

Study 1. Overcoming Temptations & Trials

READ: Ephesian 6: 10-18



KEY VERSE: James 4: 7

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

When we first become Christians we have a new joy, a new love for the Lord and for other Christians. Sadly, we may, sometimes, lose this joy when problems come. What should we do then? Should we give up? We can expect problems as Christians because we are not yet perfect.

When we become Christians we gain new enemies! Non-Christian friends may laugh at us, the devil will oppose us, and our own sinful nature will still be attracted to sin! In this series of Studies, we shall examine some of these problems.

TEMPTATIONS

Temptation is a real problem to everyone, but particularly to a Christian. This is because, now that we are believers, we have a ‘tug of war’ in our lives. This tension arises from the fact that we have a new nature now, which wants to please God by turning away from sin. But the old, sinful nature, which we had before we became Christians, is still with us and is attracted to the same sinful things which we did before we were saved. Therefore we can still be easily tempted to be sexually immoral, to steal, to lie, to cheat, to lose our tempers, and to be unkind and selfish. (See **Ephesians 4: 22-24 and Colossians 3: 9 & 10**)

Being tempted is not in itself a sin. Sin occurs when we give in to the temptation - we like it, think about it, and yield to it! (**James 1: 13- 15**) As believers, there are certain things which we can do to help us resist temptation.

I. WE SHOULD MEMORISE VERSES FROM THE BIBLE.

This will remind us of what God expects. (**Psalm 119: 11**) Jesus Himself was tempted by Satan, but refused to give in to him. He won victory in

the temptations which He suffered by quoting the Word of God to the devil. The devil does not like the Scriptures at all! (**Luke 4: 1-13**)

2. WE SHOULD RESOLVE, BEFORE GOD, NOT TO GO TO PLACES, OR DO THINGS THAT WE KNOW WILL LEAD US INTO SIN.

Job said that he had made a covenant (an agreement) with his eyes that he would not look lustfully at a girl. (**Job 31: 1**) A resolve of this kind, made solemnly in the presence of God, strengthens us in the fight against temptation.

3. WE SHOULD KNOW OUR OWN WEAKNESSES.

We should ask God to give us victory over them. Knowing yourself is very important in the Christian life. We are all different and are tempted in varying ways. But we are all expected to resist temptation. This calls for constant watchfulness, as Peter reminds us in **1 Peter 5: 8 & 9**.

4. WE SHOULD DEPEND UPON THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD JESUS.

In Him we have the power to resist all temptations. We should, **“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”** and **“put on the whole armour of God”** that we may be able to stand against the crafty schemes of the devil. (**Ephesians 6: 10 & 11**)

TRIALS

They are different from temptations. A temptation is something which may lead us to sin. Trials are problems and difficulties that come our way. Trials can be sicknesses, family problems, accidents, persecutions and similar things. God allows them to come in order to strengthen our faith and teach us important lessons which will help us to mature as Christians. (See **1 Peter 1: 6 & 7**)

Trials come to all mankind, not just to believers. They do not happen because we are sinners or because God does not love us. As believers we should be able to cope with them in a spiritual way. We have strengths which unbelievers do not have. We have the Lord, who has promised to be with us and never leave us. (**Hebrews 13: 5 & 6**) We have Christian fellowship, and the faith to believe that any trials, which come to us, deepen our love for God.

Study 1. Overcoming Temptations & Trials

1 THE STUDY STATES THAT WHEN WE BECOME CHRISTIANS WE GAIN NEW ENEMIES. WHO ARE THESE ENEMIES ?

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2 WHY IS THERE A 'TUG OF WAR' IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER?

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3 READ LUKE 4: 1-13 AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:-

a. For how many days did Jesus' temptation last?

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b. Give an account IN YOUR OWN WORDS of one of the temptations.

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c. In each case, how did the Lord Jesus respond to Satan's attack?

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4 ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE:-

- i. Our warfare is against "flesh and blood".
- ii. The shield of our own strength will overcome the devil's darts.
- iii. The sword of the Spirit is God's Word.
- iv. Prayer is an important element in defeating temptations.
- v. The Christian soldier's 'helmet' is his own power.

