

TEMPTATION

ANXIETY

STN

ADDICTION

DEPRESSION

SHAME

FEAR

GUILT

Why Are You Still Struggling?

The Battle Over Temptation Has
Already Been Won

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Preface

"Why Are You Still Struggling? The Battle Over Temptation Has Already Been Won" is a deeply personal and faith-centered journey through the reality of temptation, spiritual warfare, failure, grace, and restoration. Through honest stories from his own life, Michael shares the hidden struggles he battled for years, including shame, envy, lust, anger, alcohol and the exhausting cycle of trying to overcome temptation through willpower alone. What began as frustration and repeated defeat slowly became a life-changing realization that true victory could never come from human strength; it could only come through complete dependence on Jesus Christ. Blending raw personal reflection with biblical truth and practical spiritual guidance, this book helps readers understand how to fight temptation God's way: learning when to stand firm in faith, when to flee from temptation, and how to rely on prayer, Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit daily. This is not a book written by a biblical scholar claiming perfection, but by someone still walking through the battle while discovering the peace, freedom, and strength found in staying close to God.

For anyone feeling trapped by recurring sin, discouraged by repeated failure, or distant from God, this message offers hope, encouragement, and the reminder that through Christ, the battle has already been won.

Introduction

There were times when I felt confident enough to resist any temptations that crossed my path. Yet, on other days, I found myself giving in so quickly, barely putting up a fight. Afterward, the regret weighs on me all day. I sat in that feeling of condemnation, expecting God to be disappointed in me once again. I want to please God, but I wasn't strong enough to go a week without falling. Like Paul the apostle, I want to please God, but I'm not strong enough to do the right thing all the time. If you've ever felt this way, please know you're not alone. Jesus never promised an easy road, and there are moments when it seems like every hour brings a new test. It truly feels like a battle within, between the spirit and flesh. Before I gave my life to Christ and put Him first in everything, it seemed most of the time, the flesh won. Now that I have learned that I can't fight the battle without the strength of Jesus, victory over temptation is not a delusion. The journey of faith isn't a smooth highway, but a winding, bumpy, pot-hole-filled path, filled with challenges and obstacles at every turn.



The Battle has already been Won



I've always felt a deep calling to write this book to remind fellow believers that they're not alone and that they can have victory over temptation with Christ. Whenever I managed to go a week without giving in to temptation, I started thinking about writing. As soon as I stumbled, I questioned myself: "Who am I to offer encouragement or advice?" How can I help others find freedom from sin when I can't? The truth is, I keep struggling and falling, but the strength I feel from God is real. I finally learned that victory over temptation cannot be achieved without Jesus.

God doesn't want us to come to Him when we are perfect. He wants us to come to Him when we are imperfect. He will make us perfect through the sacrifice and the Blood of Jesus. The Scripture is clear: God does not wait for us to clean up our act; He takes us as we are, sinners.

The Battle has already been Won



1. God calls the weary and burdened, not the polished. Matthew 11:28 (KJV)
2. God meets us while we are still sinners. Romans 5:8 (KJV)
3. God's strength shows up in our weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV)
4. God heals the broken, not the self-sufficient. Psalm 34:18 (KJV)
5. Jesus came for the sick, not the "good." Mark 2:17 (KJV)

In the fall of 2025, I had one of those moments that shakes you to the core, a real "come to Jesus" moment.

I was still working full-time in healthcare; my kids were grown up, and the house was quieter than ever. I started focusing on retirement and income, securing my family's future, and enjoying life. Things were going well, investments were strong, opportunities opened, and I saw God's provision. But I realized I had never truly put Him first. I had so much to be thankful for, but how did I thank Him?

That hit me hard, and it didn't let go.

I asked myself, "What have I *done for Jesus*?" He blessed us beyond expectation, but I still felt I was failing Him. "Why can't I resist temptation? Will I fight these battles forever?"

If I stood before Him now, what would I say? Am I living to reflect His grace, or just benefiting from it? Do I even have His grace? If I'm still falling short each day, did I push Him away without realizing it?

The Battle has already been Won



Those questions were constantly on my mind.

So I started going to Him in a different way.

Not routine prayers. Not the usual meaningless demands.

Every day I went to Him asking, “Lord, show me what’s broken. Show me how to fix this. Show me how to actually walk with You, not just talk the talk.”

And I meant it.

One night during prayer, I felt God speak to me in a way that stopped me in my tracks. It was clear, direct, and impossible to ignore. He was telling me to give Him everything.

Stop worrying about money and retirement; trust Him with it. Stop fighting temptation alone; let Him take over. Stop chasing promotion and focus on what matters: bringing people to His Kingdom.

The Battle has already been Won

Everything became simple, though not easy. I realized I resisted giving God control of areas where He asked for full surrender.

It almost felt like He was right there, just waiting for me to ask. He was waiting for me to reach out.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19 KJV)

It made me realize I never truly trusted Jesus. Focusing on my retirement and looking at stock charts every day will not get me closer to Him. Fighting temptation alone clearly isn't working. Now God is asking me to trust Him and let Him fight my battles. He's calling me to chase His Kingdom rather than money, and to trust that He will provide.

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field... shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matthew 6:30 KJV)



That was when I felt compelled to finish this book and share it widely. In my heart, I asked God, "How can I help others find victory over temptation when I'm still struggling myself?" I sensed His answer: He isn't asking me to be perfect, but to keep trying, keep reading His word, and let Him fight the battles. I finally felt ready to complete the mission He called me to start. I searched the Bible for everything about sin and temptation and listened to countless pastors online. The more I read and understood, the more I wanted to learn. The more I put Jesus first, the stronger He is in my weakness.

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV).

Now I know I'll never be strong enough, but Jesus shows His strength through my weakness. All those prayers for God to remove temptation molded me for this purpose. I wanted my weakness gone, but He wants to use it. Paul said:

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me... For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." (2 Corinthians 12:7-8, KJV)



When Paul spoke of his "thorn in the flesh," it wasn't just a physical issue. It was a weakness that kept him humble before God. The word "buffet" comes from the Greek kolaphízō, meaning to beat repeatedly. So, Paul didn't just deal with this thorn once; he faced it constantly. Paul never says what his thorn was. Many believe it was intentionally vague to encourage all sinners. Now it all makes sense. God is constantly shaping me, reminding me how much I need Him and that I can't break free without Him. For years, I read:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful... with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
(1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV)

In this verse, I understood that God always gives you a way out, a path to walk away from temptation. I used to think I had to be strong enough to walk away on my own, but now I realize I could never do it. It is God's strength that allows us to walk away, not ours.

I failed over and over again, even though I kept trying to do it on my own. Now I see God is allowing this thorn to keep me humble and reliant on His strength, not mine. Notice how I said 'is allowing,' because it is a constant battle. Paul understood this deeply.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing... but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Romans 7:18-19 KJV)

Paul admits he cannot do the right thing and keeps doing the wrong thing, not making excuses but acknowledging that his willpower isn't enough. This resembles my own struggle: instead of seeing it as proof of failure, I now recognize it as a reminder of how much I need Jesus. I once thought giving in to temptation pushed God further away from me, but in reality, God was drawing closer to me every time I fell, I just failed to see it because I wasn't leaning on Him.

Many people face persistent struggles, whether with habits, emotions, or temptations that can feel overwhelming or discouraging. Yet these struggles are not the end of your story. Instead, they are opportunities for God to reveal His strength. Just as Paul never specified his own thorn, the message is that whatever burdens us, God is ready to help. This book is about overcoming temptation by relying on Jesus, showing that human willpower isn't enough; true victory comes only through God's strength.

I didn't write this book for recognition, money, or reward. I never wanted to be a pastor or stand up in front of people and preach. I wanted to be a priest for 10 minutes when I was a kid, until I realized they couldn't be married. I am not a new Christian, but I admit to not knowing the Bible nearly as well as I should. I just feel God is calling me now to go to Nineveh. He's telling me to pass this message on to men and women suffering everywhere. I am ashamed of these thorns; the last thing I wanted to do was share them with anyone, let alone have the whole world see them.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." (Jonah 1:2-3 KJV)

Nineveh was a wicked city that Jonah feared, and he had no desire to proclaim the Lord's name to these people. Maybe he was scared, maybe he had disdain for these people, whatever the case, he did not do what God had asked. So instead of listening to God's call, he decided to ignore Him and go somewhere else.



The Battle has already been Won

God had a different plan, and as you probably know the story, Jonah, in his disobedience, wound up aligning with God's plan the hard way. After being swallowed up by a giant fish and spit out somewhere in the Mediterranean, Jonah realized God's plan for him could not be altered or delayed.

God is asking me to do something uncomfortable, something I don't want to do, something that is the furthest path from my retirement plan.

I've felt the torment of my thorns since I could remember. In addition to many temptations I struggle with, like anger, pride, envy, and alcohol, one of the first thorns that afflicted me when I was a teenager was pornography. There was no easy access to "dirty pictures" back in the early 80's. My older brother and I searched every nook and cranny of our house for years, looking for a hidden magazine. We heard other dads kept that stuff hidden, but my dad never did. My brother eventually got a hold of a magazine from a friend but kept it hidden from me as long as he could. When I found it, unfortunately, I was hooked. The enemy locked me in his sights and had chained me for years. Now, every kid with an iPhone can see the worst pornography that would even make the residents of Sodom & Gomorrah cringe.

Don't hold me to these statistics, but I heard that around 69% of males admit to watching pornography regularly, while 40% of women report watching it as well. A report from The Guardian found that more than a quarter of children said they had viewed porn online by the age of 11, with some recalling exposure as young as six. This is heartbreaking, and it makes me want to run to Nineveh right now and spread God's message.

"But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28 KJV)

Pornography is looking with lust by design. Jesus places the sin in the heart and the eyes, not just in the physical action of sex.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16 KJV)

The Battle has already been Won

Lust of the eyes is a battle that has been around since the beginning of time. This is not new; it is just easier and more accessible. The problem is that a lot of people feel that looking at porn is not hurting anyone, so why is it so bad?

It is bad because on so many levels, it is ruining a civilization, driving us into the arms of the enemy. It is feeding into the underlying cause of the child slave trade that is hurting God's children worldwide. It is causing men and women to be desensitized towards sex, and in my opinion, causing an increase in divorce and a decrease in marriages.

I continue writing this book because I believe God called me to reach others who may feel overwhelmed by temptation, whatever form it takes.

This is for those who are tired of pretending to have it all together, for believers who pray to overcome temptation but find themselves struggling again and again.

It's for those who keep stumbling but continue the fight because of their love for God.

It's for anyone who feels condemned and wonders if they're living the life God intended.

Don't feel that God will turn his back on you if you're still struggling. He leans into you when you're weak; you just need to let Him in.

Remember the fight is His, not ours. When God's people were surrounded and outnumbered, he wanted them to know he had their backs.

"Thus, saith the LORD unto you, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." (2 Chronicles 20:15 KJV)

This verse reminds us that victory doesn't come from our willpower, discipline, or toughness. The fight is always bigger than us; God never intended us to win it alone. He intended for us to trust Him while He fights on our behalf.

The Battle has already been Won

If this touches your heart, this journey is for you. Together, we'll honestly explore what it means to live with weakness, face temptation, and overcome it, not by our own strength, but by surrendering to God's. Every thorn, every trial, every hidden battle is covered by God's grace.

This book isn't about perfection or never falling again. It's about persistence. It's about refusing to give up in God's strength, even after we fall. When I sensed God telling me not to give up, it made perfect sense. God doesn't despise our weaknesses; He uses them to reveal His strength and compassion. As I read Scripture and write this book, I feel like I am getting stronger and stronger each day through Christ. Take this journey with me and let God's promise enter your heart and spirit.

When we finish this journey, we will not be free from every temptation, but we will discover something greater: God's unwavering commitment to shape our lives for His glory. Even though the thorn remains, He will guide us, turning every struggle into a step along the path He has prepared.

In our weakness, Christ is strong.

Chapter 1

The More I Draw Closer
to Jesus, the More I Feel
Tempted

As I grow closer to Jesus, I notice that temptation feels increasingly strong.

I used to think the opposite would happen. I thought that more faith and more time with the Bible would make life easier. Instead, I found that when you pursue God seriously, the battle often grows louder and feels closer.

I recall believing in Jesus as far back as I can remember. In my Catholic, Italian family in Queens, faith was part of daily life, church on Sundays, and religious instruction at school. Yet, for much of my life, my relationship with God felt distant and routine.

Only in my late forties did I realize I had put everything ahead of Jesus. Work, family, and finances always came first. I tried to put God first, but daily responsibilities always pushed Him to the back.



The Battle has already been Won

Eventually, I made a decision to read the Bible and started a “Bible in a Year” program. It has now been over a year, and I am working on my second go through to try and understand more and more. Even so, I feel God working on me every day. I am beginning to understand what it means for Him to truly come first. To help keep my focus on Him, I started building small daily habits. Each morning, I take time before anything else to read a passage of Scripture, pray about the day ahead, and write a short reflection or prayer in my journal. Sometimes, I pick a verse from my reading to memorize and repeat throughout the day. These practices help anchor my mind and remind me to invite God into every part of my daily routine.

The more I read, the more I want to read. The more I study the meaning of the verses, the more I thirst for a relationship with God. I actually look forward to opening my Bible plan and seeing what the next verse will teach me.

Leaving the Catholic Church in my thirties was a turning point in my spiritual journey. I found a home in a non-denominational Christian church where pastors addressed real-life struggles and encouraged deeper faith.

I once imagined closeness with Jesus would ease temptation. Surely spiritual maturity would shield me from these battles, or so I believed. Instead, just the opposite unfolded: as I drew nearer to God, struggles intensified. Rather than feeling stronger, I often sensed my own weakness, as if the enemy pressed in harder than ever.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
(Ephesians 6:12 KJV)

This verse reminds us that the closer we walk with God, the more aware we become of the spiritual battle taking place around us.

The Battle has already been Won

There is a reason the struggle usually feels stronger when we pursue God. The enemy is not focused on people who are far from God. His attention is directed toward those who are moving closer to Him. Satan actively searches for believers to attack. The closer you move toward the Lord, the more persistent the opposition becomes as it tries to discourage and distract you.

If you find yourself stumbling or facing setbacks, remember that this is not a sign of failure or that God is disappointed in you. Setbacks are a normal part of spiritual growth and can actually be signs that you are on the right path. Every believer faces moments of weakness, but these do not define your journey with God. When you struggle, do not give up. Instead, let those moments remind you of your need for God's strength, and be encouraged that He is patient and will help you persevere. Progress often comes through pressing on after a fall. God's grace is always available for you, no matter how many times you have to stand up and try again.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

(1 Peter 5:8 KJV)

Even Jesus faced repeated temptations from Satan. In Matthew chapter 4, we see that the devil did not give up after one failed attempt. He continued looking for opportunities to distract Jesus. This same pattern appears in the lives of believers today.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

(James 4:7-8 KJV)

James teaches that pursuing God also requires resisting the enemy. When you draw closer to God, He draws closer to you. Yet resisting the enemy is part of that journey.

The important part of this verse is the promise. If you resist the devil, he will flee.

When I lean on God's strength, resisting temptation feels easier. Spending time in God's Word renews me daily; my strength grows as I sense Him working in me.

The Battle has already been Won



Sometimes I simply call out loud, “Jesus, give me strength.”

I repeat it until the temptation fades. When the enemy finally walks away, I lift my head, thank God, and walk away knowing that the Lord fought that battle for me.

This struggle is daily. The good news: God never tires of helping us.

Along with relying on God's strength, I have found that Christian community makes a real difference. Having friends, mentors, or accountability partners who listen, pray with me, and encourage me helps me stay focused on my faith. Sometimes, simply sharing my struggles with someone I trust reminds me that I am not fighting alone. God often works through others to strengthen and support us on this journey.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”
(John 15:5 KJV)

Willpower and discipline may help briefly, but cannot last without God.

Self-reliance is an illusion. Jesus replaces it with dependence on Him.

This is not a weakness. It is love.



The Battle has already been Won



A young child cannot survive alone; it depends on a parent. In the same way, we cannot survive spiritually without depending on God.

Victory over temptation is not achieved by the strongest person fighting alone, but by those who rely on the Lord to fight for them.

For many years, I tried to fight temptation using my own strength. I even believed that maybe as I got older, temptation would simply disappear.

I learned that it does not work that way.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”
(Zechariah 4:6 KJV)

When temptation comes, and I ignore God or make excuses for giving in, I fall easily.

Excuses are always easy to find.

“My wife turned me down again.” “Just this one drink.” “I feel pressure and frustration building.” “How did he afford that boat?” “My horse is bigger than your horse.”

Once these thoughts enter your mind, you forget God. At that moment, you fight alone.

It’s a battle you can’t win.

When temptation begins, I repeat the same simple prayer over and over.

The Battle has already been Won



"Jesus, strengthen me.
Jesus, strengthen me."

I repeat it until the temptation passes.

Sometimes I feel so weak; I do not even want to say those words. At those times, it feels as though I am telling God that I can handle the situation myself.

Then, after I fall again, the guilt and shame hit me, and I feel like I am just as bad as the men who whipped Jesus.

I picture the Roman soldiers whipping Jesus with the flagrum. This whip was designed to tear flesh, not simply cause pain. It had multiple leather straps with metal pieces attached to the ends that ripped the skin down to the bone.

The Battle has already been Won

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

(Isaiah 53:5 KJV)

Iniquities do not refer to a single mistake. It refers to repeated sin. His flesh was torn apart for the sins we commit again and again.

Those stripes show that the punishment meant for us was placed on Him.

Sometimes, in weakness, I wish I could stand toe-to-toe with Satan and fight him face-to-face. I always saw myself as a tough guy, growing up in Queens in the 70s & 80s. I had at least one street fight per week, and I had no fear. Unfortunately, that's not how the enemy fights, and without God, the battle is lost before it even starts.

It's now clear to see that we cannot win this fight without Jesus.

Victory over temptation does not belong to the toughest or the strongest-willed person. It belongs to those who find their strength in Christ.

It often feels as if the devil never stops. He waits patiently for moments when we are vulnerable. Even something as simple as watching television or browsing social media can feel overwhelming. A mind-field of temptation.



For months, I told myself that I should delete my social media accounts because they constantly expose me to temptation. Yet I delayed. Part of me worried about losing touch with people from my past, even though most of them are only acquaintances. I also convinced myself that I needed social media for news and research. That was not the real reason; deep down, I knew why. I liked watching the risqué videos that kept popping up in my feed.

After a long period of wrestling with the decision, I finally chose to step away from social media altogether. I realized that no connection or online convenience was worth the constant battle with temptation and distraction it brought into my life. Deleting those accounts from my cell phone was not easy, but it cleared space in my mind and heart for God to work more deeply. For anyone facing a similar struggle, I encourage you to honestly consider what helps or hinders your walk with God. If you find yourself grabbing your phone and constantly scrolling through social media, whatever your looking at, then you're not putting God first. Sometimes letting go of convenience is exactly what makes more room for peace and a real relationship with Jesus.



“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”

(Romans 8:9 KJV)

When you give your life to Jesus, the Spirit of God lives in you through the Holy Spirit.

We are never alone. God gives us the strength to overcome temptation, fear, and anxiety.

Yet even with the Holy Spirit living within us, we still wrestle with our sinful nature.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.”

(Romans 7:18 KJV)

God is always working on us. He shapes us, molds us, and refines us over time. It is through our weaknesses that His power becomes most visible.

“Not as though I had already attained, nor were already perfect.”

(Philippians 3:12 KJV)

We battle sin throughout life; only when we see Jesus face to face will it end.

God does not wait for us to become perfect before calling us to Him. He invites us to come now, in the middle of our imperfections.

When I read these passages, I feel comforted knowing that I am not alone.

The Battle has already been Won

Even the Apostle Paul struggled with temptation. Throughout my life, I have begged God to remove my weakness. I have pleaded with Him to take away the struggles that keep returning.

Paul did too.

“There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.”
(2 Corinthians 12:7 KJV)

Paul asked the Lord three times to remove his thorn. Instead of removing it, God gave him an answer.

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”
(2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

Paul stopped resenting his weakness and began seeing it as a reminder that he needed God every day.

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
(2 Corinthians 12:9–10 KJV)

Paul’s thorn never disappeared. Instead, it became the place where God’s grace shone brightest.

I am beginning to understand my struggles differently. The thorn in my flesh is not a sign of failure, but a daily reminder that I need God every day. Even in the middle of ongoing battles, God's love never leaves me. If anything, my need for Him makes space for His grace to work in my life. Ongoing struggles do not disqualify anyone from God's love. Instead, they can be one more way that He draws us closer, teaching us to depend on Him. There is always hope, because His grace is always enough.

The battle does not mean defeat. It means I am being formed by grace.

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to slow down and reflect on what you just read. The battle with temptation is real, but it is not something you are meant to face alone. This is where understanding turns into action.



The Battle has already been Won

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

In the middle of the struggle, there is truth you can stand on. This is what gives you hope and keeps you moving forward.

- Trying to fight in your own strength instead of relying on God
- Making excuses in the moment that lead to repeated failure
- Forgetting God when temptation hits and acting as if you are alone
- Letting shame after falling push you away from God
- Keeping access to things that constantly trigger temptation
- Delaying obedience when you know something needs to change
- Putting daily responsibilities ahead of time with God
- Isolating yourself instead of seeking support from other believers
- Misunderstanding the battle as only physical instead of spiritual
- Believing that ongoing struggle means you are failing The Good News

Good News

In the middle of the struggle, there is truth you can stand on. This is what gives you hope and keeps you moving forward.

- Temptation does not mean you are failing. It often means you are growing
- God is always present in the battle. You are never alone
- When you resist the enemy, he will flee
- God never grows tired of helping you
- The Holy Spirit lives within you and strengthens you
- Setbacks are part of the process, not the end of your journey
- Jesus already paid the price for your repeated sin
- Your weakness is where God's strength is revealed
- You are being refined, not rejected
- Victory has already been won through Christ

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

Faith is not just something you believe. It is something you live out daily. These are simple but powerful steps to help you stand firm.

- Start your day with God before anything else
- Build small, consistent habits like prayer, journaling, and Scripture reading
- Call on Jesus in the moment when temptation comes
- Remove anything in your life that feeds temptation
- Be honest about what triggers you
- Stay connected with other believers who can support and encourage you
- Invite God into your daily routine, not just difficult moments
- Resist temptation immediately instead of entertaining it
- Let go of self-reliance and depend fully on God
- Walk away from situations that pull you toward sin

Lessons Learned from Scripture

God's Word gives us clarity and direction in the middle of the battle. These truths anchor us when things feel overwhelming.

- The battle is spiritual; Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that we are not fighting flesh and blood
- The enemy is active and intentional. 1 Peter 5:8 shows he is always looking for an opening
- Resistance leads to victory James 4:7 promises the devil will flee
- Closeness to God brings awareness of the battle of growth. Growth does not remove struggle; it reveals it
- We cannot do anything without Jesus, as John 15:5 makes dependence clear
- Strength comes through the Spirit, not effort. Zechariah 4:6 points to God's power, not ours
- The Holy Spirit lives within us. Romans 8:9 reminds us that we are never alone
- Our flesh will always struggle, but Romans 7:18 keeps us grounded in truth
- Perfection is not the goal in this life. Philippians 3:12 shows we are still being formed
- Weakness draws us closer to God. 2 Corinthians 12:9 shows that grace is enough, and power comes through it

Chapter Reflection

The battle does not mean you are losing. It means you are in the fight. Every moment of resistance, every time you turn back to God, every time you call on His name instead of giving in, you are growing stronger.

Stay close to Him. Keep showing up. Keep trusting.

He is with you in every moment of the battle.

You are not fighting for victory. You are living from it.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter 2

Three Types of Temptation

Lust of Flesh - Lust of the Eyes - Pride of Life

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:16 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won

Lust of the Flesh

Lust of the flesh is anything that puts our physical desires ahead of God. While it often involves sexual sin, it also means giving in to what feels good in the moment rather than doing what is right.

Here are some real, everyday examples:

Sexual temptation

- Looking at pornography
- Fantasizing about someone who is not your spouse
- Hookups or sex outside of marriage
- Flirting or entertaining attention that feeds desire

Overindulgence

- Eating or drinking to the point of losing control
- Using food, alcohol, or substances to escape stress or pain
- Constantly chasing comfort and money instead of God.

Addiction-driven behavior

- Substance abuse
- Being controlled by habits, you feel like you cannot break them.
- Turning to temporary pleasure instead of God when you are struggling

Chasing pleasure over purpose

- Constantly choosing what feels good instead of what honors God.
- Avoiding anything uncomfortable, like prayer, discipline, or growth
- Living for entertainment and distraction. Looking at Instagram videos instead of reading the bible

The Battle has already been Won

Impulsive reactions

- Acting on anger, yelling, or losing control
- Giving in to urges without stopping to think or pray
- Letting emotions drive your actions instead of the Spirit

To summarize, lust of the flesh means allowing your bodily desires and feelings to control your actions, rather than following God. It's about choosing what brings immediate gratification instead of acting in lasting obedience.

To actively resist the lust of the flesh, it helps to build daily habits that keep you close to God and strong in spirit. Here are some practical strategies you can start today:

- Begin each morning in prayer, asking God for strength and help to overcome temptation.
- Memorize scriptures that remind you of your identity in Christ and the dangers of giving in to the flesh.
- Set aside time for regular Bible reading and journaling to keep your heart focused on truth.
- Connect with an accountability partner who can pray with you and ask about your struggles.
- When temptation strikes, immediately turn to worship, speak a verse out loud, or remove yourself from the situation.
- Use fasting to help deny your flesh and teach your body that God comes first.

Building these habits does not make you perfect, but it does empower you to make the right choice, moment by moment. Every step you take in faith is a step away from the grip of the flesh and a step closer to freedom.

A successful career or a large portfolio may make you feel better about yourself, but if God is not first in your life and ambition rules your heart, it becomes another form of lust of the flesh, an idol. There is nothing wrong with working hard or climbing the corporate ladder. What's wrong is making it the center of your life and placing it above God, your spouse, and your children, in that order. If you're checking your stocks and pension plan returns before you do your daily bible reading, you might be putting God second.



Choosing a sexual relationship outside of marriage may offer the pleasure you feel you're missing at home, but those desires are deceptive. They convince you that you deserve this, that God will understand, that your spouse is distant and uninterested. They promise it will be just this once, that you can stop whenever you want. This is the enemy working through weakness. Rather than fighting to heal your marriage and rekindle what has grown cold, it becomes easier to replace what's missing and substitute it with something you think you deserve.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)

The Battle has already been Won



Remember, what you feed grows. What you starve, dies. Prayer, worship, scripture, and fasting all weaken the flesh's grip. Run, don't reason. The bible doesn't say argue, reason, or debate with temptation; it says run from it.

Even if you have struggled with the same temptations for years, do not lose heart. God is not finished working in your life, and His strength is always greater than your weakness. Every small victory matters, and progress is possible through His power. You are never alone in this battle. God is faithfully walking with you, giving you what you need for each day. Keep moving forward and trust that He can bring real change, one step at a time.

