, *George MacDonald An Anthology*, C. S. Lewis, editor, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1947.

Ralph Neighbour, Jr., *Touching Hearts Guidebook*, TOUCH Outreach Ministries, Inc., Houston, TX, 1997.

# list of SCRIPTURES

## ➔ General References

<b>Psalm 19:12-13</b>	Keep me from willful sins; may they not rule over me
<b>Psalm 86:11</b>	give me undivided heart, that I may fear (revere) God's name.
<b>Psalms 103:12</b>	as far as east from the west, removed sins
<b>Psalm 141:3-5, 8-10</b>	let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, in you I take refuge
<b>Proverbs 3:7-8</b>	fear the Lord, shun evil; health to body
<b>Proverbs 8:13</b>	To fear the Lord is to hate evil
<b>Proverbs 16:6</b>	through the fear of Lord man avoids evil.
<b>Jeremiah 17:5-8</b>	cursed if depend on flesh, blessed if trust in Lord
<b>Matthew 9:10-13</b>	healthy don't need doctor; came for sinners
<b>Acts 19:18-19</b>	burned their occult books
<b>Romans 6:1-2</b>	go on sinning so grace abounds? No.
<b>Romans 6:13, 16, 19 (6:13-23)</b>	offer yourselves to God and not to sin
<b>Romans 12:2</b>	be transformed by renewing of your mind
<b>1 Corinthians 3:11-15</b>	your work shown for its quality on judgment day
<b>1 Corinthians 12:13</b>	baptized by one Spirit into one body
<b>2 Corinthians 3:5</b>	not competent in ourselves
<b>Galatians 3:2-3</b>	begin in spirit; finish by human effort?
<b>Galatians 5:16</b>	live by Spirit not gratify sinful nature
<b>Galatians 5:22-23</b>	fruit of spirit
<b>Philippians 2:12-13</b>	work out salvation, God works in you to will and act
<b>Colossians 2:13-15</b>	forgave all our sins, disarmed evil powers by cross
<b>Colossians 3:16</b>	teach and admonish one another with wisdom
<b>1 Thessalonians 5:11-15</b>	encourage each other, warn idle, don't pay back evil for evil
<b>Titus 2:11-14</b>	grace teaches to say no to ungodliness
<b>Hebrews 3:13</b>	encourage one another daily, not hardened by sin
<b>Hebrews 4:15-16</b>	come to throne of grace
<b>Hebrews 9:12</b>	Christ entered Most Holy Place by His own blood
<b>Hebrews 9:27-28</b>	Christ died once, appear second time to bring salvation

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

**Hebrews 12:1**

**James 4:7**

**James 5:16**

spur one another on to love, don't give up meeting together  
throw off sins, run with endurance  
submit to God; resist devil  
confess sins to each other

**1 Peter 5:5-7**

**1 John 1:7-9**

**1 John 4:4**

**Revelation 3:17-20**

humble selves; God gives grace to humble; resists proud  
walk in light, have fellowship, confess and forgiven  
One in you greater than one in world  
I stand at door and knock; open door

## ➔ **Cost of Sin**

**Genesis 25:29-34**

**Proverbs 28:14**

**Jeremiah 17:9**

**Galatians 6:7-8**

**Ephesians 1:7-8**

**Ephesians 2:13**

**1 Timothy 4:2**

**Titus 1:15**

**Hebrews 9:12, 14**

**Hebrews 11:25**

**Hebrews 12:16-17**

**2 Peter 2:18-19**

story of Esau selling birthright  
blessed if fear Lord, hardens heart falls into trouble  
heart deceitful  
you reap what you sow  
redemption through His blood  
far away, brought near through His blood  
consciences seared  
minds and consciences corrupted  
Christ entered Holy Place with own blood, cleanses our consciences  
pleasures of sin for season  
immoral and godless like Esau  
promise freedom when they are slaves of depravity

## ➔ **Temptation**

**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**

**Matthew 6:13**

**Matthew 26:41**

**1 Corinthians 10:13-14**

**1 Timothy 6:10-11**

**2 Timothy 2:22**

**Hebrews 2:18-3:1**

**Hebrews 4:15-16**

**James 1:13-15**

**Jude 1:24-25**

set before you death and life, choose life  
lead us not into temptation  
pray so that not fall into temptation  
No temptation seized you except common to man.  
flee temptation to love money  
Flee evil desires, pursue righteousness, etc.  
Christ tempted so able to help the tempted; fix thoughts on Jesus  
Christ tempted in every way yet without sin, approach throne of grace  
tempted by own desire, becomes sin, then death  
He is able to keep you from falling