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5 ACCORDING TO 1 CORINTHIANS 10: 13, WHAT ENCOURAGEMENTS DOES A CHRISTIAN HAVE IN THE TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS THAT COME UPON HIM?

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6 SUMMARISE IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS.

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7 READ 1 PETER 1:6 & 7 AND EXPLAIN, AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE, WHAT SHOULD BE THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIALS THAT GOD ALLOWS TO COME INTO OUR LIVES.

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Total marks for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. Overcoming Peer Pressure

READ: 1 John 1: 5-10, 1 John 2: 15-17



KEY VERSE:
Romans 12: 2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Another problem we are likely to encounter as believers is the pressure we are put under by the world. When we say ‘the world’, we mean the present global system in its opposition to God and its rejection of the Lord Jesus. As believers we are **“in the world” (John 17: 11)**, because we live in the same world as unbelievers. We should, however, not be like them in our life-style. Peer-pressure is one of the points of conflict between believers and non-believers.

As a young Christian, you will face many questions, such as; “Should I go to discos?” and “Should I listen to, and sing, the pop songs of our culture?” “Should we behave immorally because those around us will laugh at us if we do not?” “How can we resist the pressures of a sinful society?”

The Bible gives us some good guidelines:-

1. REMEMBER TO WHOM YOU BELONG.

We are accountable to God because He is our Creator. **“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth.” (Ecclesiastes 12: 1)** But we also belong to Him, because He has bought us by the death of His Son. **(See 1 Corinthians 6: 20)** Because of these facts we should stand in awe of Him, and give Him first place in our lives. This is what the Bible means when it speaks about **“the fear of the Lord”**. It teaches us that, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”**. **(Proverbs 9: 10)** If you want to be wise in a sinful society, make it your aim to please Him rather than others, or yourself!

2. REMEMBER THAT WHEN WE SIN, WE SIN AGAINST GOD.

In the first place, all sin is against God. Joseph refused to commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife because he believed it was wrong and a sin against God. He said, **“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39: 9)** David, having committed adultery and murder, **(See 2 Samuel 11)** said to God, **“Against You, You only, have I sinned”**.

(Psalm 51: 4) The prodigal son, who left home and wasted his father’s money on a sinful way of life, eventually decided to return to his father. The words which he had planned to say when he met his father were, **“Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you.” (Luke 15: 18)** In other words, he recognized that his sin was firstly, and most importantly a sin against God! We know that when we sin, others are often hurt. This should make us think twice before we sin. So in the first place, all sin is against God!

3. REMEMBER THAT SIN BREAKS OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

It must be admitted that Christians are not perfect - they do sin! **(Note 1 John 1: 8)** But our sin does not result in our losing our salvation. Once we are saved, we are always saved. **(John 10: 28)** However, our sins do prevent us from having close fellowship with God. The psalmist expressed this in these words, **“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”**. **(Psalm 66: 18)** Our peace is disrupted, our prayer life is hindered, and our relationship with God is spoiled!

4. REMEMBER THAT THE PLEASURES OF SIN ARE NOT LASTING.

When the pleasures of sin are over, we often have to face unpleasant consequences. Like Moses, we should choose God’s pathway for our lives, rather than **“to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin”**. **(Hebrews 11: 25)** Lasting joy and happiness can only come from serving and loving God, rather than satisfying self.

The message of the Bible is clear,- **“If sinners entice you, do not consent.” (Proverbs 1: 10)** Stand firm as a believer, and do not compromise. The Key Verse, **Romans 12: 2**, says **“Do not be conformed to this world”**, which means we are not to let this sinful world squeeze us into its mould. The godless world will not be a friend to you if you love God. You will have to choose between loving this evil world and loving God.

(1 John 2: 15-17)

This Study challenges us to be true to our Lord Jesus and not to compromise with sin. We need to pray each day for God’s strength to stand for Him against the evil tide of wickedness and worldliness which is all around us!