The Battle has already been Won



Lust of the Eyes

This is desire awakened by what we see. It is temptation through the eyes, pornography (again), envy, coveting what does not belong to us, comparison, and materialism. Little by little, you may begin to measure your life against others: friends, family, co-workers, even complete strangers. No one seems exempt from your quiet comparisons. At times, envy creeps in, and you feel you are falling behind; at other times, pride rises, and you feel superior. But whether it pulls you down or lifts you up, it is the same temptation, the same sin. This is the lust of the eyes, drawing your heart away from God's plan for your life and toward a race you were never meant to run.

Here are some real, everyday examples:

Coveting what others have

- Constantly comparing your life to someone else's
- Wanting someone else's house, car, lifestyle, or success
- Feeling discontent when you see others prosper

Materialism

- Always chasing the next thing you do not have
- Believing happiness comes from possessions
- Obsessing over money, status, or outward success

Visual temptation

The Battle has already been Won



- Looking at things you know will stir up lust or impurity
- Letting your eyes linger on images or people in a way that feeds desire
- Consuming media that pulls your mind away from God

Jealousy caused by what you see

- Browsing through social media and feeling less than
- Wanting someone else's relationship, appearance, or opportunities
- Resenting others because of what they have

Distraction by appearances

- Being drawn to things that look good on the outside but are empty spiritually
- Judging value based on appearance instead of truth
- Choosing what is visually attractive over what is right

The Battle has already been Won

At the core, lust of the eyes is about letting what you see influence what you want. It's allowing your desires to lead your heart instead of God. To guard your heart, it helps to set up purposeful boundaries for your eyes and your habits. That might look like limiting the time you spend on social media or unfollowing accounts that stir up envy or desire. Consider installing filters or accountability software on your devices, especially if you struggle with certain temptations online. Make a habit of putting your phone away and turning off screens during certain hours, to break the cycle of mindless scrolling. Share your struggles with someone you trust, so they can check in and encourage you. Taking these practical steps is not about cutting off all entertainment, but about proactively making it easier to focus on what is good and true.

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.”
(Proverbs 14:30 KJV)

Sometimes you want what they have; you desire things you were never meant to possess. Either way, this destructive behavior constantly brings you to your knees. When you don't feel good about yourself, you make every excuse to give in to sin. Like you deserve it somehow. Your lackluster life gives you an excuse to do whatever you want.



Sometimes you begin to feel that your simple, unfulfilled life is somehow God's fault, that He owes you more. From that place, sin starts to feel justified. But the truth is a harder pill to swallow: the position you are in is the result of your own choices. We believed we could get through life without God's help, and now we find ourselves in the belly of the fish, like Jonah, ignoring God's directions to go to Nineveh.

Regrets and constant looking back become a convenient excuse; ways to shift blame instead of taking responsibility for the direction our lives have taken. Yet freedom doesn't come from blame or being a victim; it begins when you're honest about where you are in life and how you got there. It's time to be honest with yourself and let God lead you forward.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62 KJV)



Pornography, by its very nature, is the act of looking with lust. The word itself comes from the Greek word *porne`*, meaning prostitute. Joined with *graphein*, meaning a drawn or carved image. From the beginning, pornography was about turning sexual desire into something to be consumed with the eyes. Even the term later used in 19th-century France, *pornographie*, describes sexually explicit material which only reinforces what it has always been at its core, lust packaged for viewing.

“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28 KJV)

Looking and not touching doesn't make it any less of a sin. This imagery does not come from God, and the pleasure derived from it is destructive. Job knew that what he looked at would eventually lead him to what he desired.

“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1 KJV)

Job understood that if he allowed himself to dwell on a thought, it would eventually become a look, the look would become desire, and desire would open the door to temptation. So, he chose to stop it before it ever had a chance to grow. By refusing to invite temptation through his eyes.

Job was admitting something strongly honest, that he did not trust himself to walk away once it took hold. This is where the enemy deceives us, whispering that looking isn't hurting anyone. But sin always begins in the imagination, and once it is fed, it doesn't stay contained. It spreads, reaching into every corner of the soul. When that image pops up in your mind, push it out immediately, like flipping a page in your mind.

The Battle has already been Won

When you feel the urge to continue talking to that coworker who is very flirtatious, run away. Linger will just help the temptation to grow. The longer you stay, the weaker you get. So, when a video pops up on your social media that's tempting, the longer you watch, the harder it is to swipe it off. Your mind then takes hold, and you start seeking more and more until the enemy pushes you over the cliff.

Pride of Life

This relies on your own wisdom, strength, experience, and success rather than on God. Pride makes us feel we no longer need God. We think our success in life was hard-fought on our own; all those nights studying or working late didn't come without reliance on God, even if you convinced yourself otherwise.

Here are some real, everyday examples:

Self-reliance

- Believing you can handle life without depending on God
- Only turning to God when things fall apart.
- Trusting your own strength, plans, and knowledge over His

Seeking recognition and status

-
- Wanting praise, attention, or validation from others
 - Feeling frustrated when your efforts go unnoticed
 - Measuring your worth by titles, achievements, or influence

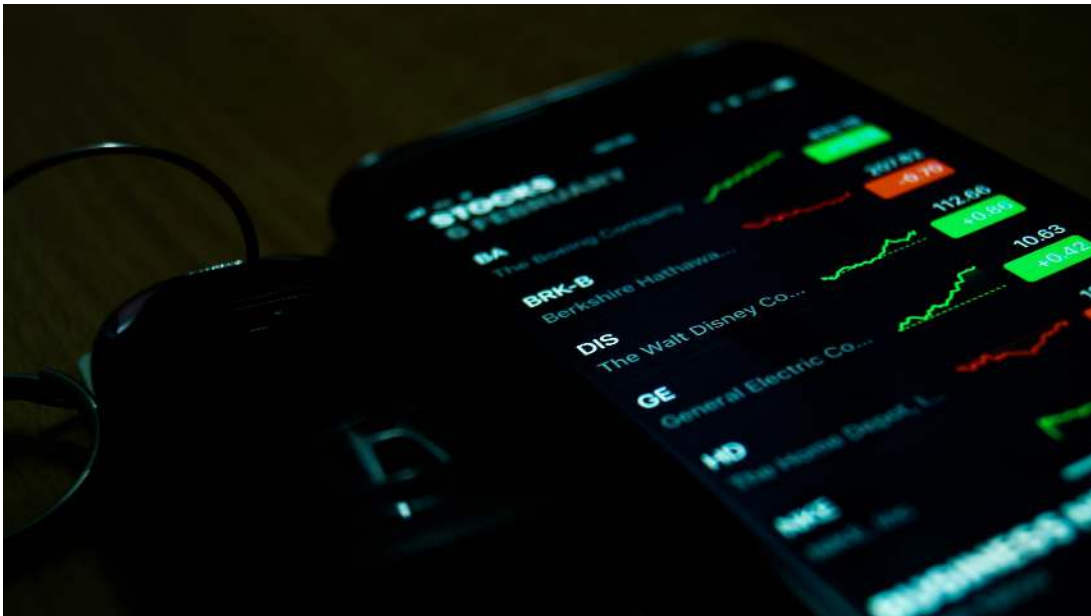
Comparing and elevating yourself

- Thinking you are better than others because of your success or behavior
- Bragging to friends or family about your bank account is pride of life
- Looking down on people who struggle in areas you feel strong in
- Needing to feel ahead or superior to feel secure

Control and independence

- Struggling to surrender control to God
- Wanting things your way instead of trusting His plan
- Resisting correction, guidance, or accountability

Spiritual pride



The Battle has already been Won

-
- Believing you are more righteous or closer to God than others
 - Judging others for their sin while ignoring your own
 - Using faith as a way to lift yourself instead of humble yourself

Identity established in the world

- Defining yourself by money, career, appearance, rank or success
- Feeling lost or shaken when those things are threatened
- Building your life on what can be seen instead of what is eternal

This confidence may not seem destructive because it is subtle and says, you got this. Unchecked, success creates independence. Unchecked, independence creates self-reliance. Unchecked, self-reliance causes separation from God. You can run from a girl. You can close the laptop screen. But you carry pride wherever you go. The scripture doesn't say "Run from Pride", it says to humble ourselves.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won

“Thus, saith the LORD, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.” (Jeremiah 9:23 KJV)

In this verse, God is saying your wisdom, strength, and money don't come from you; they come from Him. So, in other words, don't glorify yourself for your blessings in life; glorify God. This is why Scripture warns us not to boast about what we possess or what we can do. When we glorify ourselves, we rob God of the honor that belongs to Him alone.

The pride of life says, “I don't need God right now.” The gospel says: “Apart from Me, ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5 KJV)

Some people are turned off by Christianity because they can't understand why God wants all the credit. Lucifer couldn't stand that God alone received all the glory, so he challenged God, and he lost. Lucifer was the highest of all angels before his pride took control. And because of that rebellion, we are still dealing with that fallout until Jesus returns. This describes Lucifers fall.

“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” (Ezekiel 28:14–15 KJV)

These verses describe:

- Anointed cherub → a high-ranking angel with authority
- Close to God's presence → “holy mountain of God”
- Created perfect → no sin in him at the beginning

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground...” (Isaiah 14:12 KJV)

Lucifer was not created evil. He was created perfect, beautiful, and exalted, but his pride took over, making him the enemy.

The Battle has already been Won

Dependence on God is not failure or weakness; it is a beautiful and magnificent gift that God will do anything to protect His children. As it says in Psalm 91:4, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." God's protective love is offered to each of us, and if you have children of your own, you understand this more clearly.

I would do anything to protect my children, even if that meant risking my own life. I believe God gave us this innate love for our children so that we may understand how much he loves us. Whatever we would do to protect our children cannot compare to how much God would do to safeguard us.

Adam and Eve believed the enemy when he said God was trying to restrict their freedom, when in reality, God was trying to protect them. God was protecting us. The lie was that obedience was bondage, when in reality it was safety. Think about the "free will" we enjoy now, the free rein we asked for. We are free to be sick. Free to be robbed. Free to be violated. Free to lose the people we love. Free to be taken out by violence, chaos, or catastrophe. That's the cost of living outside of the garden, outside of God's protection.

When people ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" I believe it goes back to the reality of free will that God gave us from the beginning. God did not create a broken world. He created something perfect, but He also gave humanity the choice to obey Him or turn away.

From the very beginning, that choice was used to disobey. When Adam sinned, sin entered the world, and everything changed. In a way, we are all living in the result of that one decision.

We now live in a fallen world where pain, suffering, and evil exist. That was never God's original design, but it is the reality of what sin brought into His creation.

So when we ask why bad things happen, the deeper truth is this. We are not living in the perfect world God created. We are living in a world that has been broken by sin.

2 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV)

"...but they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, are not wise."

Comparing yourself to others and becoming envious or jealous is just another form of pride. If you are reading this and telling yourself, "I don't do that; I am not envious of other people," you are probably being a little dishonest with yourself, because we have all done it.

Whether it is a sibling, a friend, or a cousin, we have all had that thought at some point. What did they do to deserve that? I work just as hard, so why don't I get the same breaks?



The Battle has already been Won



We look at people on TV or on social media and start wishing we had what they have. Their car, their house, their lifestyle. Sometimes we do not just want one part of it, we envy the whole package.

But God never called us to compare our lives to anyone else's. Each of us has been given our own gifts and our own talents according to His will. You are not running the same race as your best friend, your co-worker or your sister.

God equipped you with exactly what you need for your journey. And He will provide exactly what you need for His purpose in your life.

Your calling is not to measure yourself against others. It is to walk with Him and be faithful with what He gave you.

At the end of the day, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life all point to the same struggle, choosing what we want in the moment over what God wants for us. Remember, the temptation is not the sin; it's what we do with the temptation that determines the outcome. If we trust in God and bring it to Him, the battle is already won.

The Battle has already been Won



But maybe you feel you have already failed. Maybe you have given in to temptation, maybe you've done something you think is unforgivable and wonder if there is any way back. The good news is that God's grace is greater than any mistake. If you confess your sin to Him and turn your heart back to Him, He is faithful to forgive you and restore you. Restoration begins with honest repentance: admit your failure, ask God's forgiveness, and accept that Christ paid the price for your freedom. Take practical steps to avoid falling again, and reach out for support if you need it. No matter how many times you slip, God welcomes you back every time you return. There is always hope for a fresh start and a restored relationship with Him

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. Temptation is not random. It follows patterns. When you begin to recognize these patterns, you stop being caught off guard and start responding with awareness and intention. This is where understanding leads to real change.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

These are the patterns that quietly keep you stuck. Recognizing them is the first step toward breaking free.

The Battle has already been Won



- Letting physical desires control your actions instead of God
- Feeding temptation through what you watch, scroll, and look at
- Comparing your life to others and feeling either envy or pride
- Making excuses that justify giving in **“just this once”**
- Holding on to sources of temptation instead of removing them
- Believing lies like **“I deserve this”** or **“God will understand”**
- Avoiding responsibility and blaming circumstances or others
- Thinking you are strong enough to handle temptation on your own
- Letting success or independence push God out of your daily life
- Ignoring early warning signs and allowing temptation to grow

The Good News

No matter how strong the temptation feels, there is truth you can stand on.

The Battle has already been Won

- Temptation itself is not sin. It is what you do with it that matters
- God always provides a way back, no matter how many times you fall
- You are not alone. God is with you in every moment of the battle
- The Holy Spirit gives you strength to overcome
- You can choose to run from temptation instead of reasoning with it
- What you starve loses power, and what you feed grows
- Your past failures do not define your future
- God is patient and continues working in you
- Every small step of obedience moves you toward freedom
- Victory is already secured through Christ

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

This is where faith becomes action. These steps help you fight wisely, not just emotionally.

- Start your day in prayer, asking God for strength before anything else
- Stay consistent in Scripture reading to keep your mind anchored in truth
- Memorize verses and speak them when temptation hits
- Remove or limit anything that feeds temptation, especially online
- Set boundaries with your eyes, your time, and your habits
- Find an accountability partner who can support and pray with you
- Turn immediately to prayer or worship when temptation starts
- Practice fasting to train your body to submit to God
- Walk away quickly from situations that pull you in
- Be honest with yourself about what triggers you and deal with it directly

Lessons Learned from Scripture

God's Word gives clarity about how temptation works and how to overcome it.

The Battle has already been Won

- Temptation comes in three main forms: flesh, eyes, and pride
1 John 2:16 identifies the core areas where temptation attacks
- Walking in the Spirit keeps you from fulfilling the flesh
Galatians 5:16 shows that living in the Spirit overcomes fleshly desires
- What you allow your eyes to dwell on shapes your desires
Job 31:1 shows the importance of guarding what you look at
- Sin often begins in the mind before it becomes action
Matthew 5:28 teaches that sin starts in the heart and thoughts
- Guarding your eyes protects your heart
Proverbs 4:23 reminds us to protect our heart, which is influenced by what we take in
- Envy and comparison lead to destruction, not fulfillment
Proverbs 14:30 and 2 Corinthians 10:12 warn against comparison and envy
- Pride creates distance between you and God
James 4:6 shows that God resists the proud
- Humility opens the door for God to work in your life
James 4:6 teaches that God gives grace to the humble
- Everything you have comes from God, not from yourself
Jeremiah 9:23–24 reminds us not to boast in our own strength or success
- Dependence on God is strength, not weakness
John 15:5 shows that apart from Him, we can do nothing

Chapter Reflection

At the end of the day, every temptation comes down to one choice. Will you follow what you want in the moment, or will you trust what God wants for you.

The Battle has already been Won

You will not always get it right. There will be moments where you fall. But that is not the end of your story.

Do not stay there. Do not hide. Do not let shame keep you down.

Turn back to God immediately. Be honest. Be real. Let Him restore you.

You are not fighting for victory. You are living from it.

Stay close to Him. Keep moving forward. He is not finished with you.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter 3

Understanding Temptation

Temptation isn't something we outgrow. It isn't a sign of spiritual immaturity or proof that we've failed God. It's the reality of living in a broken world and it is closely tied to the gift of free will God has given us. In Genesis, when Adam and Eve chose to ignore God, listened to Satan, and ate from the Tree of Knowledge, they were exercising the free will that God gave them (Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6 KJV). Scripture tells us that God created humans with the ability to choose:

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17 KJV).

With free will comes real choices, including the choice to obey or disobey God, and this is where temptation enters in. James 1:14 explains that “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.” God does not force our obedience. Instead, He invites us to freely choose Him, and waits to save and strengthen us when we are ready. Our temptations reveal both the reality of our free will and our need for God's grace.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come... And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17 KJV)



I used to believe that strong Christians didn't struggle. I would see prominent men and women of Christ on TV and imagine they were above the temptations I face. As I've opened myself up to the scriptures, I realize that even the greatest heroes of faith, like Paul, David, and Peter, faced powerful temptations and sometimes fell. Even Jesus faced temptations as a human, but with the Holy Spirit, He was the only One victorious over temptation.

David, a "man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14 KJV), stumbled in times of weakness. David wasn't perfect, far from it, but David was dependent on God and willing to repent and turn from his sin. Peter, who walked with Jesus, denied him under pressure. Paul openly wrote about his ongoing battles and the persistent thorn in his flesh.

"Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.." (2 Corinthians 12:7-8, NIV)



Temptation isn't reserved for the weak; it's a challenge for all of us, no matter how strong our faith may seem. It tests what we truly treasure, whether it's lust, money, power, or acceptance. It also reveals the desires beneath our good intentions, rearing its ugly head constantly. The enemy doesn't waste time tempting us with things we don't care about; instead, he targets the places where our hearts are weak. He knows our desires and convinces us that "this is who you are." Lust becomes "I was born this way", addiction becomes "I'm just coping," and pride becomes "I don't need anyone."

I used to think that if I prayed enough and begged God to rid me of my thorns, temptation would simply vanish. But the truth is, even Jesus was tempted, not because He was weak, but because He was human.

Matthew 4:1 (KJV) tells us that "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Wait, the Spirit led Him there? Why would God lead his own son to be tempted? Because temptation is part of the human experience, and how could Jesus identify with our struggles if he never truly felt them as a human? Jesus had to be led there, confront evil directly, and overcome it. His victory over the enemy is our victory over the enemy. We should be assured that when God wants us to overcome evil, it will certainly happen. Just as Jesus was tempted, so were Paul, David, and Peter. Everyone faces temptation, and we shouldn't be ashamed or discouraged when we struggle. These stories remind us that temptation is universal, but God's grace is available to all who seek it.

It is important, while understanding God's grace, that we don't get fooled by the enemy into believing it's ok to sin and God will forgive us anyway. Paul said, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." (Romans 6:1-2 KJV). Grace is meant to overcome weakness, not an excuse for continuing in it. God never says weakness is good; He says His strength is good, working through weakness.

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15 KJV).

For me, temptation often begins with something I see, a picture on social media, a commercial on TV, or even a beautiful woman in the supermarket. It's surprising how quickly a simple image or a low-cut blouse can stir up thoughts and desires in my mind. If I'm not careful to address those thoughts right away, they can grow and lead me down a path I regret. I used to think that as long as I wasn't physically unfaithful, it wasn't a big deal. But I've come to realize that even entertaining lustful thoughts is a serious matter and can ruin relationships without you even knowing it.

Jesus spoke directly to this in Matthew 5:28 (KJV):

“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

This verse reminds me that God cares about what happens inside my heart, not just my actions. I’m learning to be honest about my struggles and to seek God’s help in turning my thoughts toward what is good and pure. I know I’m not alone in this battle, and I trust that God’s grace is enough for me, even when I fall short.

The good news is that God never leaves us alone when we are weak. When temptation rises, grace rises higher. I mentioned this passage twice already, but it is so important to know and understand that God gives us a rescue line, a way out. We just have to learn to recognize it and, most importantly, acknowledge it.

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.” (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV)

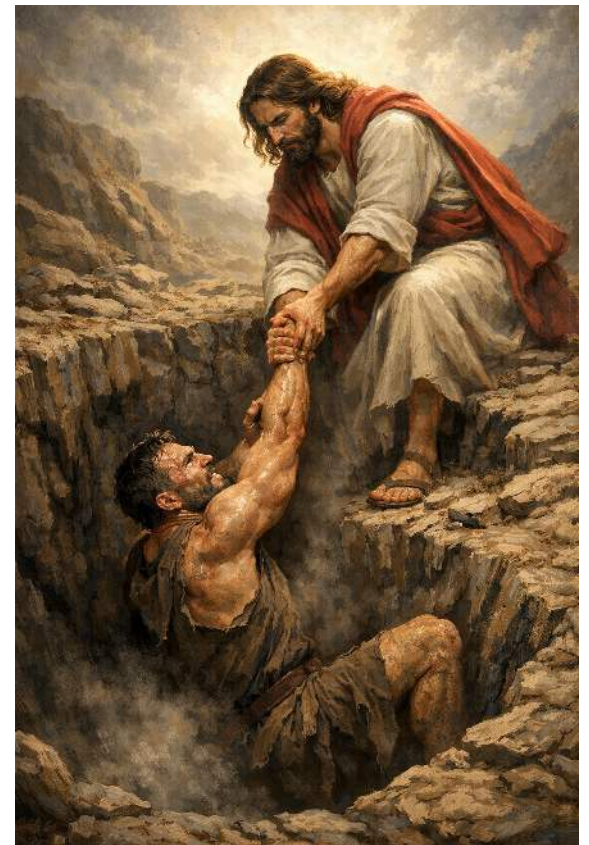


The Battle has already been Won

There is always a way out, even if sometimes it's as simple as walking away, closing the app, or shutting the computer off. Sometimes it means physically getting up and changing your surroundings, leave the room, step outside, or go for a walk. If you feel the temptation growing, call or text a trusted friend and ask them to pray for you or simply distract you. You can also recite Scripture aloud to fill your mind with God's truth or turn on worship music to shift your focus. If that doesn't work, talk directly to God and say, "Lord, give me the strength to turn away."

When I find myself falling to temptation, I usually get subtle nudges from God to shut it down. I used to ignore those nudges, and it always led to me falling.

Some other lifelines are a feeling of disgust, an apprehension, an alert signaling me, "What am I doing here?" "I don't even want to look at this crap." "I don't even feel like having a drink." This is a way out; God is holding up a stop sign and flashing lights at you to walk away. Sometimes the feeling of excitement you had suddenly turns off for just a second. If you ignore it, it comes right back. If you acknowledge it, you will feel God's strength overpowering it and pulling you out of the pit.



The Battle has already been Won

Now that I am learning to recognize God's lifelines, I am finding it easier to walk away. Next time you feel yourself falling, call out to Jesus to give you strength, but keep your mind peeled for His lifeline. He will throw you a safety buoy; you just need to grab it.

Understanding temptation also means understanding the enemy. The devil doesn't just want you to sin; he wants you to believe that once you do, you're beyond forgiveness, you're condemned. As soon as you learn his tricks, he comes in from a different angle and convinces you that it's ok, "God will forgive you", "keep on looking at that website." The enemy isn't just after your actions; he's after your soul.

After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the enemy said to Him repeatedly, "If thou be the Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3-6 KJV). He attacked Jesus' identity, and that's still his favorite tactic for us today. If the enemy can make you doubt who you are in Christ, he can make you reach for things that were never meant to satisfy you. He will use any tactic to draw you away from God. It's like the enemy pulls you down this dark hallway of temptation, and as you pass each room, the thoughts and images get worse and worse. And then, when and if you finally snap out of it, you're left questioning who you are. "What was I even thinking? How did I let myself get there?"

It's all Satan's trappings, his way of making us believe we are something we are not. He sells us on the big lie: your weakness defines you; embrace it. The enemy convinced Eve of three lies in the Garden.

- We don't need God to decide what is right and wrong; we can be just like God.
- God was depriving us of our freedom, not protecting us.
- We surely wouldn't die if we sin; God was exaggerating.

Eve was convinced she didn't need God, and Adam went along with the lies. I've heard some Christians say, "If only Adam and Eve hadn't eaten the apple, we would all be fine." I'm not buying that, because we go along with the lies every day in some form or another.

The Battle has already been Won

Don't beat yourself up. The devil knows exactly how to get into our heads when we give him even a little room. That's why we can't rely on our own strength; only God's strength breaks those chains and pulls us back into the light.

Temptation can also become a tool in God's hands, not to destroy you, but to define you. Every time you choose obedience over sin, you learn to rely on God more and more. Every time you fall and return to God, your love for Him deepens. Temptation tends to expose the areas we struggle with most, and that's exactly where God steps in to strengthen us.

It took me a long time to realize that temptation is not sin. The moment of testing isn't what separates us from God; it's our response that does. Jesus Himself was tempted in every way we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15 KJV). That means He understands every craving, every pull, every battle of the heart. He doesn't condemn us for the temptation; He wants us to call on Him for the victory.

The wilderness/temptation is not a punishment; it's preparation. It's where you learn to depend, not on your strength, but on God's Word. It's where you discover that what you feed will grow. Feed temptation, and it grows into sin. Feed on God's word, and it grows into victory. The more you look at social media posts that tempt you, or the more you pull out the bottle of vodka, the more you watch the games on the weekend and think you can win easy money, you're going to be tempted, you're going to fall.

Temptation often comes in familiar forms, drawing us in through things that seem harmless or pleasurable. For example, repeatedly scrolling through social media posts that entice you can gradually weaken your resolve. Each time you reach for another bottle of bourbon, the urge becomes harder to resist. Similarly, betting on weekend games or placing a few bets online and believing you can easily win money may lead you down a path of risky behavior. The reality is, the more you expose yourself to these triggers, the more temptation builds and the greater the likelihood of stumbling.

The more you're tempted, without God, the more you're going to fall.

The Battle has already been Won

When temptation comes, and it will, don't see it as proof of your weakness. See it as proof that you're growing, that you're becoming dangerous to the enemy. Satan doesn't bother tempting those who pose no threat; he seeks those who are a threat. Your struggle is evidence of progress. If you're reading this book, then the enemy already knows you're a threat. I realized the enemy was up to his dirty tricks when I questioned whether I should continue writing this book because the temptation seemed to kick into overdrive as soon as I started. I wondered if it would subside if I walked away from the path God chose for me. Satan was deceiving me as usual.

Don't view temptation as a sign of your weakness. Instead, recognize it as evidence that you are growing and becoming a greater threat to the enemy. Satan does not waste his time tempting those who pose no danger; he targets those who have the potential to overcome and make a difference. Your struggle is not a setback, but a mark of progress.





So, when the battle comes, don't be ashamed. You're not disqualified. You're being trained. You're learning how to call on Jesus and how to walk through the fire by letting him carry you.

God provided strength and care to His own son after He was tempted, be sure that He will do the same for you.

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."
(Matthew 4:11 KJV)

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. Temptation can feel personal, isolating, and overwhelming, but it is not unique to you. The more you understand what is happening, the more clearly you can respond. This is where truth replaces lies and where real change begins.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

These are the lies and patterns that quietly keep you stuck in the cycle.

The Battle has already been Won



- Believing temptation means you are spiritually weak or failing God
- Comparing yourself to “strong Christians” and assuming they do not struggle with temptation
- Ignoring hidden desires in your heart that the enemy targets
- Expecting prayer and Bible reading to remove temptation completely
- Underestimating how quickly a simple moment can trigger sinful thoughts
- Ignoring God’s nudges to walk away until it becomes too strong
- Letting shame convince you that you are beyond forgiveness
- Allowing the enemy to attack your identity and distort who you are
- Relying on your own strength instead of God’s power
- Believing the lie that temptation itself is sin, leading to guilt and discouragement

The Good News

This is where hope rises up in the middle of the struggle.

The Battle has already been Won



- Temptation is universal. Even Paul, Peter, David, and Jesus faced it
- God is with you in every moment of temptation
- God always provides a way of escape
- Jesus understands your struggle because He lived it
- Temptation itself does not separate you from God
- God uses temptation to strengthen you, not destroy you
- The Holy Spirit gives you power even when you feel weak
- God cares about your heart more than your performance
- Falling does not disqualify you. You can always return
- Your struggle can be a sign that you are growing and becoming a threat to the enemy

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

This is where you begin to fight differently, with intention and awareness.

The Battle has already been Won

-
- Replace wasted time with time in prayer or Scripture
 - Be honest about your triggers and deal with them early
 - When tempted, pray directly and speak truth out loud
- 2 Chronicles 20:15 reminds you that the battle is not yours, but God's
- Learn to recognize God's way of escape and act on it immediately
 - Surround yourself with Scripture to strengthen your heart
 - Redirect your thoughts quickly before they grow stronger
 - Talk to God openly instead of hiding your struggle
 - Ground your identity in what God says about you
 - Feed your spirit daily and be mindful of what you consume
 - When you fall, return to God immediately instead of hiding in shame
 - Reach out to a trusted believer for support and accountability



Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Temptation is common to all people
1 Corinthians 10:13 shows that no temptation is unique
- God always provides a way of escape
1 Corinthians 10:13 reminds us there is always a way out
- Jesus understands temptation because He experienced it
Hebrews 4:15 shows He was tempted, yet without sin
- Temptation itself is not sin
James 1:14–15 explains that sin comes when desire is acted upon
- God looks at the heart, not just outward actions
1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us God sees deeper than behavior
- The Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome
Romans 8:13 shows we overcome through the Spirit
- There is no condemnation for those in Christ
Romans 8:1 reminds us we are not defined by our failures
- God calls us to bring sin into the light
1 John 1:9 shows confession leads to forgiveness
- Identity comes from God, not the enemy
2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us we are new in Christ
- God uses trials to strengthen and mature us
James 1:2–4 shows that testing produces growth

Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4):

- He was *led* by the Spirit into a place of temptation. It was preparation, not punishment.
- Satan attacked His identity first ("If You are the Son of God..."), showing how temptation targets who we believe we are. Don't believe you are a drunk, a pervert, a gambler, a weak man or women, or an angry person. That's not who you are. You are loved by God, who didn't create you to be hopeless or insignificant; He created you to be a masterpiece.
- Jesus overcame temptation by relying on God's Word, not His own strength. Jesus quoted the scripture while Satan tempted Him. He didn't argue; he didn't yell or try to explain; he just swung the sword, the word of God. If Jesus would use the Word to overcome temptation, why wouldn't we do the same? The only offensive armor God provides is the sword of the Spirit, which is His Word. Shame says you're disqualified and alone, the Word says you're not alone, and God will never leave us. His victory becomes the foundation of ours.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17 KJV)

David's failure (2 Samuel 11):

- Even someone after God's own heart can fall when desire goes unchecked.
- Unaddressed temptation grows into destructive action.
- David committed a horrible act by sending the husband of a girl he was attracted to off to battle, so he could hook up, so to speak. That soldier was eventually killed and David married that girl, Bathsheba.
- Your weakness or desire may be worse or not as bad as David's. Either way, he repented and ran back to God and was forgiven. I will run back to God every time. No atrocity you have committed is a shock to your Holy Father.

Peter's denial (Luke 22):

- Peter denied Jesus three times, but Jesus already knew he would.
- God already knows that we are going to fall, He is just waiting for us to extend our hand so He can pick us up.
- Do you think it was a surprise to God that Adam and Eve were going to fall? He forewarned that the day they eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they will surely die. He didn't say if you eat from the tree, in some modern Bible versions, He said: "when."
- Fear and pressure can lead even the closest followers to stumble.
- Failure doesn't remove God's calling on your life.

Paul's struggle (Romans 7):

- Even the strongest believers battle the flesh daily.
- The struggle doesn't mean you're hopeless; it means you're human.

James 1:14-15:

The Battle has already been Won

- Temptation starts internally, not externally.
- If we feed it, it grows into sin. If we starve it, it dies.

Matthew 5:28:

- God cares about the heart, not just outward behavior.
- Lustful thoughts matter, but God provides grace and help to redirect them.

1 Corinthians 10:13:

- There is always a way of escaping. Always.
- God limits temptation so it never becomes impossible to resist.

Hebrews 4:15:

- Jesus understands every kind of temptation we face.
- We never fight alone.

Chapter Reflection

You are not alone in this fight. You are not the only one who struggles. And you are not beyond restoration.

The enemy wants you to believe that your struggle defines you, that your failures disqualify you, and that your shame should keep you hidden.

But God says the opposite.

Run to Him, not away from Him. Speak to Him in the middle of the battle. Trust that He is already working, even when you feel weak.

You are not fighting for victory. You are living from it.

Stay close. Stay honest. Keep getting back up.

God has not left you, and He is not finished with you.

The Battle has already been Won

Temptation isn't a sign that you're weak or that God is disappointed in you. It's simply part of being human in a broken world. Every person you admire in Scripture, from David to Paul and Peter, faced battles with temptation. Even Jesus walked into the wilderness and confronted the enemy head-on.

Temptation exposes the areas where we still need God. It reveals our weak spots not to shame us, but so His grace can strengthen them. The enemy wants to use temptation to crush your identity, but God wants to use it to grow your faith.

You're not a failure for struggling. You're growing. You're being trained. The enemy tempts those he fears, those drawing close to God and who stand with Jesus. You just need to let God fight the battle.

And just like Jesus walked out of the wilderness stronger, you will too. On the other side of every temptation, God offers strength, forgiveness, and a way forward. You are not alone. You are not defeated. Grace is already working on your behalf.

Let me close with a simple prayer for you:

Father, thank You for Your unfailing love and constant grace. When I face temptation, give me the strength to turn to You and trust in Your power to overcome. Remind me that I am never alone and that Your forgiveness is always within reach. Help me to stand firm, walk in Your light, and rely on the victory You have already won for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 4

The Battle is
Won Through
Christ

Temptation always has a moment where everything slows down and we choose which path to take. What happens in that small window can change everything. Sometimes we heed God's warning and walk away; other times, we ignore the Spirit and walk into the trap of sin.

Temptation hits us from all different angles: eating, drinking, envy, anger, pride and all the little habits that sneak in and start to take control if we're not careful. I fall more than I want to admit.

My drinking is a perfect example. What started as "just on the weekends" slowly turned into "one drink after work"... then "two drinks after work." I didn't plan for it to become a routine; it just happened before I even caught it. The thing that helped me get control wasn't willpower; it was prayer. Every day before I get home, I ask God to make me strong and take away the desire to shake a martini or pour an old-fashioned. And by His grace, I've gone from almost nightly drinking to just one drink a couple of days a week. I thank God constantly for giving me the strength I don't have on my own.



The Battle has already been Won

If you find yourself stuck in a similar cycle, some practical steps may help. Consider removing alcohol from your home, even just for a season, to make it harder for the habit to take over. Let someone you trust know what you are facing, so you can check in with each other and pray together. If evenings are your weakest point, think about replacing the old routine with a new habit, maybe taking a walk, calling a friend, or reading Scripture when the urge hits. Small changes like these, along with prayer, have made a real difference for me. The same goes for any temptation you are battling; the more you feed it, the more it controls you. You may have a problem with gambling, eating, porn or any number of battles. All temptations can be overcome with the strength of your heavenly Father; you just need to call on Him.



The Battle has already been Won

I know I'm not alone in these battles. These struggles are genuine and present in my life every day, but I am learning that God is with me through each one. When temptations arise, whether it's with drinking, anger, lust, envy, or any other weakness, I remind myself that God hasn't left me to face them on my own. He is walking with me and giving me the strength to persevere, even when I feel overwhelmed. This is not a fight we win by our own willpower, but through God's help and grace. If you are facing similar struggles, take heart: God is ready to help you as well, if you open your heart to Him and lean on His strength. You don't have to go through this alone. He will fight for you and guide you forward.

Sometimes, temptation feels too powerful to resist; its pull is magnetic, leaving me powerless. But that's not true if I call on the Spirit. Paul writes that God always gives us a way to escape, so we can have victory over temptation.

Paul's words bring more than comfort; they're a promise. God's faithfulness doesn't mean you'll never be tested; it means He'll never let the test destroy you. There's always an exit, a path to freedom instead of regret.

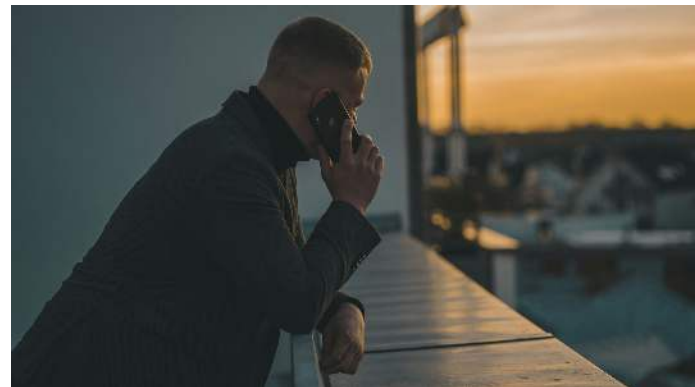


The Battle has already been Won

I can't count how many times I've cried out, "Lord, why does this temptation keep coming back?" But over time, I began to realize that God wasn't ignoring me; He was teaching me how to see the door He had already placed in front of me. Sometimes that door looks like a text pop-up from a friend or family member. Sometimes, a verse that you recently read flashes across your mind. Sometimes, the sudden urge to walk away, or a feeling of disgust and regret, is the door of escape opening right in front of you. If you ignore it, your fall is inevitable.



The "way of escape" isn't always dramatic. It might just be the Holy Spirit whispering, "Don't stay here." It might be a phone call from a friend who checks on you at the exact right time. It might be a feeling of guilt that is really grace in disguise, which is calling you home before you go too far.



The Battle has already been Won

Temptation grows in silence and secrecy. But the way of escape often starts with bringing things into the light. Now that I am confessing my struggles to God and other believers, the power of temptation seems to be weakening. I feel like I am being tempted more, but with the strength of the Holy Spirit, I am able to either run away quicker or stand stronger. Almost as if the enemy is throwing everything he has at me, but with God's shield, I am deflecting Satan's arrows.

In the following verses, we see the power of sharing weakness.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James 5:16 KJV)

"Two are better than one...for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 KJV)

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."
(Proverbs 27:17 KJV)

Healing comes through honesty. The devil loves isolation because that's where shame thrives, but God brings strength through weakness. It is extremely difficult to share your weaknesses with others, let alone a spouse or a friend. Although I feel comfortable discussing temptations with my wife, I have found it hard to discuss this with another Christian man. If you don't have someone close you can talk to, consider seeking support in new ways. Many churches have small groups, men's Bible studies, or accountability groups where honesty is encouraged and prayer is offered. You can also explore online Christian forums or apps that connect believers looking for encouragement and accountability. Some people find a prayer partner by reaching out to a pastor, church leader, or even through trusted social media faith groups. The key is to look for believers you sense you can trust and who are committed to helping each other grow. I recently called a long-time friend of mine, bit the bullet, and told him I was struggling with sin. We opened up a discussion about how God has recently opened his heart and how he is struggling with a different temptation.

We had a great conversation about what God is doing in our lives and how we can help each other when we struggle. After I hung up the phone, I felt such a relief, a feeling of release from a load I had been carrying for years. We are even closer friends now than ever before. We have been sending each other inspirational messages and words of encouragement. When he told me he is having his weekly men's group pray for me, it gave me a feeling of God's strength I really needed.

Even Jesus, when He faced temptation in the wilderness, used the word of God to fight off the enemy. Every time Satan attacked, He responded: "It is written." The Word was His weapon and His escape. That showed me something vital: if Jesus, the Son of God, needed the Word to stand against temptation, how much more do I?

When you fill your heart with Scripture, it becomes your way of escape before the temptation even arrives. You don't have to scramble for strength when the storm hits; you'll already be standing on the Rock.

There are some moments when the way of escape looks like simply running. In Genesis 39, Joseph didn't stay to chat with Potiphar's wife; he fled. He didn't linger, he didn't reason, he didn't risk it. He ran. That act of fleeing was not cowardice; it was wisdom. Sometimes escape is not weakness; it's warfare.

God's escape route is always there, we just need to be faithful and call on Him. He never asks us to fight temptation alone. When you feel trapped, remember this: the feeling of "no way out" is the first lie the enemy tells. The truth is that God's already built the exit. You just have to reach out to Him and take it.

And if you've failed, if you missed the door and fell again, His mercy is still waiting on the other side. His grace doesn't end when you fall; it begins when you get back up.

One of the most freeing moments in my walk with God was realizing that failure isn't final. The same Jesus who prayed in the wilderness is the one who forgave Peter after his denial. The same Spirit that led Christ into the desert now lives in us, guiding us through our own journey.

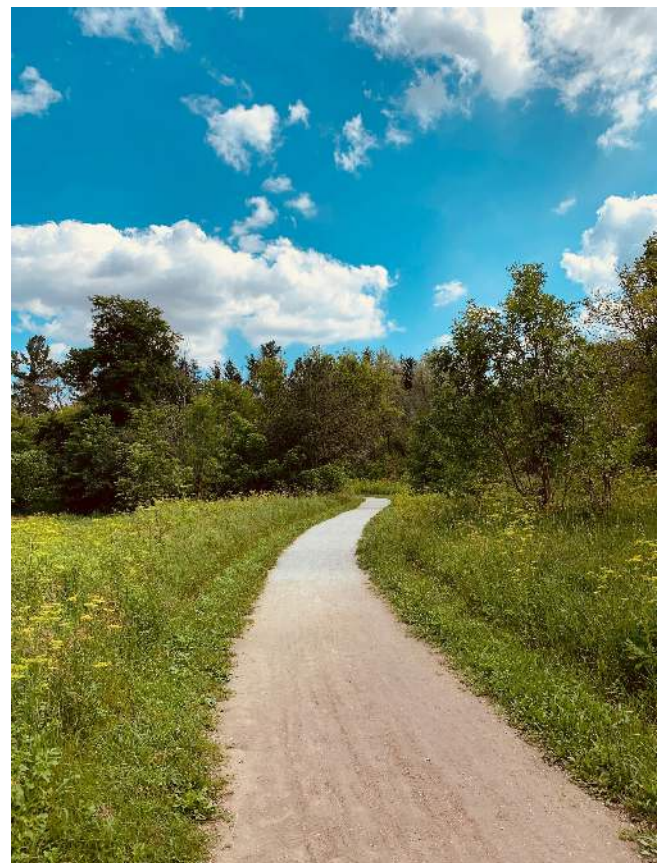
The Battle has already been Won

The way of escape isn't only about avoiding sin; it's about learning dependence. It's about building a relationship with God that's strong enough to sense His voice before the fall and dependent enough to run back to Him after you fall.

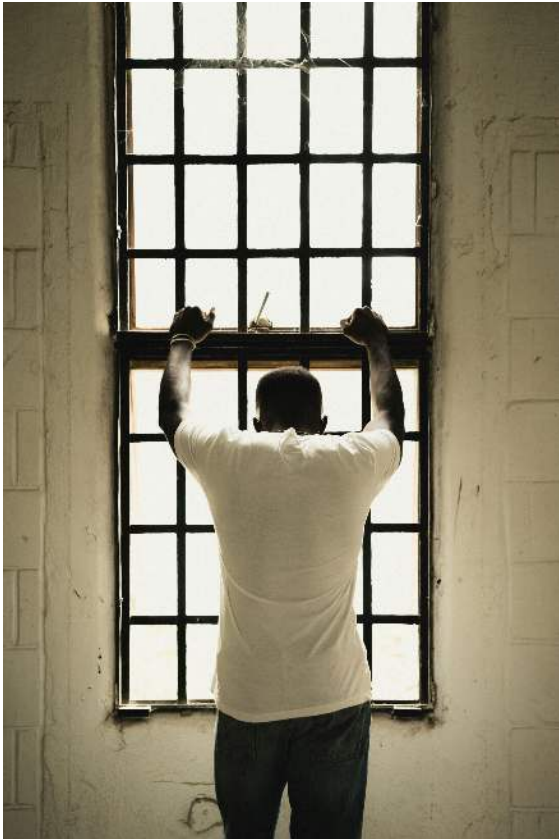
So, when temptation comes again, and it will, don't just look at how strong the temptation feels. Look for the escape route because God planned it well before the battle began. Every time you take His path of freedom, you are building a stronger relationship with Him and creating a roadmap for victory over temptation. The same God who allowed the testing also designed the exit, and both are meant to draw you closer to Him.

God Always Provides a Way Out

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV)



The Battle has already been Won



Temptation lies to you. It convinces you that you are trapped, there's no turning back. The enemy wants you to think that once the desire hits, the fall is guaranteed. But God Himself promises something different: there is always a way out. It may be small, a thought, a poke, a chance to shut the screen or walk away, but the escape is there. You just need to learn to recognize it and act on it.

That instant of escape isn't about you being strong; it's about God being faithful. When you feel Jesus reaching for you, close your eyes and extend your hand. God will rescue you.

Prayer:

Lord, open my eyes to your rescue. Help me see it and choose it when temptation strikes.

Resist, and the Enemy Will Flee

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won



Sometimes it feels like the devil chases us endlessly, like he knows exactly when we are weak. Scripture says the moment we submit to God; the enemy starts losing ground. The power isn't in resisting by pure willpower; it's in surrendering to God first. Once God steps into the ring, the enemy can't stay. I heard someone say that if we want to overcome temptation, we must recognize: if you were the enemy, what would you use to take you out? In your heart, you know exactly what that is.

Calling on God, "Lord, help me," is enough to send the devil running.

Pray Before the Battle Begins

Prayer:

Father, I submit my thoughts, desires, and weaknesses to You. Stand with me as I resist.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41 KJV)

Jesus didn't tell His disciples to pray so temptation would disappear; He told them to pray so they wouldn't walk into it. Prayer builds spiritual awareness. It keeps your guard up. It helps you notice the signs of temptation before it becomes a battle. Temptation is not the sin; giving in to it is.

Your spirit wants to do right. Your flesh wants comfort, escape, pleasure. Prayer is what strengthens your spirit to lead.

The Battle has already been Won



Prayer:

Lord, make me watchful. Give me discernment to see temptation coming before I step into it.

Hide His Word in Your Heart

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11 KJV)

When God’s Word settles into your heart, it becomes more than words; it becomes armor. Scripture gives you something to fight back with when the enemy attacks your mind. Jesus used Scripture in the wilderness, not authoritative arguments or rebuttals. The Word turns a weak believer into a spiritually armed warrior. Read it. Memorize it. Let it sink deep.

Prayer:

God, fill my heart with Your Word until it becomes my first defense.

The Battle has already been Won

Walk in the Spirit, Not the Flesh

“So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. (Galatians 5:16 NLT)

Whatever you feed will grow. If you feed frustration, lust, envy, or money; temptation becomes stronger. When you feed your spirit through prayer, worship, Scripture, and small moments of obedience, you suddenly find strength you didn’t think you had. It's God's strength, through you. Walking in the Spirit isn’t about perfection; it’s about direction.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, guide my steps today. Strengthen me to choose what brings You glory.

Jesus Understands Your Temptations

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:18 (KJV)



Succour comes from a Greek word meaning to assist. or protect in times of trouble. Jesus knows what temptation feels like. Not in theory but in reality. He experienced the pull, the pressure, the desire, the weakness of the human body. That means when you go to Him in the middle of your struggle, He doesn't respond with judgment... He responds with assistance, comfort, strength, and protection.

You are never alone in the moment of temptation. Jesus is closer than the temptation itself.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for understanding my struggle. Strengthen me the way only You can.

Avoid the Path Altogether

“Enter not into the path of the wicked... Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.” (Proverbs 4:14–15 KJV)



In the Lord's prayer, we say "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13 (KJV) We are asking God to walk us past temptation, bring us through unscathed and untouched. I would rather not be tempted than face the very thing that brings me down over and over again. Sometimes the holiest thing you can do is not fight but avoid it and walk away.

It goes against everything I knew as a kid growing up in Queens. My father taught me to never walk away from a fight. The only difference is my father never fought my battles for me, but Jesus does.

The enemy wants you on the battlefield. God often wants you nowhere near it. Don't test your strength. Don't flirt with danger. Don't linger near the thing you're trying to escape. Turn away early, turn away fast.

Since I removed my social media apps from my phone, I have felt freedom from temptation I have never felt. The world around me is still filled with temptation, but the more I can remove, the easier the path is. It is like having a reconnaissance team identify mines along the soldiers' path. If we know where some of the mines are, we have a better chance of completing our mission. I know where many of my temptations come from, so I am removing them from my path.

The quickest victory is the temptation you never entertain.

"So if your eye....causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand...causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." Matthew 5:29-30 (NLT)

Prayer:

Lord, help me build wise boundaries and avoid places where I'm vulnerable.

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. The battle with temptation often feels fast, but there is almost always a moment right before the fall where a decision is made. Learning to recognize that moment, and respond differently, is where change begins.



The Battle has already been Won

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

- Ignoring the warning moment before the fall
That slow-motion moment right before the decision is a real barrier. It feels small, easy to brush off, but that is where the battle is either won or lost.
- Letting habits grow without confronting them
What starts as something occasional can slowly take hold without you realizing it. Weekend behavior turns into daily routine, and before long, it feels normal.
- Being surrounded by constant, layered temptation
Temptation does not come from one direction. It hits all at once. Lust, food, alcohol, money, envy, anxiety. When everything comes at you together, it wears you down. Staying near the temptation makes the fall almost guaranteed.
- Relying on willpower instead of God
Trying to fight temptation on your own is a losing battle. Willpower fades. When that is your only defense, failure becomes a pattern. Shame keeps you from seeking help, making you feel isolated.
- Keeping the struggle hidden
Silence is a barrier. What you keep in the dark grows stronger. When no one knows, nothing challenges it.
- Believing the lie that there is no way out
One of the strongest barriers is the belief that you are stuck. That is just who you are now. That lie makes temptation feel inevitable.

The Battle has already been Won

The Good News

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV): God always provides a way of escape.
You're never stuck, never trapped, never without a God-built exit.
- James 4:7 (KJV): When you submit to God, the devil must flee.
Resistance empowered by God is stronger than any temptation.
- Matthew 26:41 (KJV): Prayer strengthens the weak flesh.
God warns you before temptation shows up.
- Psalm 119:11 (KJV): God's Word is protection and power.
Scripture stored in your heart becomes a weapon. The sword of God. The only offensive weapon God provides.
- Galatians 5:16 (KJV): Walking in the Spirit breaks the power of the flesh.
Spiritual nourishment (reading and understanding the Gospel) weakens sinful cravings.
- Hebrews 2:18 (KJV): Jesus understands your struggle personally.
He doesn't judge your weakness; He supports you through it.
- Proverbs 4:14-15 (KJV): Avoiding the tempting path is wisdom, not cowardice.
God often tells you to flee, not fight.

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezekiel 36: 26-27)

Victory over temptation doesn't come from trying harder. It comes from God changing your heart and empowering you through His Spirit.



The Battle has already been Won

- Pray before temptation hits, not just during it, ask God for strength before you feel those temptations coming on.
- Look for the “escape door” immediately, the conviction, the nudge, the disgust, the chance to walk away.
- Bring struggles into the light with trusted believers (James 5:16 KJV)
- Use Scripture as Jesus did, memorize verses that speak directly to your weaknesses. Write down 1 or 2 of the scripture verses that you feel touch your heart. If some Bible verses seem hard to understand, try reading them in different translations like the New Living Translation (NLT) or the New International Version (NIV). Sometimes a different translation makes the meaning clearer or helps you apply it more personally. The important thing is to choose a version that helps you really connect with and live out God's truth. I mainly used the KJV (King James Version) in this book because of copyright restrictions on other versions.
- Avoid triggers early (people, places, apps, websites, routines). Sometimes this means making difficult choices, like distancing yourself from friends or family whose conversations or actions continually encourage temptation. I have a friend who often talks about porn and his sex life. Even after sharing my feelings about the topic, he continues to discuss it. This has been painful for me, because he is someone I care about, but I know I need to protect my spiritual health. With prayer and by asking God for wisdom, I remove myself from his company when he brings up this topic. If you are facing a similar situation, know that it is normal to feel sadness or discomfort when avoiding people you love. Ask God to guide your decisions, show you compassion in your relationships, and help you walk wisely as you make these changes.
- Build new habits that fill the empty space temptation used to occupy (prayer, reading, accountability, puzzles, walking, going to bed the same time as your spouse).

The Battle has already been Won

- Set limits on food, drinking, spending, and screen time before your emotions get involved.
- Run when necessary, as Joseph did. Not everything requires a fight.
- Celebrate the wins God brings us, instead of focusing on how many times you fell.
- Connect your heart to God daily, not just when you've made a mistake.

Lessons Learned

- Temptation is strongest amid silence, honesty breaks its power.
- Failure isn't final. God's mercy meets you even after the fall.
- Strength doesn't come from willpower; it comes from daily dependence on God.
- Habits don't become strong overnight; they grow slowly, which means they can be slowly reversed, too.
- Every temptation includes a God-designed exit, even if it's small and quiet.
- Jesus battled temptation with Scripture, not emotions. We need the Word just as much.
- Avoiding temptation can be more powerful than trying to fight it directly.
- The Holy Spirit gives you strength before the temptation arrives, but you stay close to Him.
- God uses struggles to build spiritual maturity, not to shame you.
- Every victory, big or small, is another step toward freedom.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter Reflection

God doesn't expect you to escape temptation alone. Every moment you feel weak is an invitation for His strength. Every moment you feel pulled is a chance for His grace to lift you up. Every time you choose Him, even in small ways, He builds spiritual power inside you that will carry you into victory.

Chapter 5

Grace in Weakness

To understand God's gift of Grace, we must first understand what Grace is and what Grace isn't. Grace is God's gift of love and forgiveness you didn't deserve, but He gives you anyway. If you accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior and the Son of God, Grace is our gift from God. This doesn't come with a return receipt, so he takes it away if you mess up. Religion sometimes teaches us to be better, try harder, and clean ourselves up first. Grace says come as you are, and God will help you change. Grace is God's relationship with us, not our reward. It is forgiveness before improvement, and God moving toward us before we clean up.