Study 2. Overcoming Peer Pressure

1 EXPLAIN WHAT THE TERM 'WORLD' MEANS IN SUCH VERSES AS *1 JOHN 2: 15*.

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2 THERE ARE **TWO** SENSES IN WHICH A CHRISTIAN BELONGS TO GOD. WHAT ARE THEY?

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3 A. THINK ABOUT THE THREE BIBLE CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN SECTION 2 IN THE STUDY. WHAT VIEW DID THEY **ALL** TAKE ABOUT SIN?

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B. WRITE OUT WHAT **ANY ONE** OF THEM SAID ABOUT THIS MATTER.

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4 'I USED TO BE SAVED, BUT AM NOT ANY LONGER, BECAUSE I DID SOMETHING WRONG.'

A. HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER SOMEONE WHO SAID THIS TO YOU?

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B. WHAT PROMISE DOES *1 JOHN 1:9* GIVE US WHEN WE ARE UPSET ABOUT HAVING SINNED?

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5 A. EXPLAIN WHAT YOU THINK THE PHRASE "THE PASSING PLEASURES OF SIN" (*HEBREWS 11:25*) MEANS.

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B. OUTLINE, IN CONTRAST, THE CHIEF JOYS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN.

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6 IN LIVING OUR LIVES WE OFTEN HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO ALTERNATIVES.

A. WHAT TWO ALTERNATIVES CAN YOU SEE IN THE KEY VERSE?

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B. WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS VERSE MEANS FOR YOU TODAY?

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Total marks
for this study

Study 3. Overcoming Discouragement



KEY VERSE: 1 Peter 5: 7

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

In your new life as a Christian, it is possible to be discouraged or even tripped up! One area in which many Christians lose heart is in the matter of unanswered prayer.

At the beginning, we are often full of zeal and excitement, praying for many things, and expecting God to answer all our prayers. After a while, however, we notice that some of our prayers are not answered in the way we would like. For instance, we might pray for someone to be saved and it doesn't happen! Sometimes we pray for healing for someone and it doesn't take place! What's wrong? Doesn't God love us anymore? Has He not heard us? Have we gone wrong somewhere?

We need to be aware of these important principles when we pray:-

1. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT GOD'S ANSWER MAY NOT BE WHAT WE EXPECTED.

There are three answers to prayer - 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not just yet'. Both 'No', and 'Not just yet' are answers! When God does not give us what we ask for, it does not mean He has not heard our prayers. In this sense, there is no such thing as 'unanswered prayer'. For an example of a 'Not yet' answer, think about Zacharias and Elizabeth in **Luke chapter 1**. For an example of a 'No' answer, see Paul's words in **2 Corinthians 12: 7-9**.

2. WE PRAY 'IN THE NAME OF JESUS'.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples, **“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son”**. (**John 14: 13**) We must not think, however, that merely ending our prayers with the phrase, **“In the name of the Lord Jesus”** means we are using a spiritual 'abracadabra' which will always get us what we want. Praying 'in His name' actually means that we acknowledge His sole authority. Unworthy, selfish motives, therefore, have no place in our prayers! **“You ask and do not receive, because...”** (**James 4: 3**)

3. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO IMPOSE OUR WILL UPON GOD.

He is greater than we are, not the other way round. Because God is sovereign, He has the right

READ: Luke 11: 1-4 & 9-13 and 1 Corinthians 13: 1-7

to act in accordance with His own will. That is why we should always pray, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”** (**Matthew 26: 39**) If the Lord Jesus prayed that, how much more should we! We acknowledge that what we ask for should be given in line with His will. (**See 1 John 5: 14**)

4. WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR US.

God, our Father, does! Any toddler wanting to play with a sharp breadknife will find it taken away from him quickly by his parents. Perhaps the child thinks the parents are mean and unkind. But in denying their child what is bad for him, they are being kind. We can count upon our heavenly Father giving us what He knows is best for us. (**Matthew 7: 7-11**)

Another area in which discouragement may arise is in our relationships with other people. We may discover tensions in family life, or relationship difficulties in college or work. Even in church life, people may not have the attitudes to us that we expected. What help can we get from the Bible when we are discouraged and upset by such problems?