You don't achieve Grace; you don't work towards it; you begin with it when you admit you are dead spiritually. "Spiritually dead" does not mean you are physically dead or that you have no value. It means you are separated from God, the source of life. Sin created that separation, and on our own, we do not have the ability to fix it or bring ourselves back to life spiritually. Only through Jesus can we have Grace.

Grace is not an excuse to sin; it is not a get-out-of-jail-free card. It's not God lowering His standards or deciding sin doesn't really matter. It's God walking with us, carrying us, molding us, and protecting us as we become who He called us to be.

For years, I thought grace was only for the moment when I walked in obedience. Something God offered when I finally stopped sinning. How could God love me when I can't even fight temptation? How could He accept me when I constantly fall? When I started reading God's word, I finally realized that I already had Grace. God wasn't waiting for me to be perfect; He was already carrying me. I've learned that grace isn't just the safety net beneath us; it's also the strength that holds us up. It's not a last resort; it's the source of everything that keeps us standing.

When we realize God loves us as we are, we stop running from Him and start running towards Him.

We live in a world where we grow up learning to do things on our own. We are taught to be strong, push through the pain, and never show weakness. These are all good character traits to get along in this tough world we live in but there's something profoundly humbling about realizing that you can't do it on your own without Jesus. Our world tells us to be strong, push through, and never let them see that we are weak. The Kingdom of God turns that idea upside down. In God's Kingdom, weakness isn't a liability; it's an invitation.



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When Paul pleaded for his thorn to be removed, he probably thought God's love would take the pain away. Instead, he heard words that have changed countless lives: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness"(2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV).

That verse is more than comfort; it's revelation. God doesn't always fix what's broken; sometimes He uses it for His purpose. God uses so many weaknesses and weak people to advance His Kingdom. Weakness doesn't disqualify you from being used by God; it's the very reason He can use you. When you call yourself lost, God calls you found. When you call yourself a disgrace, God calls you a masterpiece.

David – Sexual sin and murder followed by crushing guilt. **Truth:** God didn't erase David's future after his failure; He reshaped his heart. **Called:** Redeemed.

Samson – Lust blinded his judgment and destroyed his strength. **Truth:** Even after consequences, God still heard Samson's final prayer. **Called:** Restorable.

Peter – Fear-driven denial and bitter weeping. **Truth:** Shame made Peter hide, but Jesus came looking for him. **Called:** Reclaimed.



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Mary Magdalene – A past marked by bondage and accusation. **Truth:** Jesus didn't define her by her past; He entrusted her with His resurrection. **Called:** Freed.

Paul – A relentless “thorn” that kept him weak. **Truth:** God didn't remove the struggle; He revealed grace inside it. **Called:** Sustained.

Rahab – A sexual reputation that screamed: “unworthy.” **Truth:** God wrote her into the lineage of Christ. **Called:** Chosen.

The Woman at the Well – Multiple relationships and deep shame. **Truth:** Of all people to reveal Himself to first, Jesus chose this sinner. **Called:** Seen.

Noah – Drunkenness after great obedience. **Truth:** A moment of collapse didn't cancel a lifetime of faith. **Called:** Human.

Abraham – Sexual compromise fueled by impatience. **Truth:** God stayed faithful even when Abraham wasn't. **Called:** Kept.

You & Me – Shameful habits that we hate and lust of the eyes and flesh we give in to. **Truth:** God is not shocked, done, or distant. **Called:** Loved.

Grace turned all these people into testimonies of God's love for us. Many times, I've asked God to make me stronger, to take away the urge of the lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes, pride of life. Instead of removing my weakness, He is teaching me to rely on His strength.

If you are wondering how to rely on God's strength in moments of weakness, start simple. Pray honestly about your struggle and ask for help, even when you feel like you don't deserve it. Turn to scripture that reminds you of God's power, like 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT): “Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.'”

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Meditate on that verse. Find someone you trust to talk to about your challenges, so you aren't fighting alone, and you have people to stand with you. When temptation comes, pause and ask God for wisdom. You don't have to win the battle with your own strength; God's grace gives you a way out. Small steps like these can help you lean on Him instead of just trying harder.

Grace doesn't just forgive, it transforms. It meets you where you are but refuses to leave you there. It whispers in your exhaustion, "You don't have to perform to be loved." It stands in the ruins of your mistakes and says, "I still have plans for you."

When you start to live in that truth, something shifts. You stop trying to impress God and start learning to trust Him. You stop hiding your wounds and begin to let Him heal them. You stop measuring your worth by your perfection and begin to rest in His presence.

Romans 8:1 (KJV) declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." That means you can stop punishing yourself for what God has already forgiven. Shame says, "You'll never change." Grace says, "Watch what I can do with your weakness."

Grace doesn't give you permission to sin; it gives you power to overcome it. It lifts your eyes from your failure to His faithfulness. It doesn't minimize the struggle; it magnifies the Savior.

Sometimes the greatest display of God's strength is not in your falling but rising again and again because grace refuses to let you stay down. God's power doesn't show up in your perfection; it shows up in your persistence. Every time you choose to get up, grace wins.

There have been days when I felt too lost to pray, too tired to try, too ashamed to believe that God could still love me. But then I remember, grace is not earned. It's given. The more undeserving I feel, the more beautiful His mercy becomes.

Sometimes we give in to temptation without asking God for strength. We know that's not the enemy tempting us, that's our flesh taking over. The pleasure of the flesh is so overwhelming that we ignore all the prayers, all the verses, and all of the ways of escape.

The good news is that I feel so sure now that if I called on God, he would fight for me. Sometimes we turn our backs on God in times of weakness because we don't want Him to pull us out. That shows me how powerful the flesh is, and feeding it helps it grow stronger. That also shows me how powerful our God is: We hide from Him when we want to sin because we know He is there, waiting for us to reach out to Him.

A powerful example of this is right at the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned.

Genesis 3:8 (KJV):

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”



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This is the first reaction to sin, and it is still our reaction today. They did not run to God; they hid from Him. The moment they disobeyed, shame entered in, and instead of seeking God, they tried to cover themselves and disappear.

Nothing has changed. When we fall into sin, our natural instinct is to pull away. We avoid prayer. We avoid God's presence. We carry the guilt and try to deal with it on our own, just like Adam and Eve hiding behind the trees.

But here is what stands out. God still came looking for them.

They were hiding, but God was calling. He did not abandon them in their sin. He pursued them in it.

That is the difference between how we respond to sin and how God responds to us. We run and hide, but He comes closer. The problem is not that God moves away from us; it is that we step back from Him.

This ties directly into everything I've been writing. Sin pushes us to hide, but victory comes when we do the opposite. Instead of hiding, we come back to God immediately. No excuses, no delay, no shame keeping from our heavenly Father.



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The moment you stop hiding is the moment restoration begins.

I know I'm not alone in this. Maybe you've found yourself in a place where you chose distance from God because facing Him meant leaving behind what felt good in the moment. If you've ever hidden from God, or even from others because of shame or struggle, you're not the only one. I want to encourage you, if you feel comfortable, share your own experience with a group or a trusted friend. It's in moments of honesty that we discover we're not fighting alone. When we bring our struggles into the light together, grace meets us there and helps us move forward.

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me." That verse doesn't promise that we'll never fail; it promises that through Christ, we'll never stay defeated. Grace is not the absence of weakness; it's the promise that weakness is not the final destination.

If you're exhausted and your strength is gone, then you are exactly where God begins to work. God is not disappointed in your failures; He's drawn to them.

Let grace do what your strength and effort never could. Let it teach you to rest, to trust, to breathe again. Because when your strength runs out, His is just getting started.

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If you want to practice resting in grace instead of your own efforts, try this simple exercise: Each day, before anything else, pause for a few quiet moments. Take a few deep breaths and pray, "God, I release my need to prove myself today. Help me remember that your love and acceptance are not something I need to earn. Remind me that I can rest in your grace, even in my weaknesses."

Whether you write this prayer down, say it out loud, or just hold it in your heart, repeating it regularly can help shift your focus from your own striving to His unlimited grace. Let this be a reminder each day that you don't have to do it all. Grace is already in motion on your behalf.

Grace is not a get-out-of-jail-free card.

What Scripture says

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul addresses this exact mindset:

Romans 6:1–2 (KJV)

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“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

That phrase, “God forbid,” is strong. It’s basically saying, absolutely not.

What this means

God’s grace is not a free pass to live however we want. It’s not meant to enable sin; it’s meant to free us from it.

When someone says, “Well, God will forgive me anyway,” they don’t have a good understanding of grace.

Grace isn’t:

- A loophole
- An excuse
- A safety net so we can keep doing the same things

Grace is:

- A gift we didn’t earn
- A reason to change
- A call to live differently



There may have been times when you were falling, and you thought to yourself, “I’ll just ask for forgiveness later.” But that mindset slowly hardens your heart. It sours your relationship with God and distances you from the Spirit.

And that’s not what this is.

When you truly understand what Jesus did for you, you shouldn’t want to sin more; you should want to walk away from it as often as you can.

Hebrews 10:26 (NLT)

“Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins.”

This is talking about deliberate, ongoing sin with no repentance, not struggling, not falling, but choosing it and staying in it.

What does sin “deliberately” really mean?



This isn't talking about struggling with sin, falling, repenting, and getting back up.

This means:

- Deliberate, ongoing sin
- A settled decision to keep living in sin
- Knowing the truth about Christ but choosing to reject it

It's not weakness, it's willful rebellion.

There's a difference between:

- *"I hate this sin, but I keep falling into it."*
- vs.
- "I know this is wrong, but I'm going to keep doing it, it feels too good, and I don't care."

There are two types of "heart postures" described in modern Christianity.

The first heart posture is hiding from God

The second heart posture is running back to Him.

- Instead of covering your sin, you confess it.
- Instead of running away, you run back.
- Is your heart turned toward God or toward the world?
- Instead of relying on yourself, you surrender.

The balance

- God **will forgive** you when you are truly sorry and repentant.
- But we are not called to **live comfortably in sin.**

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There's a difference between:

- **Falling into sin and getting back up**, and
- Planning to sin because you think grace covers it

Grace isn't permission to stay the same.
It's the reason you don't have to.

In the verse from Hebrews it says "No more sacrifice will cover these sins." What does that mean?

This doesn't mean Jesus' sacrifice isn't enough.

It means:

There is no other sacrifice coming.

If someone fully understands what Jesus did and then rejects Him, there's nowhere else to turn. There's no backup plan, no second way to be saved.

Jesus, is it!

So if a person says:

- "I know the truth."
- "I know what Christ did."
- "But I'm choosing sin over Him, and I'm staying here."

They are stepping outside of the only means of forgiveness.

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Context matters

The writer of Hebrews was speaking to people who:

- Knew the truth of Christ
- But they were being tempted to return to their old lives.
- Possibly even abandoning Christ altogether

So this is less about someone slipping into sin...
and more about someone walking away from Jesus entirely.

What this DOESN'T mean

It does not mean:

- You messed up too many times, and now you're done.
- God won't forgive you anymore.
- Your struggle disqualifies you.



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If you still feel conviction, if you still care. If you still want Jesus in your life and you still acknowledge you are dead spiritually, that's evidence your heart hasn't turned away.

What this DOES mean for us

This verse is a warning, but it's also a form of protection.

It's saying:

- Don't play games with sin.
- Don't treat grace casually.
- Don't drift so far that your heart becomes hard.

Because sin, when it's embraced long enough, can dull your sensitivity to God.

A simple way to understand it

- Struggling with sin → God is still working in you.
- Choosing sin and rejecting God → dangerous ground

God's grace is endless for the one who keeps coming back.



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Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. Grace is not something you earn after you get it right. It is where you begin. The moment you stop trying to fix yourself and start bringing your weakness to God is the moment everything starts to change.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

These are the heart issues that quietly keep you from fully living in what God has already given you.



The Battle has already been Won

- Pride
Thinking you can fix yourself without God
Refusing to admit you need help
Feeling like you have to “earn” your way back to God
Example: You fall into sin and instead of going to God, you tell yourself you will get it together first
- Shame and Guilt
Believing you have messed up too many times
Feeling unworthy to come into God’s presence
Letting past failures define your identity
Example: Avoiding prayer or Scripture because you feel like a hypocrite after you fall
- Self-Reliance
Depending on willpower instead of God’s strength
Trying to fight temptation on your own
Only turning to God when things get really bad
Example: Making promises like “I will do better next time” without ever surrendering the struggle to God
- Unforgiveness
Holding on to anger toward others
Refusing to release past hurt
Blocking your own ability to receive grace by not giving it
Example: You pray for God’s help but still replay offenses in your mind and refuse to let them go

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- Unbelief

Doubting that God's grace is enough for your situation

Believing the lie that your sin is too big

Questioning whether God really wants to help you

Example: Thinking "this is just who I am" instead of believing God can actually transform you

The Good News

This is where grace changes everything.

- Grace is a gift, not something you earn
- God meets you in your weakness, not after you fix yourself
- You are spiritually alive through Jesus, not through your effort
- God is not waiting for perfection, He is already working in you
- Weakness is not disqualification, it is where God's strength shows up
- You do not have to carry the weight of your failures anymore
- God pursues you even when you hide from Him
- There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ
- Grace does not just forgive, it transforms
- You can always return to God, no matter how many times you fall

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

This is how you begin to live in grace instead of striving in your own strength.

- Start your day by releasing your need to prove yourself to God
- Pray honestly about your struggles, even when you feel unworthy
- Meditate on Scripture that reminds you of God's strength in your weakness
- When you fall, return to God immediately instead of hiding
- Talk to someone you trust and bring your struggle into the light
- Recognize when your flesh is taking over and pause to call on God
- Replace self-condemnation with truth from God's Word
- Build daily habits that keep you connected to God
- Remind yourself that grace is not permission to sin, but power to overcome it
- Stay aware of your heart posture, whether you are hiding or running back to God

The Battle has already been Won

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Grace is given, not earned
Ephesians 2:8–9 shows that salvation is a gift of God
- There is no condemnation for those in Christ
Romans 8:1 reminds us we are not defined by our failures
- God's strength is made perfect in weakness
2 Corinthians 12:9 shows that His power works through our weakness
- God pursues us even when we hide
Genesis 3:8–9 shows God calling out to Adam and Eve
- We are called to confess, not cover our sin
1 John 1:9 shows that confession leads to forgiveness
- Grace is not a license to sin
Romans 6:1–2 makes it clear we are not to continue in sin
- Deliberate sin hardens the heart
Hebrews 10:26 warns against ongoing, willful sin
- Jesus is the only way to forgiveness
Acts 4:12 shows there is no other name by which we are saved
- God looks at the heart posture, not just actions
1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us God sees beyond the outward
- Those who return to God will always be received
James 4:8 promises that when we draw near to God, He draws near to us

Chapter Reflection

Grace is not something you fall back on after you fail. It is what holds you up every step of the way.

You do not have to hide anymore. You do not have to pretend. You do not have to carry the weight of trying to fix yourself.

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God already knows. God is already there. And God is already calling you back.

Every time you fall, you have a choice. You can hide, or you can return.

The Battle has already been Won

Return quickly. Return honestly. Return without excuses.

You are not fighting for grace. You are living in it.

And that changes everything.

Chapter 6

Confession and Cleansing

Growing up in a Catholic church, I learned about confessing sins to a priest from an early age. I went to catholic grammar school, high school and college. As a child, I remember sitting in a dark closet in church, facing a blacked-out screen, with a priest on the other side. I would try to tell him all the sins I committed that week, only to end up revealing some minor transgressions. It would always be the usual go to's like littering, stealing my brother's toys, or talking back to my mother. Anything that would get the priest off my back for that week. The priest would make me say a few Hail Mary's and an Our Father, and apparently, I was forgiven. To me, it was perplexing. Not confessing the sin per say, but why did I have to go through a priest to ask God for forgiveness? Why couldn't I just pass Go and ask God for forgiveness directly? I want to acknowledge that for many, the tradition of confession is meaningful and deeply rooted in faith. There are countless Catholics whose sincere love for God is expressed through these rituals, and I have great respect for their devotion. It just wasn't something I accepted.

When I got to high school, I stopped going to confession, and over time I drifted away from the Catholic Church altogether. But the moment that truly broke it for me came years later, when it wasn't just about me anymore, it was about my daughter.

She was going through sacramental preparation for her First Holy Communion, and we were doing everything we were told. One Sunday, we missed a mass because we were attending my brother's wedding at his wife's Methodist church. We were still in church. We were still honoring God. We were still worshiping.

But when we explained that, the administrators told us it didn't count for going to church that week.

Not because we skipped. Not because we didn't care. But because it wasn't a Catholic mass.

Then they looked at my daughter and told her she had "one strike," and if she got two more, she wouldn't be allowed to receive Communion.

That moment hit me hard. I wasn't just frustrated, I was done.

Because what I saw in that moment wasn't the heart of God. It was rules over relationship. It was checking boxes instead of seeking Him. It was making a child feel like access to God could be taken away over technicalities.

So I told them, "Go ahead and give her strike two and three. We're not coming back."

I wasn't going to raise my daughter believing that God's love is conditional on denominational rules. I wasn't going to let her think that being in a different church building somehow meant she was further from Him.

That moment made something clear to me: I didn't walk away from God, I walked away from a system that, in that moment, felt like it had lost sight of Him.

And from there, my journey toward a real, personal relationship with God truly began.

Now that I have really started finding God, I realize there's a real feeling of freedom that comes from being completely honest with God.



The Battle has already been Won



For so long, I tried to hide my sin behind good intentions and half-hearted prayers. I thought if I said it out loud, maybe He would forgive me. Was I really being honest about my sins, or was I just so ashamed that I was hiding from the one true God who could cleanse me? I remember times when I blamed God for making women so attractive. How could you expect us not to lust after them? I was actually blaming God for putting the piece of meat in the lion's cage and not expecting the lion to eat it.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:16 (KJV)



The Battle has already been Won



We chose free will over God's protection when Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the serpent, the enemy. Notice I said we chose free will, not just Adam and Eve. I believe this is a choice that we all make as humans, not just one man and woman thousands of years ago. We choose free will every day when we don't put Jesus first in everything we do. We choose free will every day when we ignore God's calling on our lives and pursue money, career, and the pleasures of the world. We choose free will every day when we fall to lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. We choose free will every day when we allow the culture to deteriorate because we are too afraid to stand up for Christ. We choose free will every day when we allow our kids to go into the world without the armor of God, giving them cell phones that can access the most horrible temptations while the enemy laughs. But even in our failures, God never stops inviting us back to Him. His grace gives us the strength to turn from what holds us down, and His Spirit empowers us to make different choices. No matter how many times we fall, God keeps reaching out with hope and the power to choose Him again.

Confession is not about informing God of something He doesn't already know; it's about opening our hearts and minds and handing that deep, hidden shame directly to Him. When Adam and Eve were hiding from God because they were naked, God asked them, "Who told you that you were naked?" God knows our sins, He knows our desires, He knows our weaknesses. God wants us to bring them to Him so he can clothe us, cleanse us, and cover us with His Grace and Mercy. Why try to hide our sins like a child hides food in his cheek because he doesn't think his mom will know he ate the last cookie?

The Battle has already been Won



John 1:9 (KJV) says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” That’s one of the most comforting promises in all of Scripture. It tells me that forgiveness is not based on how sorry I am, but on how faithful He is.

Confession is not condemnation, it’s restoration. When I finally stopped making excuses and brought my sin into the light, I felt like chains were being removed from my arms and legs and the weight of the world being lifted off my shoulders and onto Jesus! Shame tries to convince us that God is turned off by our sin, but Grace shows us that He draws near to us when we open up to Him.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:1,10 KJV).

The Battle has already been Won

David took the wife of one of his soldiers, sent him off to battle and planned his demise. All this so he could keep Bathsheba as his wife. When he finally realized how much he hurt God with his lust of flesh, eyes, and pride, he fell on his face and cried to the Lord for forgiveness. He realized he could not fix this on his own, and he would not be right with God unless he repented. David wasn't just forgiven of his sin; he was cleansed, refreshed, and transformed. God doesn't just wipe the slate clean; He renews our hearts.

Sin is a deep stain on our hearts that only the blood of Jesus can remove. There is no shame, no weakness, no filth that His light can't expose, and His blood can't wash away. The cross didn't just cover sin, it canceled it, wiped it out.

Now, instead of waiting for my shame and condemnation to subside, I immediately ask for God's forgiveness. I don't wait until I feel better about it. When I fall, I go straight to God and ask Him to forgive me, help me be stronger, and help me recognize His ways of escape sooner. I discovered that I don't have the same lasting feelings of shame and condemnation when I go to Him without hesitation. I feel so much closer to Jesus now because I know He is working on me every minute of the day, and I refuse to hide from Him anymore. He knows I'm naked, and there's no reason I need to run from Him anymore. Now I run to Him, and I don't stumble because I know He is waiting with open arms.



Sometimes repentance needs to go beyond confession to God.

James 5:16 says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

I heard it said that you confess your sins to God for forgiveness, but you confess to one another for healing. I mentioned in an earlier chapter how I started talking to a close friend about my sins and how much that has helped me. There's a special kind of healing that happens in community when you find someone led by the Spirit to walk with you. Satan cringes the moment your secrets are spoken in the light.

God sees isolation as dangerous, especially when it comes to sin and temptation. "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NLT)



When we hide our sin, it festers and grows. It starts to eat away at us, however, so slightly. We may think we are not harming anyone. Oh, I'm just looking at a picture or a video of consenting adults who chose to live that life. We are actually feeding a multi-billion-dollar industry that is destroying our world. We are not blameless in this cultural demise. In God's eyes, we are just as guilty as the film producers and the actors who make these videos. But no matter how deep our guilt or shame may run, God's grace is always greater. Even if we are caught in the darkest habits, there is hope and forgiveness available in Jesus. Grace meets us where we are and is powerful enough to break every chain of sin, no matter how strong.

There is good news, though; the same person downloading this filth in the middle of the night can seek forgiveness from God and be restored. The same person who once hid in shame can now testify to God's mercy. The same person who contributed to this billion-dollar downfall of humanity can now be a warrior of God in taking it down. One less person doesn't seem like a big difference, but God leaves the 99 to go after the one.

One less person watching porn might not mean much, trend on a chart, or make headlines. This world measures impact in numbers, clicks, and likes. In God's kingdom, one heart turning from sin matters more than a million people staying lost.

Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents. Jesus often paused everything to go after one person. One woman at a well, one man in a tree, one thief on a cross, Jesus walked 80 miles to find Peter on a boat.

When one person turns away from sin, it's not "just one nasty habit beat." It's one person being renewed. One family is being saved. One future marriage is being protected. One generation set on a different path.

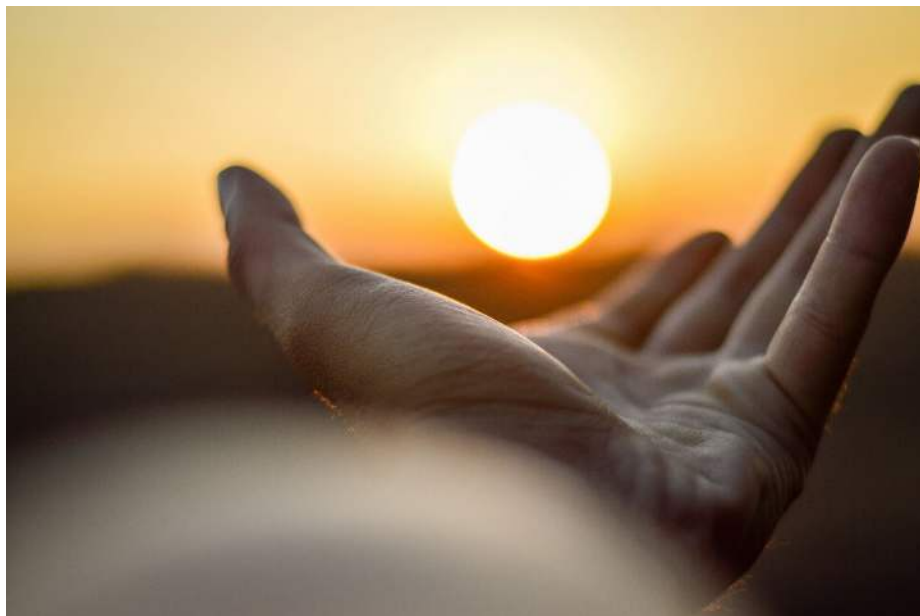
Temptation promises pleasure in secret, but it quietly distorts our hearts, our expectations, and deceives our relationships. So, when one person says "no" to porn, to alcohol, to envy, or to gambling, we see it as no big deal, but God sees a battle won, a lost sheep found. Spiritual wars are won, one small battle at a time. God doesn't ask us to change the world overnight; He asks us to be faithful right where we are.

When I first started this book, I asked God, "Why bother? Who's going to read this?" Now I see it clearly: if you're the only person reading this, then you're the one God is looking for. The one He would leave the ninety-nine to find. What feels insignificant to you here is cheered by the angels in heaven. When battles are won in war, the soldiers who risked their lives don't really understand the significance until they return home. It's the same for you and me in the battles Christ fights for us. They may seem insignificant now, but when we return home, we will see the glory of God.

Isaiah 1:18 NIV declares, “Come now, let us settle the matter,”
says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as
snow;
though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

That is not just God overlooking our sins; that's God saying our sins are wiped out, we are cleansed, and our souls are renewed. There's no better feeling than knowing you're pure, not perfect, but washed as clean as snow. Not perfect, but forgiven.

So today, if you've been hiding from God, running away from Him when you fall, turn around and run back to Him. Confession doesn't make you weak; it proves you're ready to be healed. When you open your heart to God, He doesn't just forgive you; He begins purifying you from the inside out. He knows you're naked. He knows your shame. He knows your heart is broken. The One who knows the worst of you, still calls you His own. That's the kind of love that changes everything.



The Battle has already been Won

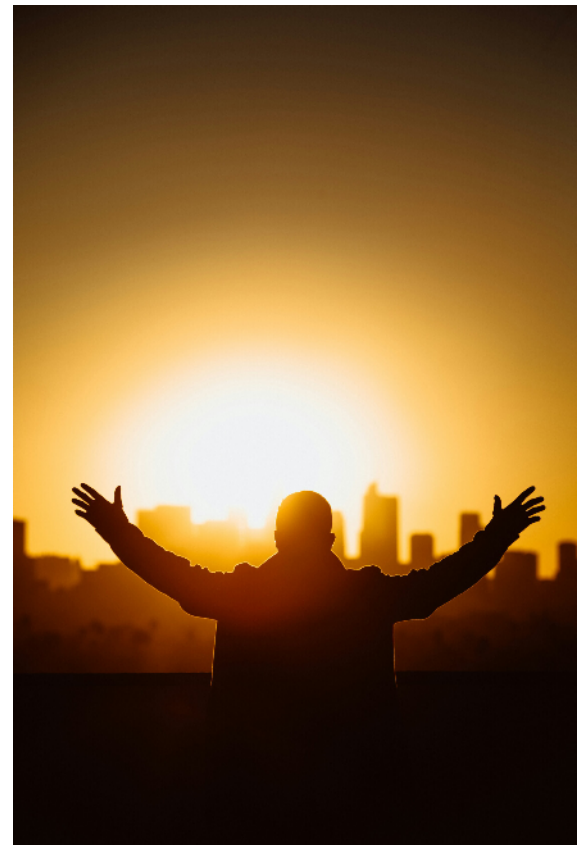
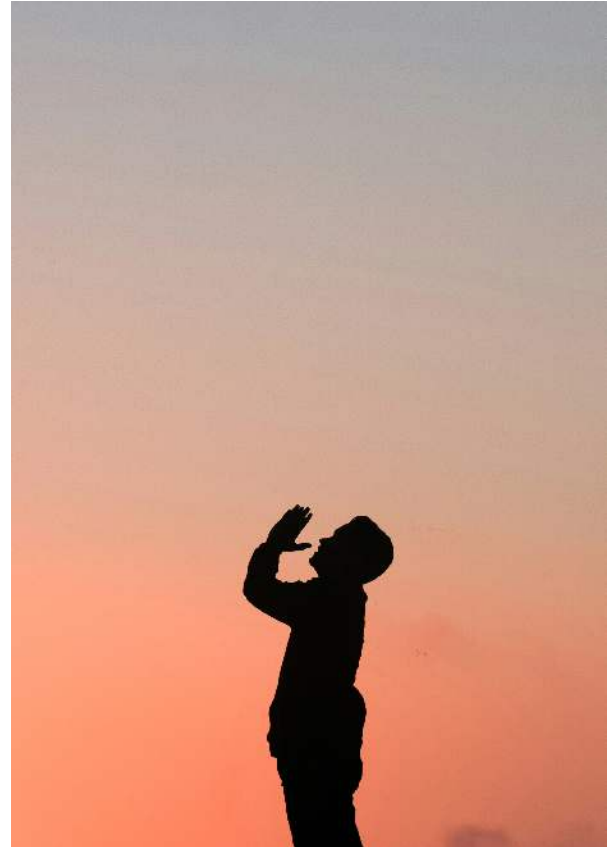
If you're not sure where to start, you can pray something simple like, "God, I know I've sinned and tried to hide from You. I'm tired of carrying this shame. Please forgive me. Cleanse my heart and help me walk in Your freedom. Thank You for loving me and calling me Your own."

Even a prayer as short as, "Jesus, help me. I can't do this without You," is enough to begin. Just be honest with Him. You don't have to use perfect words, you only need to come to Him with an open heart.

For those struggling with forgiveness and keep replaying that sin and shame in their mind.

(Psalms 103:11-12 NLT) "For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west."

Explanation: God doesn't forgive a little bit or halfway. He removes sin so that it can never be retrieved. East and West will never meet. Your sin will not see the light of day. God is not going to shake his head when you fall and say, I knew you were going to do that again.



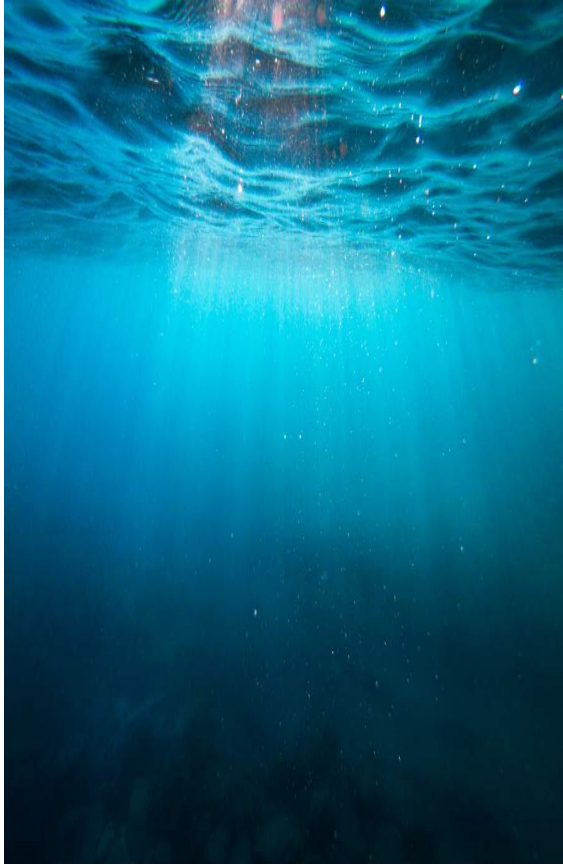
The Battle has already been Won

Application: Don't keep replaying confessed sins in your mind; you're bringing up something God has already buried. If you are still feeling shame, it doesn't mean you are failing or that God is disappointed in you; it means the enemy is up to his old tricks. Accepting forgiveness can sometimes be a process, especially if guilt and regret run deep. You are covered by God's Grace, learn to trust His promise. If shame lingers, keep bringing your feelings honestly to God. He wants all of your struggles, even the ongoing ones. Remember, He is gentle and patient and meeting you right where you are.

For those who think God uses our past sins to punish us.

(Micah 7:19 ESV) "He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.."

Explanation: God doesn't just pardon sin like a president pardons a crime. He dumps it over the boat in the deepest sea. Our sins drop to the bottom and will never resurface. When you get to heaven, God is not going to be standing there with a big fishing pole, pulling up your sin and saying, "haha, look at the size of this one." If you are still feeling condemned and guilty, then you're not listening to God's voice and you're not accepting His Grace.



Application: When you keep dredging up past sins, you're telling God you don't trust that He forgave you. You are doubting His mercy. Like if your child did something wrong, but you forgave them, and they did their punishment. How would you feel if they came to you every day and said, "Hey, Dad, are you sure you're ok with what I did. Hey, Mom, I really want to say I'm sorry again for what I did to you." After a while, you would probably punish them for being a pain in the neck. God forgave us instantly and fully. He dropped our sins in the ocean and will not dredge them up again. The only difference is that God didn't punish us for our sin. Jesus shed his blood to cover it. The debt was paid and it is finished.

For those who think forgiveness is given over time.

(Psalms 32:5 NIV) "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin."

Explanation: God forgave instantly. I confess.. and God forgave. No delay, no stalling, no procrastination.

For those who think forgiveness can only be given when you stop sinning and clean up your act.

(Romans 5:8 NIV) “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Explanation: We don't need wait to go to God when we stop sinning and straighten out our lives. God takes us as we are, broken and weak. He came for sinners.

Application: Confession isn't begging; it's not waiting until you get stronger, waiting until we break our bad habits. It's asking and receiving. An agreement with God. The moment you stop hiding from Him, forgiveness is given.

For those who are afraid to ask for forgiveness because they fear they will sin again.

If you fear this, then you believe that future sins cancel God's forgiveness and mercy. The Scripture says the opposite.

(Isaiah 38:17 NIV) “Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.”



The Battle has already been Won



Explanation: If God's forgiveness depended on future behavior, no one would be forgiven. Not David, not Paul, not Abraham, or any of God's children. He doesn't forgive you because you promise never to sin again; He forgives you because of His mercy and Grace. God doesn't collect evidence on us to use at our judgment. He knows all our future falls and failures and doesn't just forgive us temporarily, but permanently.

Although David waited 12 months before asking God for forgiveness, he wasn't waiting until he became a better person. He wasn't waiting until he stopped feeling guilty about what he did. He just finally realized God knew he was naked, and he didn't want to hide from Him anymore. He knew he couldn't fix himself, and God was the only path to true mercy.

- You confess because you are weak.
- You are forgiven because God is merciful.
- You keep getting up again because grace restores.
- You keep running to God because mercy doesn't run out.



The Battle has already been Won



Application: The fear of asking for forgiveness because you fear you may fall again is not unique to you. God already knows when and how you'll stumble and fall, but He's asking you to come to Him anyway. Your confessions are not wearing out His patience; you trust His promise and are drawing closer to Him each time. God's patience and mercy have no limits. He is never frustrated or tired of welcoming you back, no matter how many times you return. In fact, He delights every time you come home to Him. He knows what's in your heart. No amount of falling or confessing can exhaust His grace. You can rest in the truth that His love for you is truly endless.

Reflection & Application

Set aside time daily to think about how you've learned to turn to God quickly, equipping yourself with His strength, putting on His armor without hesitation. The following tips can help you get ready for challenges ahead.

- Where do you tend to lose the battle; before the moment, in the moment, or after the fall? Learn to recognize that “warning moment” and slow down. That is where the decision is made.
- Are there habits in your life that seemed small at first but are slowly getting stronger? Cut them off early before they take deeper root. What feels manageable right now will not stay that way forever. Strongholds like alcohol, gambling, stealing, lust, anxiety, and addiction often don't start big; they grow quietly over time until they begin controlling parts of your life.

The Battle has already been Won



Something as small as taking office supplies from work can slowly turn into abusing company time or becoming comfortable with dishonesty. It may not seem like a huge deal in the moment, but every time we ignore conviction, we give the enemy a little more room to work. Even scrolling through your phone for long periods while you're on the clock is a form of stealing. Your employer is paying you to work, not spend hours shopping online or watching pointless videos. Small compromises may feel harmless, but when they are repeated enough, they begin shaping your character and weakening your spirit.

- When temptation shows up, do you stay near it or create distance? Make it a habit to remove yourself immediately, don't linger, don't negotiate.
- Are you relying on willpower, or are you actually depending on God? Start praying before temptation hits, not just during it. Ask God daily, hourly, and every minute for strength.

The Battle has already been Won

- Is there a struggle you've been keeping hidden? Bring it into the light with someone you trust. Silence strengthens sin, but honesty breaks its power.
- Have you believed the lie that you're stuck or that this is just who you are? Replace that lie with truth, God always provides a way out.
- Do you recognize God's "escape door" when it appears, the conviction, the nudge, the discomfort? Act on it immediately instead of ignoring it.
- What triggers can you remove right now (apps, social media, toxic people, routines)? Avoiding temptation early is wisdom, not weakness.
- What are you doing daily to strengthen your spirit? Replace empty or harmful habits with things that draw you closer to God, prayer, Scripture, accountability, healthy routines.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

- Ignoring the warning moment before the fall
That slow-motion moment right before the decision is a real barrier. It feels small, easy to brush off, but that is where the battle is either won or lost.
- Letting habits grow without confronting them
What starts as something occasional can slowly take hold without you realizing it. Weekend behavior turns into daily routine, and before long, it feels normal.
- Being surrounded by constant, layered temptation
Temptation does not come from one direction. It hits all at once. Lust, food, alcohol, money, envy, loneliness. When everything comes at you together, it wears you down. Staying near the temptation makes the fall almost guaranteed.
- Relying on willpower instead of God
Trying to fight temptation on your own is a losing battle. Willpower fades. When that is your only defense, failure becomes a pattern. Shame keeps you from seeking help, making you feel isolated.

The Battle has already been Won

- Keeping the struggle hidden

Silence is a barrier. What you keep in the dark grows stronger. When no one knows, nothing challenges it.

- Believing the lie that there is no way out

One of the strongest barriers is the belief that you are stuck. That is just who you are now. That lie makes temptation feel inevitable.

The Good News

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV): God always provides a way of escape. You're never stuck, never trapped, never without a God-built exit.

- James 4:7 (KJV): When you submit to God, the devil must flee. Resistance empowered by God is stronger than any temptation.

- Matthew 26:41 (KJV): Prayer strengthens the weak flesh. God warns you before temptation shows up.

- Psalm 119:11 (KJV): God's Word is protection and power. Scripture stored in your heart becomes a weapon, the sword of God.

- Galatians 5:16 (KJV): Walking in the Spirit breaks the power of the flesh. Spiritual nourishment weakens sinful cravings.

- Hebrews 2:18 (KJV): Jesus understands your struggle personally. He doesn't judge your weakness; He supports you through it.

- Proverbs 4:14–15 (KJV): Avoiding the tempting path is wisdom, not cowardice. God often tells you to flee, not fight.

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

- Pray before temptation hits, not just during it, ask God for strength before you feel those temptations coming on.

The Battle has already been Won

- Look for the “escape door” immediately, the conviction, the nudge, the disgust, the chance to walk away.
- Bring struggles into the light with trusted believers (James 5:16 KJV).
- Use Scripture as Jesus did, memorize verses that speak directly to your weaknesses. Write down 1 or 2 verses that touch your heart. If some are hard to understand, try translations like NLT or NIV to help apply them more personally.
- Avoid triggers early (people, places, apps, websites, routines). Sometimes this means making difficult choices to protect your spiritual health.
- Build new habits that fill the empty space temptation used to occupy (prayer, reading, accountability, puzzles, walking, going to bed at the same time as your spouse).
- Set limits on food, drinking, spending, and screen time before your emotions take over.
- Run when necessary, as Joseph did. Not everything requires a fight.
- Celebrate the wins God brings instead of focusing only on failures.
- Stay connected to God daily, not just after you fall.

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- God always provides a way out of temptation
“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man... but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.” (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV)
- Submitting to God gives you authority over the enemy
“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7 KJV)

- Prayer strengthens you before the fall

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41 KJV)

- God’s Word equips you to fight

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11 KJV)

- Walking in the Spirit breaks the cycle of sin

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16 KJV)

- Jesus understands your struggle

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour (help) them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18 KJV)

- Avoiding temptation is wisdom

“Enter not into the path of the wicked... avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.” (Proverbs 4:14–15 KJV)

Chapter Reflection

- The battle is often won or lost in small, quiet moments, pay attention to them.
- You are not stuck, even if it feels like it, God has already made a way out.
- You don’t have to fight alone, God is with you, and others can walk with you.
- Temptation loses power when it’s exposed but grows stronger in silence.
- Every time you choose God, even in a small way, you are building strength.
- Freedom is not instant, it is built one decision at a time.
- God is not waiting for perfection, He is walking with you toward victory.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter 7

Walking in the Spirit

“I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes...” (Ezekiel 36:27 KJV)

When God says you will walk in His statutes, He is saying you will walk in His guidance, His will, and His boundaries. He will show you what is wrong and what is right. What is false, and what is the truth? Statutes are not useless rules; they are God's guardrails, His protection. For example, when you feel a strong urge to speak harshly in anger, God's Word reminds you to speak with patience and kindness. That statute acts as a guardrail, keeping you from causing harm with your words. Or when you are tempted to be dishonest at work, remembering God's call to integrity is a guardrail that protects your reputation and conscience. In daily life, these truths show up in countless decisions: choosing forgiveness over holding a grudge, generosity instead of selfishness, or honesty when a small lie might seem easier. God's statutes are not burdens, but loving boundaries designed to keep us safe and close to Him.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16 KJV)

When you accept Jesus as the Son of God and the only way to salvation, you are saved by the grace and mercy of God, not by your own works. At that moment, you are born of the Spirit. God Himself comes to dwell within you through the Holy Spirit, not because you earned it, but because you believed.



“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 1 Corinthians 3:16 (KJV)

This is comforting, knowing that God is within me, guiding, teaching, and protecting me. God doesn't just save us and then walk away. He walks with us, carries us, and breaks the power of sin over our lives. He lives within us because He knows we can't live without Him.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we choose obedience over desire, and when we fall, we run back to God, not hide in shame. There is one catch, though. God does not force His will on us, so you could ignore the Spirit if you want, which is why we still fall.

But how do you return to God after you've stumbled? Here are some simple steps:

1. Pause for a moment and acknowledge honestly what happened, there is no need to hide it from God, He already knows.
2. Confess your failure to God in prayer, trusting that He welcomes you back with love and forgiveness.



3. Ask God for the strength to keep going, and for His Spirit to fill the places in your heart where you are weak.

If you are unsure what to say, try a simple prayer: "Lord, I have fallen again, but I come to You just as I am. Please forgive me, lift me up, and help me walk in Your Spirit. I trust that You still love me, and I choose to run to You, not from You."

Remember, running back to God after failure is not about being perfect, it is about trusting His promise to forgive and restore you every time.

When I read this verse that you saw earlier, everything changed. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16 KJV)

When I started this journey, I always thought that if I tried harder, I could overcome the temptation. If I were just stronger, I could walk away from sin. I was sadly mistaken. I knew I was saved because I accepted Jesus as the only path to the Father, but by thinking I had to do all the heavy lifting, I was repeating the same behavior over and over again. It was as if God whispered, "You've been fighting temptation with your own strength, I've already won the battle, let me fight it for you."

I had spent so much time resisting temptation that I forgot to simply walk with God and let the Holy Spirit guide me. You can't beat the enemy with your own strength by trying harder. This is war, and victory comes from depending on God's Spirit and letting Him carry you.

Walking in the Spirit is not just going through the motions; daily bible reading, praying, and going to church. Walking in the Spirit is giving God access to every corner of your soul, every dirty thought, every sinful desire. Giving in completely and telling Him, "I don't have this," "I'm not strong enough," and "I want to stop, but my flesh is weak." This is when the Spirit will step in, lift you up, and carry you through. God doesn't get rid of our weakness; He just overcomes it.

One way to make this surrender real is to build a simple daily habit that helps you invite God into your struggles. Try taking a moment whenever you feel overwhelmed to pray a quiet, simple breath prayer, such as "Lord, I need You" or "Holy Spirit, help me." You can also keep a small journal, and at the end of each day, write down one place where you struggled and ask God to meet you there tomorrow. If you don't want to write it down, God knows already. These small practices draw your focus back to God in the ordinary moments, making spiritual surrender tangible and helping you stay open to His guidance throughout your day.

2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV "... for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

When you feel yourself falling, and you get that little nudge, or distraction, that feeling that you shouldn't be doing this, that is the Holy Spirit at work. I used to ignore that nudge, but now I wait for it; I depend on it. God is swooping in to rescue me, and when it happens, I reach out and let Him pull me up.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” (Romans 8:5 KJV)

A person who lives after the flesh has their mind centered on themselves. They care only about comfort, desire, and what benefits them most. Their decisions are shaped by impulse, fear, and the need to protect their own interests.

A person who lives after the Spirit has their mind set on God. They care about truth, humility, and obedience, even when it costs them. Walking in the Spirit brings a quiet peace, because you are no longer driven by guilt, fear, or constant striving; you are learning to trust God rather than control outcomes.



The Battle has already been Won

Flesh vs. Spirit

Flesh

After what makes me feel good

Self-centered

Lives by impulse

What I want, I want, and I want it now. Instant gratification

Prideful (I'm blessed more than they are because I go to church and give to charity)

Justifies sin

Resists correction

Spirit

What God wants for my life

God-Centered

Confesses all sin

Humble

Seeks obedience

Responds to correction

After the Spirit. Doesn't run from God

The Battle has already been Won

Being after the Spirit does not mean sin suddenly disappears, or that temptation no longer exists. It means that when you struggle, you turn to God rather than away from Him. You may still fall, but you no longer hide or run, because you know you are not condemned. When you walk in the spirit, temptation begins to lose its grip, not because it disappears, but because you no longer desire to live in sin.

Prayer isn't only for nighttime. I start my morning, as soon as I wake up, by thanking God for a new day. On my way to work, I thank Him for all the good things He has done for my family and me. I also thank Him for the hardships and trials, trusting that He will give my family and me the strength to get through them.



Thanking God becomes part of your day, helping you get past all the bad things going on around you. The more I thank Him, the more I feel blessed and the more I feel Him walking with me. I used to pray, "Lord, take away my weakness." Now I pray, "Lord, be my strength." Father, teach me to walk with You in my weakness." If I'm walking with Him, my flesh doesn't have the final word; His Spirit does. Not because you become stronger, but because the Spirit becomes louder. Victory over temptation doesn't come from self-control; it comes from walking in the Spirit.

The more time you spend with the Spirit, the less room the flesh has to rule. The closer you draw to His presence, the quieter the voice of sin becomes. I've learned that calling on the Spirit and thanking God as much as I can throughout the day draws me closer to Him. Thanking God for every blessing He gives me seems to make the grip of temptation weaker and weaker. One simple practice is to begin or end each prayer, no matter how short, with a word of thanks. For example, when you wake up, simply say, "Thank You, God, for another day." Throughout your day, pause whenever you notice something good, whether it's a kind word from a friend, a safe commute, or even a moment of peace, and quietly thank God for it. Sometimes I jot down small things I feel grateful for in a notebook or make a habit of thanking God aloud for the meals I eat and the strength to work. These small acts of gratitude, when repeated, create a habit of noticing God's presence all around you. They steadily shift your focus to God's goodness in every part of your day.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance," (Galatians 5:22-23, KJV)

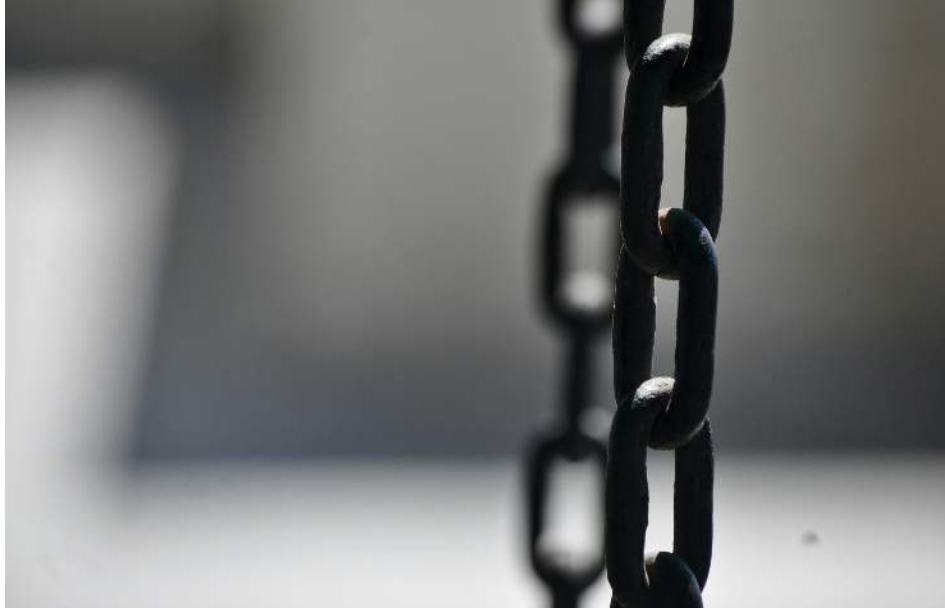
Notice how Paul doesn't say "the work of the Spirit"; he says, "the fruit of the Spirit." God doesn't force Himself on you; like fruit, He grows in you naturally and is nourished when you are rooted in Him. When you become grounded in His truth, you are rooted in His Spirit.



When you're walking in the Spirit:

- **Love:** reshapes your desires, so sin no longer feels worth the cost
- **Joy:** fills your heart minute by minute with God's love. Temptation feeds on emptiness; joy starves it.
- **Peace:** steadies you when temptation tries to drive you towards sin.
- **Long-suffering:** patience and self-restraint take over whenever you are drawn to the flesh.
- **Gentleness:** caring and empathy fill your soul.
- **Faith:** trusts the promise of God's goodness and strength when temptation arises.
- **Meekness:** keeps you dependent on God rather than confident in your own strength.
- **Temperance:** self-control is the gift that comes with walking in the Spirit. It isn't by your own strength but through the Spirit

The Battle has already been Won



As the Spirit produces fruit in you, these gifts begin to crowd out the desires of the flesh. Victory over temptation isn't about being strong enough or having enough self-control. Notice that temperance (self-control) is listed last. When you believe self-control comes from your own strength and discipline, you miss what the Spirit is trying to give you. God gives us these gifts as we walk in the Spirit, and self-control becomes the reward, the culmination of God's strength at work in us.

As I journeyed through writing this book, I learned how to walk with the Spirit and depend on God for everything. When I put Him first above everything else in my life, I stopped replaying my failures. I stopped dwelling on my weaknesses and struggles. Temptation began to lose its power over me, and God's strength showed up in ways I never could have imagined. The peace I once thought was out of reach began to guard my heart. The joy I had searched for throughout my life began to fill my soul. And the self-control I never had became a loving gift from God as I learned to walk with Him daily.

And on the days I stumble, because we all do, the Spirit is right there to lift me again, whispering, "Keep walking. You're still Mine."

The Battle has already been Won

Walking in the Spirit doesn't mean that when you stumble, you're suddenly walking alone again. Walking in the Spirit means calling on God every day, every hour, every minute. Every step with the Spirit is a step away from the flesh, away from anxiety, away from addiction. When you invite God into your struggles, He will carry you. God is not surprised by your setbacks. He is endlessly patient and always present, no matter how many times you slip or how long your battle has been. His grace covers not just your first mistake, but every mistake, again and again. He never tires of welcoming you back, and His love will continue to pursue you even in the middle of repeated struggles. He will not give up on you, so don't give up on Him. Victory over temptation isn't lost because you fall. It's lost only when you stop chasing the Spirit and stop seeking God first.

One day, when you realize that the chains that bound you no longer hold you captive, you will know that it didn't come from fighting harder. You'll know that self-control and discipline aren't of your own strength but are gifts of the Spirit of God. Victory over temptation doesn't come from fighting harder; it comes from walking closer.

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. Walking in the Spirit is not about becoming perfect overnight or suddenly never struggling again. It is about learning to depend on God instead of yourself. The Christian life is not sustained by willpower, but by surrender. Every moment you turn toward God instead of away from Him is a step deeper into freedom.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

- Trying to fight temptation in your own strength.
Many of us believe that if we just try harder, we can overcome sin on our own. But self-reliance keeps us exhausted and trapped in the same cycle.
- Treating Christianity like a routine instead of a relationship.
Bible reading, prayer, and church attendance can become empty motions if your heart is not truly walking with God.
- Ignoring the voice of the Holy Spirit.
That quiet conviction, warning, or discomfort before sin is often God trying to pull you away from danger. Ignoring it repeatedly weakens your sensitivity to His guidance.
- Believing weakness disqualifies you.
Many people think their struggles mean they are failing spiritually, when in reality weakness is often where God's strength begins to work the most.
- Trying to hide after falling into sin.
Shame convinces us to run from God after failure instead of running back to Him for restoration.
- Feeding the flesh more than the Spirit.
Constantly filling your mind with social media, lust, anger, negativity, or worldly distractions makes it harder to hear God's voice clearly.
- Wanting self-control without surrender.
True self-control is not produced by discipline alone. It is the fruit of walking closely with the Spirit of God.
- Forgetting to thank God daily.
A heart without gratitude easily becomes fixated on temptation, frustration, fear, and lack rather than on God's presence and blessings.