1. WE MUST RECOGNISE OUR OWN SHORT-COMINGS.

Difficult relationships can often be improved if we are humble and admit that we are not perfect! Paul teaches us that we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. (**Romans 12: 3**)

2. WE MUST CONSIDER OTHERS.

The principle of **Philippians 2: 4** is that we should not be inward-looking and selfish, but that we should put the best interests of others first. To pray for those with whom we are having difficulties is always a big step towards restoring harmony. Note the words of the Lord Jesus in **Matthew 5: 44**.

3. WE MUST ALWAYS ACT IN LOVE.

“Love suffers long and is kind.” (**1 Corinthians 13: 4**) Just as the moving parts of an engine need to be lubricated with oil, so all human relationships work more smoothly when 'lubricated' by the love of God.

The Christian life is not always an easy one. God never promised it would be! He has, however, assured us of His unfailing presence and He wants us to cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us, as the Key Verse tells us.

Study 3. Overcoming Discouragement

1 A. WHAT THREE POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO OUR PRAYERS ARE MENTIONED IN THIS STUDY?

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B. READ LUKE 1:5-13, AND EXPLAIN IN WHAT WAY ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH'S EXPERIENCE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A 'NOT YET' ANSWER.

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2 IN 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-9, WHEN PAUL "PLEADED WITH THE LORD THREE TIMES" THAT THE "THORN IN THE FLESH" MIGHT DEPART FROM HIM, GOD'S ANSWER WAS, 'NO'. THE LORD DID, HOWEVER, GIVE HIM A GREAT PROMISE; FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS:-

"My.....
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.....**weakness."**

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3 A. WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO "ASK IN MY NAME"? (JOHN 14: 13; 15: 16; 16: 23)

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B. READ JAMES 4: 3 AND EXPLAIN WHY THESE PEOPLE'S PRAYERS WERE NOT BEING ANSWERED IN THE WAY THEY EXPECTED.

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4 A. EXPLAIN WHAT PART YOU THINK THE BIBLE PLAYS IN HELPING CHRISTIANS TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL FOR THEIR LIVES.

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B. IF WE MAKE THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE OUR GUIDE IN OUR PRAYER-LIFE, WHAT CONFIDENCE CAN WE HAVE, ACCORDING TO 1 JOHN 5: 14?

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5 WHAT HELPFUL ADVICE FROM THE BIBLE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN WHO IS FINDING IT HARD TO 'GET ON WITH' SOME OTHER CHRISTIAN, IN HIS FAMILY, SCHOOL OR CHURCH?

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6 A. READ PHILIPPIANS 2:4 AND EXPRESS, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IT MEANS.

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B. THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THIS PRINCIPLE IS THE LORD JESUS. WHAT DID HIS CONCERN FOR OTHERS CAUSE HIM TO DO? (SEE VERSES 5-8)

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Total marks
for this study

READ: Ephesians 6: 10-20



KEY VERSE:

1 Peter 5: 8

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

Who is the devil? Is he real or just a figment of the imagination? Is he relevant to us today, or just a hang-over from the Middle Ages?

The teaching of the Bible is that the devil, or Satan, is indeed a very real spiritual being! Unlike God, he is not all-powerful, yet his power is so great that the Scriptures call him **“the ruler of this world”**. (John 12: 31) and **“the god of this age”**. (2 Corinthians 4: 4)

The devil is one of a Christians' worst enemies! He is determined to stop us from being effective Christians and to cause us trouble. (See the Key Verse) He is absolutely evil and his aim is to destroy God's work and His people. In his wicked intentions he is served by multitudes of demons or evil spirits.

To help us overcome this ruthless foe, here are some things of which we should be aware:-

SATAN IS NOT THE MOST POWERFUL BEING IN THE WORLD.

God is! God's power exceeds Satan's! God allows Satan only a certain amount of power. As a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in you, and therefore you need not fear Satan. **“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** (1 John 4: 4)

SATAN IS A DEFEATED FOE.