The Battle has already been Won

The Good News

- Ezekiel 36:27 (KJV): God places His Spirit within you and helps you walk in His ways.
You are not expected to fight this battle alone. God Himself walks with you.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 (KJV): The Spirit of God dwells within you.
God did not save you and abandon you. His presence lives inside of you daily.
- Galatians 5:16 (KJV): Walking in the Spirit weakens the power of the flesh. Victory over temptation comes through dependence on God, not self-effort.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV): God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Your weakness is not the end of your story; it is where His power begins.
- Romans 8:1 (KJV): There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Even when you stumble, God does not cast you away.
- Romans 8:5 (KJV): Setting your mind on the Spirit changes the direction of your life.
The more you focus on God, the less control sin has over your thoughts and desires.
- Galatians 5:22–23 (KJV): The fruit of the Spirit grows naturally in those rooted in God.
Love, peace, patience, joy, and self-control are gifts produced by God's Spirit within you.
- Philippians 4:13 (KJV): Strength comes through Christ.
You are stronger with God than you could ever be alone.

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

- Start each morning by thanking God before anything else. Even a simple prayer of gratitude shifts your focus toward His presence.
- When temptation comes, stop and immediately acknowledge the Holy Spirit's warning instead of brushing it aside.
- Use short "breath prayers" throughout the day like, "Lord, I need You," or "Holy Spirit, help me."
- Build a daily habit of Bible reading, even if it starts small. Consistency matters more than perfection.
- Keep a journal where you honestly write down your struggles, victories, prayers, and moments where you sensed God helping you.
- Thank God throughout your day for small blessings. Gratitude weakens the grip of anxiety, bitterness, and temptation.
- When you fall, return to God immediately instead of waiting until you "feel spiritual again."
- Feed your spirit intentionally. Spend less time consuming content that feeds the flesh and more time filling your mind with truth.
- Ask God to strengthen you in your weakness instead of simply asking Him to remove every struggle.
- Surround yourself with believers who encourage you to walk closer with God and not deeper into compromise.

The Battle has already been Won

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Walking in the Spirit is dependence on God, not dependence on yourself.
Galatians 5:16 (KJV)
- God's Spirit lives within every believer.
1 Corinthians 3:16 (KJV)
- Weakness is often where God's power works most clearly.
2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV)
- The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, strengthens, and restores us.
Ezekiel 36:27 (KJV)
- Self-control is produced by the Spirit, not human effort alone.
Galatians 5:22–23 (KJV)
- Gratitude draws your heart closer to God and shifts your focus away from the flesh.
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (KJV)
- God does not abandon us when we stumble.
Romans 8:1 (KJV)
- The more we feed the Spirit, the weaker the flesh becomes.
Romans 8:5 (KJV)
- Walking in the Spirit is a daily choice, not a one-time event.
Luke 9:23 (KJV)
- Victory over temptation comes from staying close to God, not from fighting harder alone.
Philippians 4:13 (KJV)

Chapter Reflection

The Battle has already been Won

Walking in the Spirit is not about becoming someone who never struggles. It is about becoming someone who no longer fights alone. God never asked you to carry the weight of temptation by yourself. He asked you to walk with Him.

The Battle has already been Won

Every prayer, every moment of surrender, every time you choose to run back to God instead of hiding, the Spirit is working inside you. Even when you stumble, God is still there, patient, loving, and ready to lift you back up again.

One day, you will look back and realize the chains that once controlled you no longer have power over your life. Not because you became stronger on your own, but because you learned to stay close to the Spirit. Victory over temptation doesn't come from fighting harder. It comes from walking closer to God every single day.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter 8

Putting on the Armor of God



Ephesians 6:10–11 (KJV)

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Sometimes life can feel overwhelming. It feels like we take one step forward and then get pushed two steps back. We turn on the news, and it seems like the whole world is unraveling. Everywhere we look, there is chaos, division, and people tearing each other apart. Even on social media, we see the worst in people, constant anger, constant fighting. It makes you wonder what kind of world our children and grandchildren will have to grow up in. When hope starts to fade like that, temptation becomes stronger because our hearts grow tired and discouraged. We start asking questions like, “If Jesus cares about us, why does evil seem to be winning? Why doesn’t He just step in and put out all these fires? Why can’t he take this temptation away?”

The Battle has already been Won

This is the exact moment we need to put on the armour of God. Ancient warriors and modern soldiers would never step onto a battlefield without first putting on the armor they need for protection and victory. They know the battle is real. In the same way, we are in a battle every single day. If we walk into it without putting on the armour God has given us, we should not expect to overcome temptation. When the world tries to drain our hope and make us feel defeated, God calls us to put on His armour and stand still. When we put on his armour, we show God how we are depending on His strength, not ours.

The word “armour” in the Bible comes from the idea of protective covering or equipment worn by a soldier in battle. In Ephesians 6, when Paul speaks about the “whole armour of God,” he is describing the spiritual protection God gives His children to stand against the attacks of the enemy. But unlike worldly armor built from fear, pride, or self-preservation, God’s armor is rooted in His love, truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and His Word. Every piece reflects God’s character and His desire to protect us. It is called the armor “of God” because it comes from Him, belongs to Him, and works through His strength, not ours. God’s armor is not just defense for the battle; it is the loving protection of a Father covering His children in a spiritual war.



You might wonder, what does it look like to actually put on the armor of God each day? It can be as simple as starting your morning with a short prayer or quiet reflection, asking God for His protection and strength as you step into the day. For example, before you leave your bedroom or start your busy routine, you might pray, "Lord, help me to wear your armor today. Fill me with truth, cover my heart with your righteousness, give me peace, strengthen my faith, guard my mind with salvation, and remind me of your Word. I depend on you for victory in every battle I face." Even a moment like this is how we take up God's armor and make it real in our daily lives.

If we try to fight this battle with our own willpower and strength, the enemy will defeat us every time. For years, I tried to overcome temptation on my own. I leaned on self-control and discipline, thinking that if I just tried harder, I could win the fight. But it would be like showing up to a battle without the weapons you need. You would not fly into battle without enough fuel in your plane or step onto the battlefield with no ammunition. It's a hopeless way to fight, and yet so many of us keep doing the same thing over and over, wondering why we keep losing.



To understand how God's armor will help us defeat temptation, we must first learn what the armor consists of and how each piece will be used for victory. Let's break down each verse of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 6:10–18 (KJV).

Verse 10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Ephesians 6:10 (KJV)

Paul is not telling us to be strong when temptation comes. He is telling us that God will be strong for us right in the middle of it. The strength isn't coming from us; it comes from God. We are not meant to rely on our own power; we are meant to depend on His.

Fighting temptation is not like trying to improve your time in a 50-yard freestyle, where you train harder, stretch more, build leg strength, and hope to shave a tenth of a second off your time the next race. That is how we often approach temptation, though. We think if we just try harder next time, we will win. I know this because I lived it, probably my whole life. I tried as hard as I could to walk away from that martini or push away that bad thought. Maybe next time I won't get so angry when some crazy driver gives me the finger in traffic. Perhaps after my portfolio hits my magic number, I won't be so jealous of those friends who seem to get everything they want. I can fight temptation with everything I've got, but no matter how hard I try or how much willpower I use, I will keep losing the battle, and so will you. We won't have victory over temptation until we realize that “the battle is not ours, but the Lord's.” (2 Chronicles 20:15 KJV)

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11 KJV)

The Battle has already been Won

Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God, not just a few pieces that feel comfortable, but the entire armor. Every part matters. If we leave pieces off, we leave openings for the enemy. He says the armor protects us from the "wiles of the devil." It's not a direct assault from the enemy, but it's a deceptive maneuver, a trick. From the beginning of time, that was the devil's M.O. (modus operandi), a Latin word describing the way someone behaves or operates. Remember in the garden, the serpent didn't force Eve to eat the fruit; he deceived her by twisting God's words. By the time you realize his scheme, it's too late; the temptation has already overcome you.

This is why Paul says to put on the whole armor of God. If we try to fight with only part of it, we are only fooling ourselves. The enemy has been running the same playbook for thousands of years, and if we step into the battlefield unprepared, his tricks will work on us every time. But when we put on the full armor God gives us, his schemes begin to lose their power because the truth of God exposes the lie.

Verse 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
(Ephesians 6:12 KJV)

We're not fighting another person, and we're not just fighting ourselves either. We are up against a real enemy, the devil, an evil spiritual force that even Jesus Christ called the ruler of this world.

Maybe some of us think we're tough enough. I'd like to believe I'd step in the ring with Mike Tyson in his prime if it meant protecting my family. But what in the world makes me think I could take on the devil himself? I can't even sit through a demonic horror movie with my daughters without getting the eebie jeebies.

That's the point Paul is making. This isn't something small or imaginary. The devil is real, and there are spiritual forces at work that are evil, calculated, and far more cunning than we give them credit for. This is not a fight we win on our own.

Verse 13: "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." (Ephesians 6:13 NIV)



The Battle has already been Won

This is important because you might remember earlier, God told us to run from temptation, but now He's saying, "Stand still." Don't be confused. Different temptations require a different battle plan. As a quick summary, there are times when God's Word tells us to actively stand our ground. When facing doubts, fear, or discouragement, we are called to remain strong and stand still. But with certain temptations, especially those like lust or sexual sin, the Bible is clear that we should flee as quickly as possible. For example, if you find yourself in a situation where anger is flaring, you might need to stand firm in peace and pray for God's help. But if you're alone and tempted to look at something you shouldn't, God wants you to get away from that situation immediately. We will go into this further in the next chapter, and you will understand why. For now, just understand that the temptation of sexual lust is not something God wants us to stick around and stand still. Run!!!

Verse 14: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."
(Ephesians 6:14 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won

In Old English, “girt” means to secure or fasten with a strap, which we would call a belt today. So, when Paul says to have your loins “girt about with truth,” he’s telling us to put on the **belt of truth**.

Why does he start with the belt?

Because the belt is what holds everything together. If a warrior didn’t secure his clothing and armor properly, everything would fall out of place. He wouldn’t be able to maneuver properly, and in a real battle, that could be dangerous.

It’s the same for us.

We put on the belt of truth first because every temptation starts with a lie. Remember, the enemy is deceiving. He makes the lie look harmless or even good for us. And if we don’t see that clearly, we can fall into temptation before we even realize what’s happening.

God’s truth helps us see what’s real. It exposes the lie for what it is.

We can’t overcome temptation if we don’t first recognize the lie behind it. That’s why the belt of truth comes first. It helps us stand firm when temptation comes.

Next is the **breastplate of righteousness**. A breastplate in battle was meant to stop direct attacks from arrows, swords, or spears. It is usually wrapped around the sides as well, protecting the warrior’s vital organs from every angle.

God’s breastplate works the same way for our hearts. When we sin, the enemy doesn’t always attack us physically; he attacks with guilt, shame, and condemnation. But God protects us with righteousness. He reminds us that because of Christ, we are not condemned.

This spiritual protection keeps our hearts from being hardened by sin. When we know we are covered by Christ, we can face our struggles without letting shame or guilt take over.

The Battle has already been Won

Verse 15: “and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace..”
Ephesians 6:15 (NIV)

In ancient Rome, soldiers wore spiked shoes to keep their footing during battle. Like modern-day cleats for athletes, footgear was critical; if a soldier couldn't stand firm, he couldn't swing his sword or hold up his shield.

Paul is saying the same thing about the Gospel. It gives us spiritual stability, a sure footing when life gets shaky. The Gospel reminds us that we are filled with God's peace, even when we feel restless, anxious, or empty.

When anxiety, temptation, or hardship comes, the **"shoes of the gospel of peace"** remind you: "I belong to Christ. I have peace with God. No matter what happens today, my salvation is secure." That peace gives you stable footing so you don't get knocked over by fear, doubt, or the pressures of the world.

Temptation hits hardest when we're weak. But when our feet are anchored in the Gospel, it keeps us steady and gives us the strength to resist.

Verse 16: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Ephesians 6:16 (KJV)

Roman shields were large and heavy, designed to protect soldiers from flaming arrows coming down from above. On the battlefield, that shield could be the difference between life and death. If a soldier didn't trust that his shield could actually stop those arrows, fear would take over, and he would run from the fight instead of standing his ground.

It's the same with God's **shield of faith**.

His shield is there to protect us from the arrows that come at us every day, doubt, intrusive thoughts, discouragement, and sudden temptations. These things don't always build slowly; they hit us out of nowhere.

The Battle has already been Won

Faith is trusting that God will protect us before those arrows ever take hold. It's believing His promises over what we feel in the moment.

Temptation says, "Ignore God and go after what feels good right now."
Faith says, "God's way is better, and what He has in store for me is worth more than this moment."



Verse 17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:17 (KJV)

During ancient battles, the helmet protected the soldier's head from both sharp and blunt weapons. If a flying arrow pierced through the helmet, the skull wouldn't be able to protect the brain from being destroyed. The same was true with a blunt weapon like a mace. It was designed to be heavy on one end so that even if it hit a helmet, the force could still crush the skull.



Temptation works the same way in our minds. It often starts with a thought, the enemy's sharp weapon. If we try to protect our minds on our own, the enemy can easily slip in, plant a thought, and let it grow until it takes over and crushes us like a blunt mace.

The Battle has already been Won



Paul tells us to put on the **helmet of salvation**. When we set our minds on the promise of eternal life in Christ, He protects us. The enemy can't penetrate the same way when our thoughts are grounded in that truth.

Through salvation, we are no longer identified by our sin. We have been rescued by Jesus. By His grace, the chains have been broken, the price is paid and we are no longer slaves to sin.

The **sword of the Spirit** is the only weapon God gives us to fight back. His Word is our weapon. The more Scripture we store in our hearts, the more battle-ready we are when temptation comes.

When Jesus Christ was in the wilderness being tempted, He didn't fight back with physical strength. He fought with the Word of God. Every time the enemy came at Him, Jesus answered the same way: "It is written."

Not "It is foretold."

Not "It is said."

Not "I've heard."

He said, "It is written."

When the enemy tried to get Him to turn stones into bread, appealing to His hunger, Jesus answered:

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone..." (Matthew 4:4 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won



When the enemy told Him to throw Himself down from the temple, Jesus responded:

“It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (Matthew 4:7 KJV)

And when the enemy offered Him all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship, Jesus answered:

“... for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God...” (Matthew 4:10 KJV)

Every time, Jesus used the Word like a sword. He didn’t argue. He didn’t debate. He didn’t entertain the temptation. He cut it down with truth.

That’s what the Word of God does. It exposes lies, crushes deception, and gives us real spiritual authority.

If Jesus, the Son of God, used the Word to fight temptation, it only makes sense that we do the same. The more we know it, the more we can use it when the battle shows up.

I have a tough time memorizing verses, but if you start with small verses, your sword is still just as effective.

The Battle has already been Won



Start by picking one that pertains to you. You might do what I do and take a picture of it with your phone and put it in a favorites folder so you can recall it whenever you need it. Writing the verse out on an index card and carrying it with you is another helpful method. Some people find it useful to repeat verses aloud several times a day, or to post them on their mirror, refrigerator, or car dashboard as a reminder. Find the method that works best for you, whether reading, writing, speaking, or listening to the verse being recited. Eventually, it will be etched in your memory, and you will wield your sword as soon as the enemy is near.

Verse 18: “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

Prayer isn’t a physical piece of the armour, but it’s like the power source behind all of it. When we pray constantly, we’re showing God that we’re depending on Him and His strength for the battles ahead.

The Battle has already been Won

I've noticed in my own life that the more I pray, the easier it becomes to fight off temptation. When I keep God on my mind and in my heart throughout the day, I can call on Him at any moment. It's not something I only do when things go wrong; it starts the second I wake up. I thank Him, and I keep thanking Him as the day goes on.

My daughters even make fun of me sometimes because I'll thank God for something as small as a parking spot close to the store. But that's the point. Prayer becomes a habit, not in a routine, empty way, but in a real, constant connection with Him.

One simple way to grow this habit as a family is to pray together at the end of each day. You might sit at the dinner table or gather in the living room and have everyone mention one thing they are thankful for from that day. Then, pray a short prayer of thanks as a family, thanking God for each person's blessings. It can be as easy as, "God, thank you for helping us today. Thank you for the good things we noticed, like a kind friend at school, a safe drive, or even a nice meal. "Please help us stay close to you today and tomorrow." Starting this practice makes prayer real and helps your family turn gratitude into a daily habit that draws you all closer to God and each other.

When you start thanking God throughout your day, you begin to feel closer to Him. And the closer you feel, the more you naturally depend on Him, not just in the big battles, but in everything.



In our walk with Christ, we have to understand that trying to fight these battles on our own is useless. We can't rely on our own strength to overcome the enemy. Even Jesus Christ used the Word of His Father as His weapon when He was tempted. If you find yourself struggling with the same temptations over and over, or feeling defeated after a setback, know that you are not alone. Setbacks are a normal part of the journey, and God's grace is always available to help you get back up and keep going. His love is not based on your performance but on His faithfulness.

Putting on the armor of God isn't something we do every now and then when we feel temptation coming. It's something we live in. We stay ready. We keep the armor on at all times because the battle doesn't come with a warning.

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. Life can feel exhausting, discouraging, and spiritually draining. Temptation often grows strongest when we feel weak, distracted, fearful, or overwhelmed. But God never called you to fight these battles alone. He has already given you armour, truth, protection, and His own strength to stand firm when the enemy attacks.

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation



The Battle has already been Won

- **Leaving parts of your spiritual armour off.**

Many believers rely on certain parts of God's truth while neglecting others. We may pray occasionally but ignore Scripture or know Scripture but fail to trust God in faith. Missing pieces leave openings for the enemy.

- **Believing the enemy's lies.**

Every temptation begins with deception. The enemy makes sin look harmless, justified, comforting, or deserved. If you cannot recognize the lie, you will struggle to resist it.

- **Letting shame and condemnation control your heart.**

After failure, shame often convinces people to hide from God instead of running back to Him. Condemnation weakens your confidence and keeps you spiritually isolated.

- **Neglecting prayer and daily dependence on God.**

When prayer becomes rare, spiritual strength fades. A disconnected prayer life makes temptation feel louder and God feel distant.

- **Filling your mind with worldly noise instead of God's truth.**

Constant negativity, social media, anger, fear, lust, and worldly distractions slowly wear down spiritual focus and weaken your ability to stand firm.

- **Treating spiritual warfare like it is not real.**

Many people underestimate the seriousness of the spiritual battle around them. The enemy is deceptive, persistent, and patient. Walking unprepared leaves you vulnerable.

- **Trying to fight in your own strength.**

One of the biggest barriers is believing you can overcome temptation by sheer willpower. The harder you fight in your own strength, the more exhausted and defeated you become.

The Battle has already been Won

The Good News

- **Ephesians 6:10–11 (KJV):** “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God...” Your strength does not come from you; it comes from God. He has already provided everything you need for battle.
- **2 Chronicles 20:15 (KJV):** “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” Victory over temptation is not won through human effort alone. God fights for His children.
- **Romans 8:1 (KJV):** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” Even when you stumble, you are not abandoned or condemned. God’s grace still covers you.
- **1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV):** “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able...” Temptation never comes without a God-given escape route.
- **John 8:32 (KJV):** “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” God’s truth exposes the lies that keep people trapped in sin.
- **2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV):** “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear...” Fear, panic, and hopelessness do not come from God. He gives power, love, and a sound mind.
- **Matthew 4:4 (KJV):** “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone...” Jesus Himself used Scripture to fight temptation. God’s Word is a weapon that defeats deception.
- **Psalms 46:1 (KJV):** “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” God is not distant during your struggles. He is present in the middle of them.

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

- Start each morning by consciously putting on the armour of God through prayer.
- When temptation comes, stop and identify the lie behind it before reacting.
- Memorize short Bible verses that directly speak to your struggles and repeat them when temptation appears.
- Pray throughout the day, not just during emergencies or failures, but every moment.
- Thank God constantly, even for small blessings, to keep your heart focused on His presence instead of your problems.
- Remove yourself from tempting environments quickly when necessary. Some battles require standing firm, while others require running immediately.
- Protect your mind by limiting negative influences, unhealthy media, and constant worldly noise.
- When shame hits after failure, run toward God immediately instead of hiding from Him.
- Keep reminders of Scripture visible: on your phone, mirror, car dashboard, notebook, or desk.
- Stay spiritually connected through prayer, worship, church, Bible reading, and honest conversations with trusted believers.
- Remember that spiritual battles are often won through daily consistency, not dramatic moments.
- Teach your family to pray together and thank God daily so your home becomes spiritually grounded. Start praying with your spouse before bed. It took me 33 years to start, but it's never too late.

The Battle has already been Won

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- God never intended for us to fight spiritual battles alone.
“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Ephesians 6:10 (KJV)
- The enemy works primarily through deception and lies.
“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11 (KJV)
- Temptation is a spiritual battle, not merely a human struggle.
“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...” Ephesians 6:12 (KJV)
- Truth is the foundation that holds everything together.
“Having your loins girt about with truth...” Ephesians 6:14 (KJV)
- God protects believers from condemnation through Christ’s righteousness.
“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” Romans 8:1 (KJV)
- Faith shields us from fear, doubt, discouragement, and sudden temptation.
“Taking the shield of faith...” Ephesians 6:16 (KJV)
- The Word of God is the believer’s weapon against temptation.
“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17 (KJV)
- Jesus defeated temptation through Scripture, not human strength.
“It is written...” Matthew 4:4 (KJV)
- Prayer keeps us spiritually connected to God’s strength and guidance.
“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...” Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)
- Spiritual readiness must become a daily lifestyle, not an occasional response.
“Put on the whole armour of God...” Ephesians 6:11 (KJV)

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter Reflection

The armor of God is not symbolic decoration; it is spiritual survival. Every day you wake up, you step onto a battlefield, whether you realize it or not. The enemy wants you discouraged, distracted, ashamed, fearful, and spiritually exhausted. But God has not left you defenseless.

He has given you truth when the enemy lies. Faith when fear attacks. Peace when the world feels chaotic. Salvation when shame tries to crush you. His Word when temptation comes looking for weakness.

You were never meant to fight this war alone. God Himself stands with you.

And even on the days when you stumble, His grace does not disappear. The armor is still there. His mercy is still there. His Spirit is still calling you to stand back up and keep walking with Him.

Victory does not come from trying harder. Victory comes from depending more fully on the God who already won the battle.

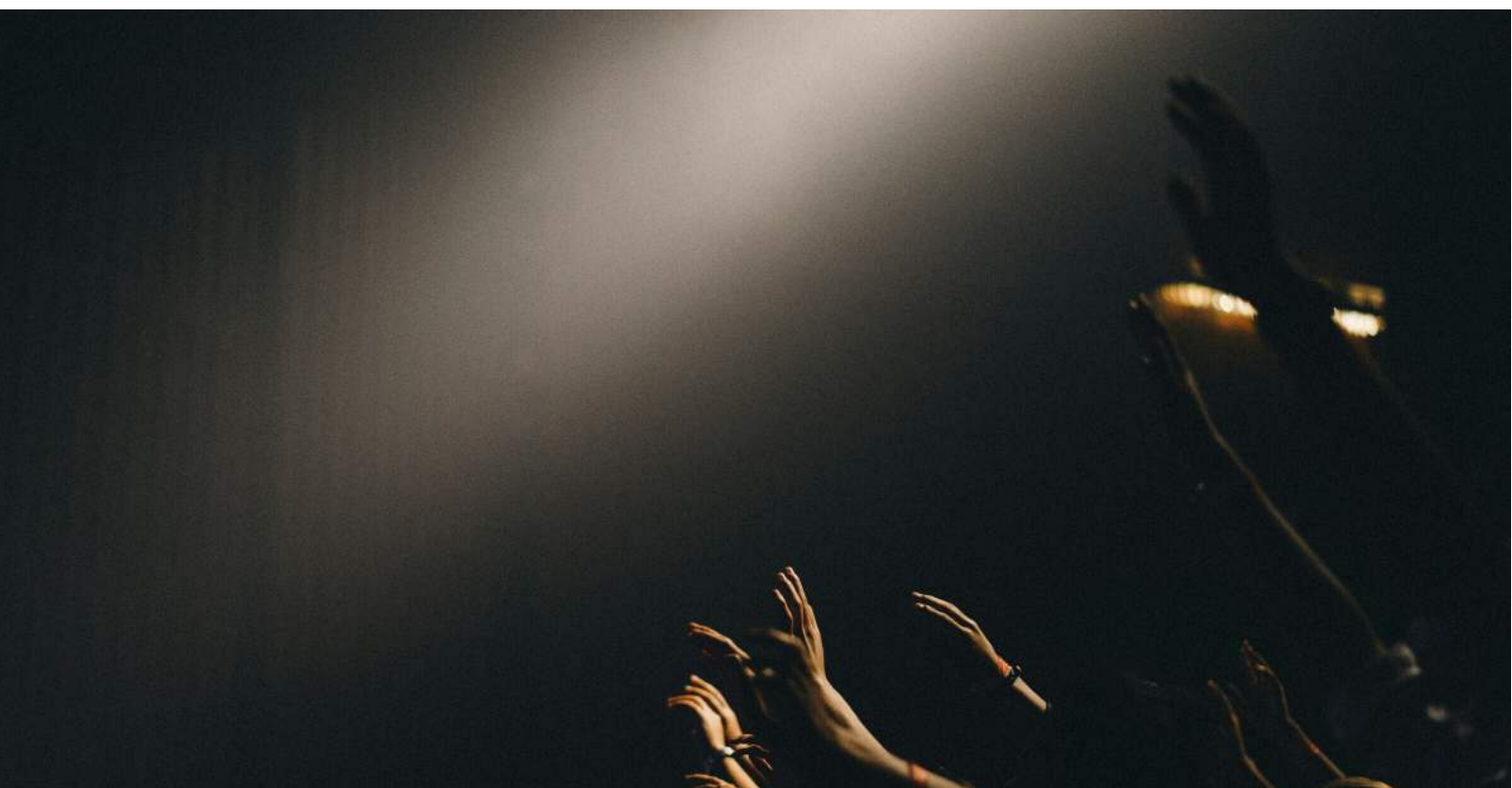
Chapter 9

The Power of Prayer

I can remember praying as a little kid, asking God for everything I thought I wanted and parroting everything I thought I was supposed to say. Standard Catholic prayers that I had memorized and never really understood.

As I got older, I didn't walk away from God because of some big disappointment or letdown. Life just got busy, and little by little, He got pushed to the side. I still believed, I still wanted a real relationship with Him, but if I'm being honest, there were times I felt too guilty to come close; like I had messed up too much. Other times, I convinced myself He had to be disappointed in me, like maybe He didn't even want to hear from me anymore.

Every now and then, I'd try to come back, join a church, bring my family, reset, but it never lasted. I'd lose that fire as fast as I found it. God wasn't first in my life; not even in the top five. Looking at my patterns, I treated Him like someone I called only when I needed help. Sometimes I wondered, if God loved me so much, why didn't He just remove temptation? If He wanted obedience and to be first, it would be easier without all life's seductions.



Boy, was I mistaken. I had it all wrong. My perspective shifted: I realized I was a lazy, want-to-be Christian who never read the Word or understood what a relationship with God meant. I assumed Catholic grammar school, high school, and college fulfilled my Christian duty. Maybe church and charity would lock it in. My only regret is not realizing my mistake 20 years ago. But with Jesus, it's never too late.

As I've pursued a real relationship with Jesus, read His word, and worked on this book, I've felt a closeness to the Spirit unlike anything I've felt before. The journey is real and steady in ways I didn't know were possible. The more I absorb His word, the closer I feel to Him.

I'm just beginning this journey; there's so much more to learn about Jesus. Now, I look forward to His word each day, knowing Him better and spending time with my Father. That doesn't mean I've got it all figured out. I still slip into old habits, putting other things ahead of God without noticing. But now it's different. Now I catch myself. I pause and say, "Hey, put that stock report down," or "Why stress about the future? God's got this."

Sometimes it happens when I reach for my phone first thing in the morning, tempted to scroll through my investment account instead of starting my day with prayer. I've noticed how easy it is to fill quiet moments alone, such as walking, relaxing on the patio, or sitting in traffic with useless distractions like listening to the news or podcasts. Now, I try to turn those same moments into prayer, even if it is just a quick "Thank you, Lord" or a request for patience with my mother-in-law. There are evenings when I want to wind down with television, but I make it a point to set aside time to bring my day to God first. These little choices made day by day, have started to shift my patterns. Prayer is slowly becoming my first response, not my last resort.

Perfection isn't the goal. It's about returning again and again, realizing He always wants me. Through all my faults, Jesus waits for me.

James 5:16 (NIV) says, "....The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.."

Prayer isn't just reciting the same words like a script. I used to do that, and many of us have, I'm sure. Prayer goes beyond routine. It's power, a direct, open line to the Father.

Now, when I pray, it's different. It's not polished; it's real and sometimes messy. I talk to God like He is right there, because He is. That change makes prayer authentic. He's holding my hand, guiding and protecting me. I thank Him for everything: the big, the small, what I see coming, and what I don't yet understand. When I bring my desires to Him, it's not about material things anymore. It's the deeper things, the things that weigh heavy on my heart, the kind only God can move.

To show you what I mean, here are a few of my honest prayers from recent days:

"Lord, I don't know what to do about this fear that keeps following me. Please give me courage when I wake up in the morning and that peace You promise, even if I can't see how it will work out."

"God, I messed up again today. I let stress get the best of me. Forgive me and help me try again tomorrow. Teach me patience."



The Battle has already been Won

"Father, thank You for giving me another day. Thank You for my beautiful family and the moments I almost missed because I was worried about money other things. Help me see the gifts right in front of me."

"Jesus, I feel far from You sometimes. Remind me that You haven't left. Help me want You more than anything else."

These prayers aren't fancy. They are just my real words, just as I am, and that's what makes them powerful.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24 KJV)

Jesus doesn't want a one-way relationship with us. He's not looking for a checklist or a "Santa Claus" kind of connection where we only come to Him with requests. He wants something real, a true, personal relationship with each one of us.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20 KJV)



The Battle has already been Won

That's what this relationship looks like. He's not distant. He's near, waiting, inviting us into something personal and real. In ancient biblical times, sup meant more than sharing a meal; it signified closeness, genuine connection. John addressed the church of Leodicia, which had grown distant from Christ. Jesus told them, "You pushed me out, but I'm still standing here." He still stands outside your door; all you need to do is let Him in.

When you truly put God first, not just in words but daily, prayer stops being routine and becomes your lifeline. This transformation creates genuine connection, real closeness, a direct path to His heart.

Matthew 26:41, as He faced the agony of the cross, Jesus told His disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus taught His disciples right before dying, telling them to pray to avoid temptation. Prayer is key to overcoming temptation, not willpower, not trying harder. Closeness to God brings strength. Prayer may not remove struggle, but gives strength to endure and flee.

Philippians 4:6–7 reminds us, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Prayer builds a wall of peace around your heart and mind, divine protection against anxiety and fear. Sometimes I pray, "Lord, protect me, strengthen me." When I call God during the day, weakness lessens. I don't wait for a fall to call Jesus anymore.

Prayer isn't about rituals or reciting verses. Instead, it's talking to God about your deepest thoughts, letting Him into your heart, asking for strength and guidance, and listening as He fills your soul. When you pray, heaven moves, chains break, and the enemy retreats. The story of Daniel in the lions' den is a powerful example of this. Daniel prayed faithfully, even when it meant risking his life, and God heard him, sending an angel to shut the lions' mouths. His honest, steadfast prayer changed everything and brought deliverance where there was no hope (see Daniel 6:10-23).

1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul says, "Pray without ceasing."

This seemed impossible at first, but now it feels natural. As I've grown closer to God, putting Him first lets your heart and mind rely on a constant connection with your Father. You seek His presence always, wanting to be closer every minute.

When your heart stays open to Him, thoughts become prayers, sighs become worship. Your daily walk grows lighter, and weakness turns to strength. Prayer may not remove the thorn, but it reveals grace for its existence.

"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:8 KJV)

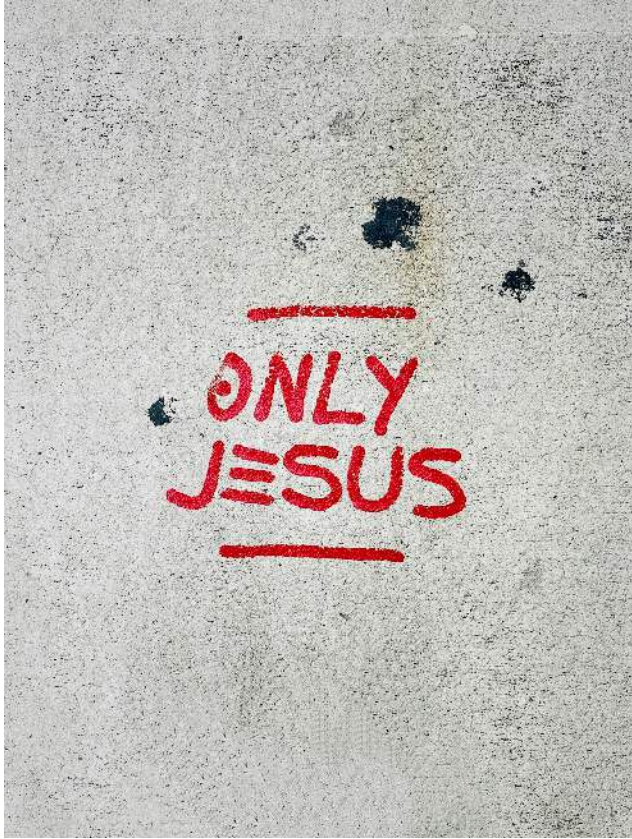
Jesus says, "Ask, seek, knock", not "fix yourself first." He invites you to come as you are, with your faults. Prayer is about persistence, not perfection. Turn to God in weakness, and that's when change begins.

And as you pray, remember this: God does not grow tired of your voice. He does not get impatient with your repeated cries. Every prayer you have ever prayed still echoes in His presence. There will be times when it feels like your prayers bounce off the ceiling, or when you wonder if God hears you at all. Doubt and discouragement are normal; we all wrestle with questions and moments when it seems silent on the other end. But even in those moments, God is listening. He treasures every honest word you bring to Him, and your voice matters to Him, even when you cannot feel it.

Keep praying, not for what you need, but for Him. Prayer isn't just habit, it's living water; our souls depend on it.



The Battle has already been Won



Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on your prayer life honestly. Not the polished version you show other people, but the real one. Is prayer your first response or your last resort? Do you run to God daily, or only when life falls apart? Prayer is not about sounding spiritual or having perfect words. It's about relationship. God is not asking you to clean yourself up before you come to Him. He is asking you to come honestly, consistently, and with an open heart. Prayer is where fear loses power, temptation weakens, anxiety quiets down, and closeness with God begins to grow.



The Battle has already been Won

Barriers to Prayer and Closeness with God

- **Treating prayer like a ritual instead of a relationship.**

Repeating memorized words without opening your heart can make prayer feel empty and distant.

- **Only going to God when life falls apart.**

Many people treat prayer like an emergency hotline instead of daily connection with their Father.

- **Feeling too guilty or ashamed to pray.**

Shame convinces you that God is disappointed in you and doesn't want to hear from you anymore.

- **Believing you need to fix yourself before coming to God.**

Prayer is not for perfect people. God says "come as you are," not "come back when you've cleaned yourself up."

- **Filling every quiet moment with distractions.**

Phones, television, work, stress, social media, and entertainment can slowly drown out your connection with God.

- **Expecting prayer to instantly remove every struggle.**

Prayer often strengthens you through the battle instead of removing the battle itself.

- **Relying on willpower instead of closeness with God.**

Temptation cannot be defeated by trying harder alone. Prayer keeps you connected to the Spirit who gives strength.

- **Losing consistency after emotional spiritual highs.**

Many people return to God passionately for a short time but drift away once emotions fade.

- **Thinking God is distant or tired of hearing from you.**

The enemy wants you to believe your prayers no longer matter, but God never grows weary of your voice.

The Battle has already been Won

The Good News

- **James 5:16 (KJV):** “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
Prayer is powerful. Honest prayers move the heart of God.
- **Revelation 3:20 (KJV):** “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...”
Jesus is not distant; He is pursuing relationship with you right now.
- **Matthew 26:41 (KJV):** “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation...”
Prayer strengthens you before temptation overwhelms you.
- **Philippians 4:6–7 (KJV):** “Be careful for nothing... by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving...”
Prayer builds peace around your anxious heart and mind.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV):** “Pray without ceasing.”
God desires ongoing closeness, not occasional conversations.
- **Matthew 7:8 (KJV):** “For every one that asketh receiveth...”
God invites you to keep asking, seeking, and knocking.
- **Mark 11:24 (KJV):** “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe...”
Prayer teaches you to trust God instead of living in fear and control.
- **Daniel 6:10–23 (KJV):** Daniel prayed faithfully even in danger, and God shut the lions’ mouths.
Prayer brings strength, protection, and deliverance even in impossible situations.

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for Building a Life of Prayer

- Start your mornings with God before reaching for your phone or distractions.
- Talk to God honestly, not formally. Prayer does not have to sound impressive to be powerful.
- Turn small moments throughout the day into prayer, while driving, standing in line, working, or walking.
- Thank God constantly, even for small blessings. Gratitude keeps your heart connected to Him.
- When temptation comes, pray immediately instead of waiting until after you fall.
- Stop trying to hide your struggles from God. Bring Him your fear, anger, shame, confusion, and weakness honestly.
- Use short prayers throughout the day:
“Lord, help me.”
“Jesus, give me strength.”
“Father, give me peace.”
- Keep reading Scripture because prayer and God’s Word strengthen each other.
- Don’t quit praying just because you feel distant from God or your prayers are unanswered. Keep coming back anyway.
- Pray for closeness with God, not just for things you want Him to fix.
- End your day by giving your worries, failures, and victories back to God instead of carrying them into the night.
- If your mind wanders during prayer, don’t condemn yourself. Simply return your focus back to Him.

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Prayer is not about perfection; it is about persistence.
Matthew 7:8 (KJV) shows that God responds to those who continue asking, seeking, and knocking.
- Prayer strengthens us against temptation.
Matthew 26:41 (KJV) reminds us that the flesh is weak, but prayer keeps us spiritually alert.
- God desires relationship, not empty rituals.
Revelation 3:20 (KJV) shows Jesus inviting us into personal closeness with Him.
- Prayer brings peace into anxious situations.
Philippians 4:6–7 (KJV) teaches that prayer guards our hearts and minds.
- God hears honest prayers, even messy ones.
James 5:16 (KJV) reminds us that heartfelt prayer is powerful.
- Constant connection with God changes the heart over time.
1 Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV) teaches us to remain connected to God continually.
- Prayer does not always remove the struggle, but it gives strength to endure it.
Matthew 26:39 (KJV) shows even Jesus praying through suffering instead of avoiding it.
- God never grows tired of hearing from His children.
Luke 18:1 (KJV) teaches that men “ought always to pray, and not to faint.”
- Closeness to God weakens the power of temptation.
Galatians 5:16 (KJV) teaches that walking in the Spirit weakens the flesh.
- Prayer shifts your focus from control to trust.
Proverbs 3:5–6 (KJV) reminds us to trust in the Lord instead of leaning on our own understanding.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter Reflection

Prayer changes more than circumstances; it changes you. The more you talk to God honestly, the more you begin to recognize His presence in every part of your life. Prayer is where weakness meets strength, fear meets peace, shame meets grace, and wandering hearts find their way home again.

God is not asking for perfect words. He wants your real heart. The prayers whispered through tears, spoken in exhaustion, prayed in the middle of failure, or cried out in desperation still matter deeply to Him. Prayer is not about earning closeness with God; it is about realizing He has been waiting for you all along.

Keep praying. Keep returning. Keep opening the door every day.

Because the more you walk with God in prayer, the more you realize you were never fighting alone.

Chapter 10

Stand Still or Run? Christ's Battle Plan for Temptation



At first glance, it can seem like a contradiction. In one place, God tells us to stand, and in another, He tells us to run. But he's not contradicting himself. He's showing us how to respond to different kinds of battles.

When God Says "Stand"

In Epistle to the Ephesians 6:13 (NIV):

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

What this means

Paul is talking about battles that happen in the mind and spirit.

The Battle has already been Won



- Doubt - Am I going to have enough money to pay the bills this month?
- Anxiety – It feels like everything going on in the world today is more than I can handle.
- Fear – Things are going so well, but I have this overwhelming feeling that the hammer is going to drop and something bad is going to happen to my family or me.
- Discouragement – Are we ever going to have a nice house of our own?
- Lies about God – Is He done with me now that I let Him down for the millionth time?
- Accusations and shame – With this addiction, I feel wicked, all alone, and unforgiven.

The Battle has already been Won

You cannot run from these, because they follow you wherever you go. You can't run away from your thoughts. You can't escape lies or discouragement by changing locations. If you are anxious about something in your life, whether it's your job, your finances, or your health, you can't escape it. If you try to bury it or numb it with work, recreational activities, alcohol, or drugs, you're only making it worse.

So, how do you stand firm in these moments?

Start by praying honestly to God about your struggles. Ask Him for strength and peace. Fill your mind with scripture by memorizing verses that remind you of Him and His promises. When anxious thoughts creep in, speak those verses out loud. Set aside time each day to read the Bible and meditate on its truth. If you're overwhelmed, reach out to a trusted mentor or a believing friend who can pray with you and encourage you in the fight. Sometimes simply talking about what you're facing breaks the power of isolation and shame. Build habits like listening to worship music, journaling your thoughts to God, or attending a church group to fill your mind with what is true. These are practical ways to stand, even when the battle feels impossible.

So God says: "Stand!"

"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!" (1 Samuel 12:16 NIV)



Standing means:

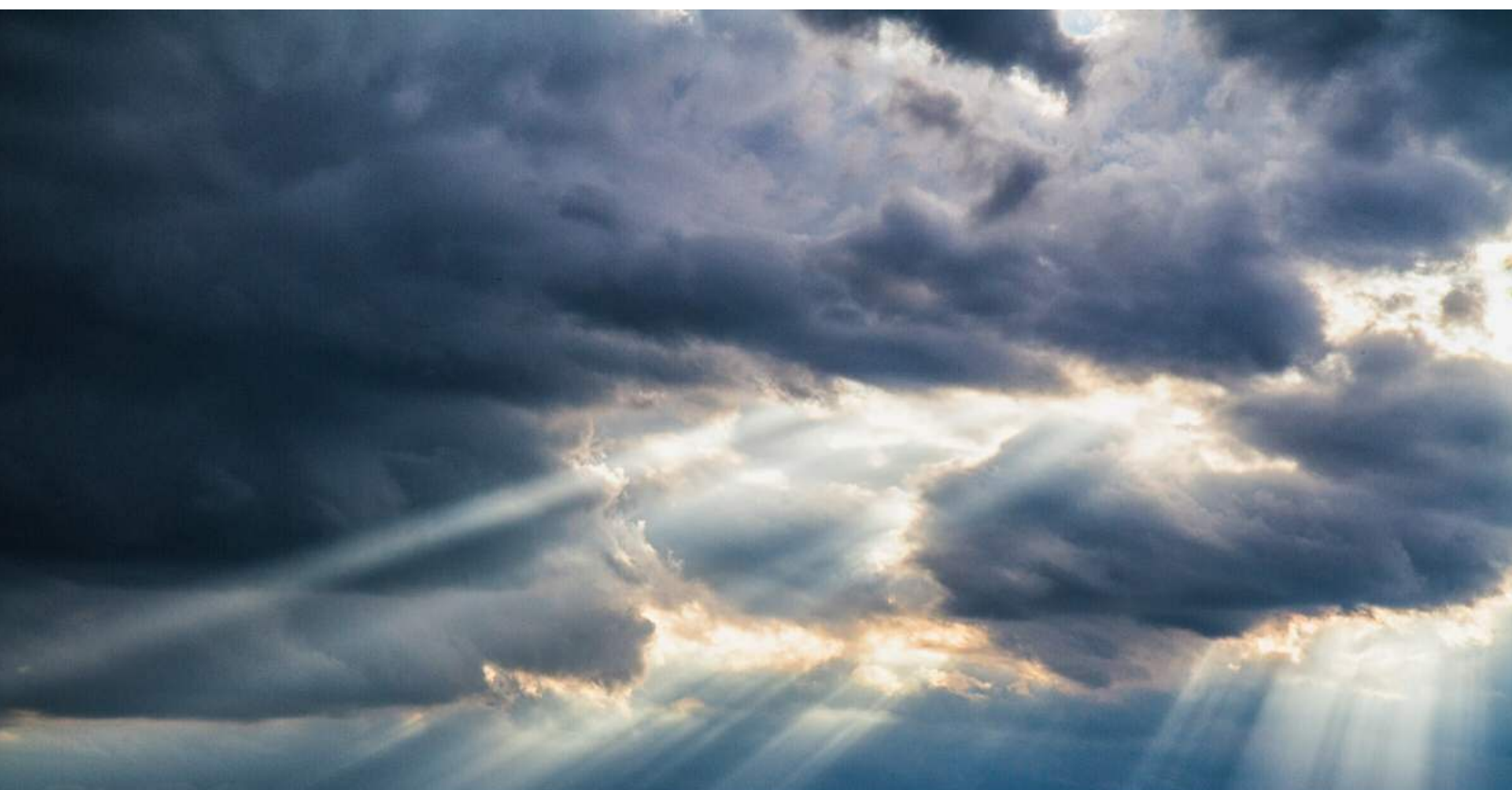
- Holding onto truth when lies come
- Trusting God when you don't feel Him
- Refusing to give in to fear or despair

This is where the armor of God comes in. You stand your ground and let God fight for you.

When to Stand (Internal Battles)

These are the kinds of temptations you can't escape by leaving the room. They come to your mind and heart constantly.

Anxiety / Fear about the future / Self-dislike



-
- “Why does it feel like everything in my life is going wrong?”
 - “I can never catch a break at work. I feel like I’m never going to move up.”
 - “Now that my kids are grown up and out of the house, I worry about them even more with all the bad things happening in this world.”
 - “It seems like you can’t say anything about Jesus without being attacked.”
 - “Everyone at school hates me, I feel like ending this all.”
 - “I’m overweight, and I feel ugly. Why can’t I look like that girl or guy on social media?”
 - “I can’t live with this addiction anymore.”

You can’t run from that.

This is where you stand.

You put on the armor of God and say:

“God is still in control, and His salvation is mine.”

Exodus 14:13 (KJV) states: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever."

Moses is telling the Israelites to stand still and see the salvation God has promised. This salvation comes with God’s commitment to us that we will see evil no more. All of our fears and all of our worries will be defeated. Looking to salvation may seem like an eternity, but in Heaven, it is only a brief moment.

The Battle has already been Won

John 15:19 (KJV)

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world... therefore the world hateth you.”

Jesus is saying we're living in a world that's influenced by the enemy, but we're not meant to belong to it or take our identity from it. If we truly follow Him, we're not going to fit in, and that's the point. So why do we fight so hard to blend in and do what everyone else is doing? Our identity doesn't come from culture; it comes from God.

The “world” here means:

- desire-driven living
- Chasing what looks good, feels good, or elevates the self.
- pride, status, control

Pride, Envy, and Running someone else's Race

These things compete directly with a life led by the Spirit.

You see someone else succeeding, and their life looks better, easier, more blessed.

Or you actually look down on certain people because they don't have what you have.

The Battle has already been Won

The thoughts creeps in:

- "He was just in the right place, at the right time."
- "I could have had that promotion if the boss wasn't out to get me."
- "What did they do to deserve that?"
- "He really let himself go, I don't think he knows how big he got."
- "I don't believe for a second he is making that much money."

You don't run from that moment; you stand in truth.

You remind yourself that God's plan for you is not based on someone else's life. You're not running your friend's race. You and your cousin have different assignments from God. It's time to stop worrying about keeping up with the Joneses and start calling on God to help you keep up with the Spirit.



The Battle has already been Won

Pride is one of Satan's best deceptions. It's disguised as self-confidence, success, achievement, and even victory. From a young age, we're taught that these are the qualities of great people. Most of us spend our whole lives striving for them, but we don't always realize that when they start to take over, we can forget who brought us to that place, who carried us to that victory.

You might think you give God the credit for your accomplishments. And maybe you do at times. But if we're being honest, we've all had moments where we beat our chests a little, where we act a little conceited or pretentious without even realizing it.

Take a look at your last few social media posts. Just be real with yourself. Were those pictures of your new car or your European vacation really just for conversation? Or was there a part of you that wanted people to see how good you're doing?

And did Jesus get any credit for any of it?

Don't feel attacked,

I'm not above this either. I'm just as guilty. That's the point, we all are.



The Battle has already been Won

We also discussed jealousy and envy in Chapter 2. This sin can be hard to overcome because sometimes you cannot simply walk away from the person you envy. It might be a close relative or a coworker; someone you are around often. Although you try, you can't seem to escape that feeling of envy when they show off their new truck or their vacation photos.

This is when you have to understand that God's plan for your life is not the same as theirs. He is not writing the same story for you.

God wants you to walk with Him and be faithful with what He gave you.

Someone hurt you. Maybe deeply.

The thoughts replay over and over:

- What they said
- What they did
- What you wish you could say back

You can't outrun those thoughts.

It is hard to forgive someone who hurt you so badly. I think about men or women who were abused as children, whether physically, emotionally, or sexually. This must be so tough to deal with. I couldn't even imagine how they feel, growing up with that kind of weight around their neck. If this is you, you're probably living every day trying to forget about what happened, but it never seems to go away.

Please know you do not have to carry this on your own. God can bring healing in powerful ways, but He often works through others too. In times of deep hurt or trauma, it is important to consider reaching out for help. Trusted people such as caring friends, supportive pastors, or small support groups in your church community can walk alongside you. Seeking support is a part of healing, not a sign of weakness. This is the time to call on God to help you see His salvation. Knowing that someday you will have no memory of that evil.

God asks you to forgive so that your heart may be healed, but to forgive doesn't mean you have to renew a relationship or break bread with your transgressor. It means allowing forgiveness to wash away the pain you feel. Standing still and letting God fight your battle. You stand and fight with truth and forgiveness, even when it feels impossible.

Forgiving someone who hurt you deeply is one of the hardest things a person can ever face. That kind of torment isn't something you just move on from. It is probably even more difficult when that person has not changed. I'm not speaking from experience, but that pain must stay with you daily. I'm sure it follows you into adulthood and becomes a weight that feels impossible to carry.

If this is your story, you might wake up every day trying to push those memories away, hoping they'll finally disappear. But they keep coming back, haunting you, torturing you until you are drained physically and emotionally. That is the enemy rearing his ugly head again, beating on you with guilt, shame, and anger.

He's up to his usual tricks, making you feel like somehow it was all your fault. Convincing you that God left you alone and didn't care about what you were going through. That can make you feel punished, believing life is unfair, causing so many weaknesses to surface, making temptation so much harder to avoid.

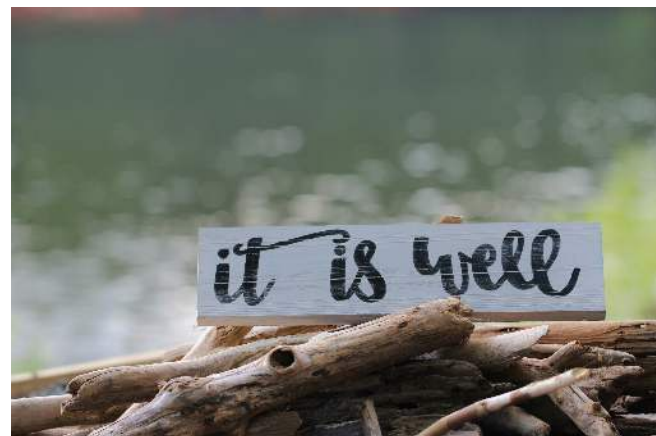
This is where calling on God becomes so important. Asking Him to help you see His salvation in your life, even in the middle of that pain. God sees everything that happened to you. Nothing was hidden from Him, and none of it was okay. Ask Him to heal what no one else can heal. One day, God promises a place where the pain, the fear, and even the memories of that evil will no longer have power over you.

God asks us to forgive, not because what happened was okay, and not because the person who hurt you deserves forgiveness. He asks you to forgive because He wants to heal your heart and free you from the hold that pain has on you. Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to rebuild a relationship. It doesn't mean you have to sit at the same table with the person who hurt you. It means you are allowing God to take the pain that has been living inside of you for so long. This is the time to stand still before God and let Him fight the battle for you. God sees every tear, every memory, and every wound. Stand in truth and forgiveness, even when it feels impossible. Trust that God is working in ways you cannot yet see.

You're angry at God

Job 1:21 (KJV)

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."



The Battle has already been Won



If you are mad at God and you blame Him for the loss or pain you've experienced at some point in your life, you're not alone. There comes a moment in life, like with Job, where it feels like everything is falling apart, where you've lost something or someone you love. The first question that arises is, "Why them?" or "Why is God doing this to me? Am I being punished?"

Job lost everything; his money, his children, his health, everything he cared about. And yet, even in the middle of that kind of pain, he still chose to trust in the Lord.

When you really look at the story of the Book of Job, you see something deeper. God wasn't punishing Job for something he did wrong. If that were the case, then every one of us would be facing judgment every single day, because we all fall short. That's not how God works.

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:1-3 (KJV)

The Battle has already been Won



In Jesus' day, many people assumed that suffering, sickness, or disability was always the direct result of a person's sin or their parents' sin. The disciples asked who was responsible for the man's blindness. Jesus corrected them. He did not say the man was sinless. Scripture teaches that all people are sinners (Romans 3:23). Jesus was saying that the man's blindness was not a punishment for a specific sin he or his parents committed.

The truth is, good things happen to people who don't deserve them, and hard, painful things happen to people who are trying to do right. That's the reality of the world we live in. It's a fallen world, shaped by free will, the same choice that began when Eve ate the fruit, and Adam followed. When Adam took that bite, in a way, we all did.

And now we live in a world where pain exists, but so does God's mercy.

There will come a day of judgment, but it is by grace, and grace alone, that we are saved.