As we struggle to overcome Satan's power in our lives it is very helpful to remember that he is, right now, a defeated foe! His defeat came about because **“the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”**. (1 John 3: 8) The Lord Jesus in His death on the cross gained the victory over Satan and secured our release from his power. (See Hebrews 2: 14 & 15) The evidence for his defeat lies in the truth that the Lord Jesus has been raised from the dead!

SATAN CAN BE RESISTED.

When you became a Christian, God sealed you with His Holy Spirit and has given you the spiritual power to overcome Satan if you want to. The tragedy of many believers is that they sin because they want to, not because they have to. God always gives a way of escape if we look for it. **“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”** (James 4: 7)

SATAN NEVER WANTS THE BEST FOR ANYONE.

He is out to spoil your new life for God. We should always remember that he is the 'master-deceiver' (2 Corinthians 11: 14) and the 'father of lies'. (John 8: 44) We should constantly be on our guard against his subtle tactics! He has no intention of giving you anything good!

SATAN IS A SPIRITUAL ENEMY.

He must be fought with spiritual weapons. These weapons are, faith in God, prayer, the Word of God, (used like a sword against the devil) and all the other items of spiritual armour listed for us in **Ephesians 6: 10-18**. You cannot fight against Satan without God's help. But God wants us to gain victories and He will help us, if we rely on Him.

Satan's power is very real and should never be played with. Christians should never have anything to do with ouija boards, seances, horoscopes, signs of the zodiac (astrology) or anything that is questionable in its origin. We must keep away from all these things, for they are the means by which Satan has entrapped many people. **“Abstain from every form of evil.”** (1 Thessalonians 5: 22)

There are three main enemies of God's people and we have considered them all - the world, the flesh and the devil. Do not be discouraged. God is with you, and He will help you.

Study 4. Overcoming the devil

1 WHAT NAMES, OR DESCRIPTIONS, ARE USED FOR THE DEVIL, IN THESE REFERENCES? 2

a) *MATTHEW 4:3* b) *MATTHEW 4:10*
 c) *JOHN 8:44* d) *REVELATION 20:2*

2 TRUE OR FALSE:- 5

a) The devil is equal with God, in power.
 b) The devil is **“the god of this age”**.
 c) A Christian has the Holy Spirit within him.
 d) The devil never tempted the Lord Jesus.
 e) The Lord Jesus never yielded to temptation.

3 READ *HEBREWS 2:14 AND 15*. THESE VERSES TELL US TWO THINGS WHICH THE LORD JESUS ACHIEVED BY HIS DEATH. WHAT ARE THEY? 2

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4 READ *JAMES 4:7*, THEN ANSWER:- 4

a) Suggest some ways in which we can **“resist the devil”**.

b) If we resist him, what does God promise?

5 IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TEMPTATION AND SIN, A CHRISTIAN HAS **“THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD”** AVAILABLE TO HIM. READ *EPHESIANS 6:10-17* AND THEN SAY BRIEFLY WHAT SPIRITUAL MEANING IS GIVEN TO:- 2

a) the shield
 b) the sword

6 A. WHEN JESUS WAS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL, HE ANSWERED EACH OF THE DEVIL’S SUGGESTIONS BY QUOTING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. READ *MATTHEW 4:4, 7 & 10*, AND WRITE THE THREE WORDS WHICH JESUS REPEATED IN EACH OF HIS ANSWERS. 5

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B. IN WHAT WAYS CAN THE BIBLE HELP US, IN OUR BATTLES WITH SATAN?

7 THE DEVIL’S FINAL DOWNFALL IS DESCRIBED IN *REVELATION 20*. READ VERSES 1-3 AND 7-10, THEN WRITE SHORT ANSWERS:- 5

a) For how long will the devil be bound?
 b) What name is given to his prison?
 c) On being released, what will he do?
 d) How will the devil’s battle-forces be destroyed?
 e) What will then become of the devil?

100

Total marks for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:

25

Total marks for this study