Shame / Condemnation

After you fall, the voice comes in:

- "Why do I even bother trying to do the right thing?"
- "I'll never quit this bad habit."
- "This is who I am, God abandoned me a long time ago."
- "God is not going to forgive me anymore."

The Battle has already been Won

This is a direct spiritual attack.
You stand and remind yourself:
“There is no condemnation in Christ.”

If you feel distant from God after a failure, here are some simple steps you can follow to return to Him:

1. Be honest with Him about what happened. Just start by talking to God, even if it feels awkward. Tell Him exactly how you feel and where you fell short.
2. Confess and ask for forgiveness. Say out loud what you did and ask God to forgive you. He promises to cleanse us when we confess our sins.
3. Pray specifically for help to change. Ask for strength, guidance, and a new heart to avoid the same mistake.
4. Reconnect through Scripture. Read a few verses that remind you of God's love and mercy, like 1 John 1:9 or Psalm 51.



The Battle has already been Won

5. Reach out to a trusted friend or mentor if you need support. Sometimes sharing your struggle breaks the hold of shame.

Remember, no matter how many times you stumble, God always welcomes you back and gives you hope for a fresh start.

Just remember not to fall into the enemy's trap when he tries to convince you that it's no big deal, you can keep sinning. Grace isn't a free pass so that we can sin because we know God will forgive us. God's grace is not a get-out-of-jail-free card to live however we want. It's not meant to enable sin; it's meant to free us from it.

When God Says "Run."

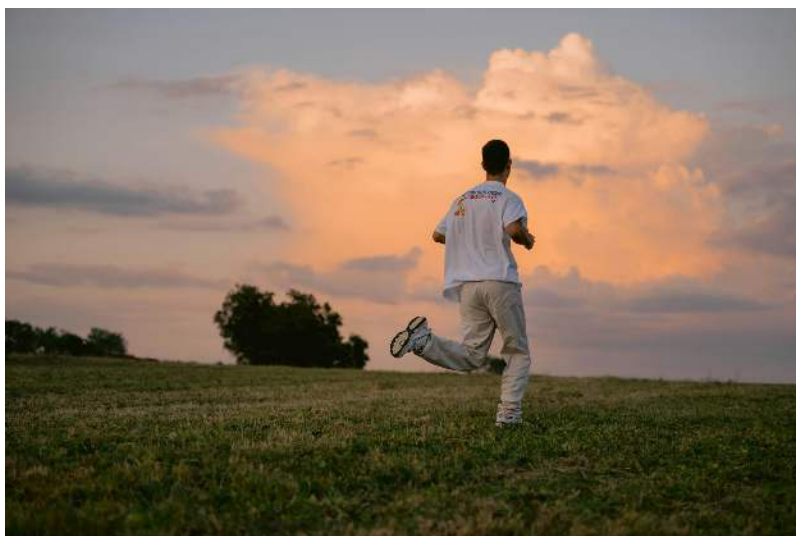
Now look at First Epistle to the Corinthians 6:18 (KJV):

"Flee fornication..."

And Second Epistle to Timothy 2:22 (KJV):

"Flee also youthful lusts..."

What this means



When it comes to lust and fleshly temptation, God does not say stand and fight. He says run.

Look at Book of Genesis 39:12 (ESV) when Joseph is tempted:

“...she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.”

When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar’s wife, he didn’t stick around to see if he could fight off her advances. He ran.

Why?

Because these temptations are:

- Physical
- Sensory
- Emotionally charged
- Once they take hold, they are extremely hard to stop.
- **Staying = failing**



Lust of the flesh works differently than other temptations. It doesn't just attack your thoughts; it grabs your body, your imagination, and your desires all at once.

The longer you stay in it, the weaker you become.

When to Run (Types of Flesh Battles)

These are the moments when staying even a moment longer makes you weaker.

◆ Alcohol / Substance Temptation

You've had a long day. You're stressed. You're tired.

You think:

- "Just one drink."
- "I deserve this."

You know where it leads.

This is not the time to stand there and debate it.

You run:

- Leave the environment, walk out of the bar, or close the liquor cabinet.
- Don't pour the drink. Make a mocktail instead.
- Remove access immediately. Get away from the temptation.

Because once you start negotiating, the battle is already slipping.

The Battle has already been Won

I know this is not easy. While I am writing this, I am thinking about having a martini. I justify it because I'll only have one, and besides, I only drank one day this week so far. This is the enemy poking at me, twisting truth, and trying to convince me that it's ok. Remember, the bible shows that it is ok to enjoy a drink, not to be shackled by it.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (KJV)

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart..."

It's not okay if alcohol controls you, if you can't go a day or even a weekend without it, something has to change. I'm not here to lecture anyone. I enjoy a bourbon or a martini myself a few times a week, and sometimes I really look forward to it after a stressful shift. But let's just be real for a second.

Ephesians 5:18 (KJV)

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

If you're falling asleep on the couch every time you drink, if your attitude changes for the worse while you're having a cocktail, if you're mistreating your family or friends when alcohol is involved, something isn't right.

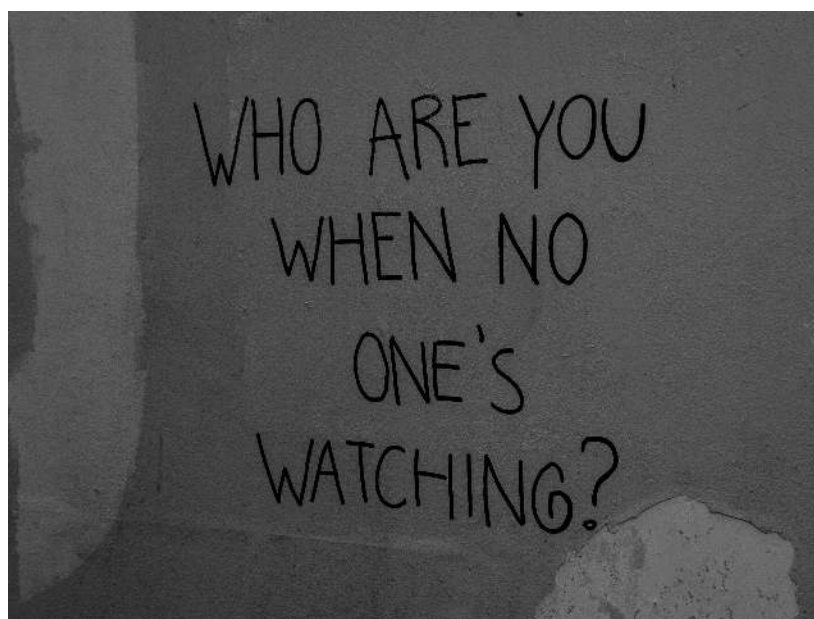
Be honest with yourself.

If alcohol or any other substance has power over you, then something else is leading you, and it's not the Spirit. That's when you need to step back and recognize what's really going on.

This isn't just mental; it becomes physical, too. Addiction takes hold of your body, not just your thoughts. In my line of work, I've seen a lot of good-hearted people lose control over something they once thought they could manage. It didn't start out that way. In the beginning, it always feels harmless. The enemy convinces you, "You've got this. You're in control."

But that's the lie.

And it's the same lie every time.



The Battle has already been Won

If you're being controlled by alcohol or an illegal substance, there is a way out. I truly believe the Spirit can lead you out of that place, but I also know this: sometimes you need help beyond just running from the temptation and prayer. There's no shame in that. Getting needed medical support and caring Christian guidance is not a weakness; that's part of the healing. Take a specific next step: consider reaching out to your pastor, a Christian counselor, or a trusted support group in your community or church. You are not alone in this, and seeking support is a sign of wisdom and courage, not failure. When you look for someone to guide you, whether professional or through a church, make sure that Jesus is at the center of the solution. If He isn't, the problem will remain. Let others walk with you on this journey toward freedom.

◆ **Lust / Sexual Temptation**

It starts small:

- a glance
- a thought
- something on your phone

This is where people try to "handle it"... and that's where they lose.



The Battle has already been Won

You don't stand there and fight lust.

You run:

- Shut it off
- look away
- Get out of the situation immediately

Because lust grows fast once it's fed.

♦ **Situations You Know Trigger You**

Maybe it's:

- certain places
- certain people
- certain habits late at night

You already know the pattern.

I have some close people in my life who always seem to get under my skin when they fact-check me. It's not like they have any real reason to be jealous or envious of my life, but somehow it still feels like they're looking for ways to put me down or discredit me whenever they can. After a while, that kind of thing wears on you.

I've gotten to a place where I realize I don't care what they think or believe about me. I don't have to keep putting myself in situations that lead to frustration and strife. Sometimes the healthiest thing you can do is step back and let Jesus fight your battles. You only need the approval of your Heavenly Father. Worrying about what people think of you is life on a hamster wheel.

You might have someone like that in your life too, someone who stirs things up, questions everything you say, or leaves you feeling drained after every interaction. And while God absolutely calls us to forgive, that doesn't mean He's asking us to continually subject ourselves to behavior that tears us down. Forgiveness doesn't always mean closeness; sometimes it just means letting go and choosing peace.

Wisdom says: don't stand there and test your strength. You remove yourself before it even starts.

A lot of people lose the battle because they mix these up.

- They try to stand and fight lust... when they should run.
- They try to run from fear and doubt... when they should stand.

That's where the struggle gets harder than it needs to be.

Bringing It Together

God is not giving you two different commands; He's giving you the right strategy for each battle.

- When the attack is in your mind, you stand in His armor.
- When the temptation is in your flesh, you run without hesitation.

Both require humility.

We all fight these battles every single day, so it is so important to understand when to run and when to stand still. God directs us in battle when we pray and focus on Him first. All the parts come together when we learn to depend on Jesus for everything.

We were never meant to do life alone. That's why God wants us to be part of a community as well. Surround yourself with trusted Christian friends, mentors, or a small group who can encourage you and keep you accountable. Having others to pray for you, share wisdom, and point you back to truth makes a powerful difference when the struggle feels overwhelming.

The Honest Truth

A lot of people feel stuck because they're trying to fight their own way.

- Trying to stand in moments when they should run.
- Trying to run from things they actually need to face with God
- Trying to fight battles in their own strength

Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

- **Believing you are strong enough to handle temptation alone**

Pride convinces people they can stay close to temptation without falling. But overconfidence often leads directly into compromise.

- **Running from internal battles instead of facing them with God**

Anxiety, shame, fear, bitterness, and condemnation cannot be escaped through distractions, addictions, or avoiding reality. These battles must be faced spiritually.

- **Staying too long in tempting environments**

Lust, addiction, drunkenness, and unhealthy relationships grow stronger the longer they are entertained. Delayed obedience weakens resistance.

- **Allowing shame to keep you away from God after failure**

Many people fall into isolation after sinning because they feel unworthy to pray or seek God again. Shame becomes another trap that keeps them stuck.

- **Believing forgiveness means allowing continued harm**

Some people think forgiving someone means they must continue allowing toxic or abusive behavior into their life

- **Ignoring triggers and repeating unhealthy patterns**

People often know the places, situations, habits, or relationships that weaken them spiritually, yet continue returning to them expecting different results.

- **Listening to lies instead of standing on truth**

The enemy constantly whispers:

“You’ll never change.”

“God is tired of you.”

“One more time won’t matter.”

“You can handle this.”

Those lies keep people trapped in cycles of temptation and discouragement.

- **Trying to fight every battle the same way**

Many people lose because they do not recognize the difference between spiritual battles and fleshly temptations. Some situations require standing firm in faith, while others require immediate escape.

The enemy wants confusion because confusion creates exhaustion, failure, and shame. But God gives clarity. He teaches us when to stand in truth and when to flee from danger. Spiritual maturity comes from learning the difference.

There are battles of the mind and spirit where God says stand firm in His armor. These are the moments where fear, shame, doubt, insecurity, anger, envy, bitterness, and condemnation try to overwhelm you. You cannot escape these struggles simply by changing locations because they follow you internally. But there are also fleshly temptations where God says run immediately. Lust, addiction, drunkenness, toxic environments, and situations that stir your flesh are not battles to casually entertain. Wisdom sometimes looks like walking away before the temptation grows stronger.

The Good News

- **Ephesians 6:13 (KJV): “Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day...”**

God has already provided spiritual armor for the battles attacking your mind and heart.

- **1 Corinthians 6:18 (KJV): “Flee fornication...”**

God gives clear instruction for fleshly temptation: do not entertain it; run from it.

- **2 Timothy 2:22 (KJV): “Flee also youthful lusts...”**

Wisdom is not proving your strength around temptation. Wisdom is removing yourself before temptation takes hold.

- **Exodus 14:13 (KJV): “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD...”**

God fights battles that feel impossible when we trust Him and stand firm in faith.

- **Romans 8:1 (KJV): “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”**

Failure does not remove God’s grace from your life. You can always return to Him.

- **John 15:19 (KJV): “Because ye are not of the world...”**

As followers of Christ, our identity does not come from the world’s approval, success, or standards.

- **James 4:7 (KJV): “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”**

Spiritual resistance becomes possible when we stay submitted to God.

- **Psalms 34:18 (KJV): “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”**

God stays close to people who are hurting, struggling, and overwhelmed.

The Battle has already been Won

- **1 John 1:9 (KJV): “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us...”**

God welcomes repentance and restoration instead of rejection.

- **Galatians 5:16 (KJV): “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”**

The closer you walk with God, the weaker temptation begins to lose its grip.

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

- Learn to recognize whether the battle is spiritual or fleshly before responding.
- When fear, shame, anxiety, or discouragement attack your mind, stand firm in prayer and Scripture instead of running into distractions.
- When temptation attacks your flesh, remove yourself immediately instead of negotiating with it.
- Be honest about your weaknesses instead of pretending you are stronger than you are.
- Avoid environments, habits, websites, conversations, or relationships that consistently pull you away from God.
- Start building daily habits that strengthen your spirit: prayer, worship, Scripture reading, gratitude, and quiet time with God.
- Reach out to trusted Christian friends, mentors, counselors, or support groups when the battle feels overwhelming.
- Stop isolating yourself after failure. Run back to God quickly instead of hiding in shame.
- Learn your triggers and make practical changes before temptation grows stronger.
- Practice forgiveness, but also use wisdom and healthy boundaries in relationships.
- Fill your mind with truth before the enemy fills it with lies.
- Remember:
standing and running both require humility.
Both are acts of obedience.
Both are part of spiritual warfare.

The Battle has already been Won

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Some battles require standing firm in faith and truth.
(Ephesians 6:13 KJV)
- Some temptations require immediate escape.
(1 Corinthians 6:18 KJV)
- Pride makes temptation more dangerous because it overestimates personal strength.
(Proverbs 16:18 KJV)
- Shame and condemnation are spiritual attacks designed to pull you away from God.
(Romans 8:1 KJV)
- Forgiveness heals the heart, but wisdom still requires boundaries.
(Matthew 10:16 KJV)
- God does not abandon people in moments of fear, trauma, or weakness.
(Psalm 34:18 KJV)
- The world constantly pressures believers to seek identity through pride, comparison, status, and self-gratification.
(John 15:19 KJV)
- Temptation grows stronger when entertained and weaker when confronted early.
(James 1:14–15 KJV)
- Isolation strengthens temptation, while honesty and accountability weaken it.
(Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 KJV)
- Victory becomes possible when believers depend on God instead of themselves.
(Galatians 5:16 KJV)

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter Reflection

Every day we face battles both inside and outside ourselves. Some attacks come through fear, shame, anxiety, bitterness, and condemnation. Others come through lust, addiction, unhealthy environments, or situations that awaken the flesh. God does not leave us confused about how to respond. He teaches us when to stand firm in His armor and when to run without hesitation.

The enemy wants you trapped between pride and shame. Pride tells you that you are strong enough to handle temptation alone. Shame tells you that after you fail, God no longer wants you. Both are lies.

God already knows every weakness you carry. He sees every battle, every scar, every addiction, every fear, and every temptation. Yet He still calls you closer to Him, not farther away.

Some victories will come through standing firm when your mind is under attack. Others will come through walking away before temptation gains ground. But all victory begins the same way: depending on Jesus instead of yourself.

The closer you stay to God, the clearer the battle becomes. You begin recognizing the enemy's traps earlier. You begin responding with wisdom instead of impulse. You begin learning that real strength is not pretending temptation does not exist; it is learning to obey God quickly when it does.

Even when you stumble, His grace still calls you back home.

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter 11

Victory Over Temptation Belongs to Christ

It took me more than fifty years to finally understand that I was never fighting these battles alone. I carried guilt and shame for decades, thinking God was punishing me. Now I see He was shaping me, refining me, and strengthening me for His purpose.

There were moments when my thorns cut so deep that I questioned everything. What kind of child of God am I? How can I say I love Jesus and still fall into the same sin? And yet I kept trying to beat it the same way every time. I leaned on self-control and willpower, telling myself I would do better next time temptation came. But it was a battle I could not win that way. It was exhausting and empty.

I blamed myself. I blamed my circumstances. I looked everywhere for the answer except where it actually was. Nothing changed until I finally surrendered it all to God. The guilt, the shame, the weakness, the parts of me I did not want anyone to see. I had to lay it all at His feet.

That is when things started to change. I realized the victory was never mine to win. It was never about trying harder. The victory already belonged to Christ. He won it on the cross, and all I needed to do was stop fighting in my own strength and start trusting in His.



The Battle has already been Won



1 Corinthians 15:57 declares, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Victory does not mean you will never be tempted again. It does not mean you will never fall. Victory through Christ means sin no longer has authority over you, and its power is broken. You begin to live differently. You fight differently. You stay close to God and seek to live in His presence every day.

Staying close to God is not something that happens by accident. It grows in the small, intentional habits you build into your daily life. Set aside time each morning or evening for prayer, asking God for strength and guidance. Make it a habit to read a passage of scripture, even if it is just a few verses, to fill your mind with His truth. Find at least one person you can be honest with about your struggles, a friend, mentor, or accountability partner to support and pray with you. Write down your prayers or what God is teaching you in a journal. Begin and end your day inviting God into each decision and moment. When you build these practices into your routine, you create space for God to work in your heart daily, making His presence felt in the middle of every battle.



The Battle has already been Won



When temptation starts to whisper, you do not entertain it. You recognize it for what it is, and you prepare for battle right away. Like a soldier hearing the call, you put on your armor and stand ready. You are not looking for ways to justify sin anymore. You are asking God for the strength to either run from it or stand firm in it, whatever the moment requires.

When you belong to Christ, you are not trying to break free from chains anymore. The chains have already been broken. You do not live in fear of being bound again. You stand in the truth that you are His, and the work has already been finished.

There are still days that feel heavier than others. Some battles press harder. But even in those moments, a peace settles in and changes your desire. It makes you not want to sin. The thorn is still there, but His voice is stronger, reminding you that His grace is enough.

I have come to understand something I did not see before. Without those thorns, I would not seek God the way I do now. If the struggle disappeared, I might drift into pride and only turn to Him when I needed something. Those thorns keep me close. What once felt like a burden has become a gift, because it continually draws me back to my heavenly Father.

Sin says, "You'll never change."

Grace says, "You're already made new."

The enemy says, "You've lost."

Jesus says, "It is finished."

The Battle has already been Won



If you are new to Christ or have been walking with Him for years, the real work begins now. This is the moment to truly commit your life to Him and put Him first in everything. Maybe you have already been baptized. Maybe you have said the words and made the decision. But if He is not first in your life above everything else, it is worth asking yourself where your commitment really stands. True commitment shows up in the choices you make when no one is watching, seeking Him in prayer, letting your priorities reflect His values, staying honest and humble, being quick to forgive, and trusting Him with your future. Putting Christ first means you build your life around Him rather than fitting Him in around everything else. You make time for His Word, let His love shape how you treat others, and allow Him to guide your decisions each day. These are the signs that He is truly at the center of your life.

The Battle has already been Won

When temptation and hardship come, it is easy to ask, “Why me?” I have asked that question more times than I can count. But a better question is, “Lord, what are You teaching me through this?” The lessons that come through the thorns are not easy, but they are priceless. They draw you closer to Jesus in a way nothing else can. Whatever thorn keeps pressing on you, whatever sin you are wrestling with right now, take comfort in this truth. The victory has already been won.

If you are in the middle of a storm, hold on. Do not let go. The same God who allowed the storm is the one who will calm it in His time. The fire may feel intense, but it will not consume you. It is refining you, shaping you, preparing you for what is ahead.

You are being strengthened. You are being formed into the likeness of Christ, who endured more than we can even begin to understand. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” Even Jesus endured suffering, not because it was easy, but because He knew what it would accomplish.

Your endurance has purpose, too. One day, you will look back and see that the very thing that tried to break you became the tool God used to build you. It brought you closer to Him in ways you never expected.



So keep going. Keep standing when it feels hard. Keep running when you feel weak. Keep trusting when you cannot see the outcome. Keep believing, not because the struggle is gone, but because His promise is greater. Temptation will never fully disappear this side of heaven. But neither will grace. He will carry us all the way through in victory over temptation.

Reflection and Application

Take a moment to reflect on what you just read. So many of us spend years trying to fight spiritual battles with our own strength. We promise ourselves we'll do better, try harder, and be stronger next time, only to end up exhausted and discouraged. But this chapter reminds us of something life-changing: the victory was never ours to earn. Jesus already won it on the cross. Our role is not to carry the weight of victory ourselves, but to stay close to the One who already overcame sin, shame, and death for us.



Barriers to Overcoming Temptation

- **Believing victory depends on your own strength**

One of the biggest barriers is thinking you can defeat sin through discipline and willpower alone. The harder you try in your own strength, the more exhausted and defeated you become.

- **Carrying guilt and shame instead of surrendering them to God**

Shame keeps people stuck. It convinces you that because you still struggle, God must be disappointed in you. Instead of running toward Him, you hide from Him.

- **Thinking repeated failure means you are defeated**

Falling into the same struggle can make you believe nothing will ever change. The enemy wants you to mistake struggle for defeat.

- **Keeping God as part of your life instead of the center of it**

Many people want Jesus as Savior but still build their lives around money, comfort, success, entertainment, or control. Spiritual victory becomes difficult when Christ is not truly first.

- **Forgetting that spiritual battles require spiritual preparation**

Temptation often catches people unprepared. Without prayer, Scripture, and daily dependence on God, the flesh becomes louder than the Spirit.

The Battle has already been Won

- **Misunderstanding suffering and thorns**

Sometimes the very struggle you hate is the thing God is using to keep you close to Him. If every weakness disappeared instantly, pride and self-reliance could take over.

- **Listening to the enemy's voice instead of God's truth**

The enemy says:

"You'll never change."

"You've already failed."

"God is tired of you."

But those lies directly oppose what Christ says about you.

The Good News

- **1 Corinthians 15:57 (KJV): “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Victory is not something you earn through perfection. It is a gift given through Jesus Christ.

- **2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV): “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”**

Your weakness does not disqualify you from God’s love. It becomes the place where His strength shines the brightest.

- **Romans 8:1 (KJV): “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”**

Even in your struggles, you are not condemned. Grace still covers you.

- **John 19:30 (KJV): “It is finished.”**

Jesus already finished the work on the cross. The battle for your soul has already been won.

- **Hebrews 12:2 (KJV): “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...”**

Jesus is not only the One who saves you; He is the One who carries you all the way through.

- **Isaiah 43:2 (KJV): “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee...”**

God does not abandon you in the storm. He walks through it with you.

- **Philippians 1:6 (KJV): “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it...”**

God is not finished with you yet. Your struggle is not the end of your story.

The Battle has already been Won

Practical Suggestions for the Battle

- Stop trying to carry the battle alone. Surrender your struggles honestly to God instead of pretending you are strong enough without Him.
- Build daily habits that keep you close to Christ: Prayer, Scripture reading, worship, gratitude, and quiet time with God.
- Start your mornings by inviting God into the day before distractions take over.
- Recognize temptation early and prepare for battle immediately instead of entertaining the thought.
- When you fall, run back to God quickly instead of isolating yourself in shame.
- Find at least one trusted person you can speak honestly with about your struggles.
- Write down prayers, lessons, victories, and moments where God carried you through temptation.
- Replace self-condemnation with Scripture. Speak God's truth louder than the enemy's lies.
- Remember that spiritual growth happens slowly. Victory is often built through small daily obedience, not instant transformation.
- Thank God even during difficult seasons. Sometimes the thorn you hate most is the very thing keeping you dependent on Him.
- Keep reminding yourself:
The goal is not perfection overnight.
The goal is walking closely with Jesus every single day.

The Battle has already been Won

Lessons Learned from Scripture

- Victory belongs to Christ, not human effort.

(1 Corinthians 15:57 KJV)

- God's strength shows up most powerfully in weakness.

(2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

- Conviction draws you toward God, while condemnation pushes you away from Him.

(Romans 8:1 KJV)

- Jesus already finished the work needed for salvation and freedom.

(John 19:30 KJV)

- Temptation may still exist, but sin no longer owns those who belong to Christ.

(Romans 6:14 KJV)

- Spiritual endurance produces growth, maturity, and deeper dependence on God.

(James 1:2–4 KJV)

- Suffering and thorns can become tools God uses to shape your heart and keep you close to Him.

(2 Corinthians 12:7–10 KJV)

- God never abandons His children in the middle of storms and trials.

(Isaiah 43:2 KJV)

- True commitment to Christ is revealed through daily choices, not just words.

(Luke 9:23 KJV)

- Grace does not run out when you stumble repeatedly.

(Lamentations 3:22–23 KJV)

The Battle has already been Won

Chapter Reflection

The victory over temptation was never meant to rest on your shoulders alone. Jesus already carried that burden to the cross. The enemy wants you exhausted, ashamed, and convinced you will never change, but Christ keeps reminding you that the work has already been finished.

Your struggle does not mean God has abandoned you. Your weakness does not mean you are failing beyond repair. Sometimes the very thorn you begged God to remove becomes the thing that keeps pulling you closer to Him.

Every time you run back to God instead of away from Him, you are walking in victory. Every prayer whispered in weakness, every temptation resisted, every moment you choose to trust Him instead of yourself, God is shaping you into something stronger than you realize.

One day you will look back and understand that the battle was never about becoming strong enough. It was about learning to depend completely on Christ. The chains break when you stop fighting for victory alone and start walking beside the One who already won it for you.

Chapter 12

Sword of the Spirit: Scripture for the Front Lines

1. Fighting Overwhelming Temptation

First Epistle to the Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able...”

How to use it:

When temptation feels too strong, and you think, “I can’t resist this,” this verse reminds you that’s a lie.

God has already made a way out. You’re not trapped. You’re not powerless.

Example:

You’ve had a long day. You’re stressed, tired, maybe frustrated. That thought comes in: “Just have one drink. It’ll take the edge off.” or “They should win tonight, maybe I’ll place one bet.”

You already know where that “one” can lead. But in that moment, it feels justified. It feels small.

That’s when you use the sword.

You stop and say:

“God is faithful. This temptation is not bigger than me. There is a way out.”

What this does:

It breaks the lie that says:

The Battle has already been Won

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- “I need this to feel better.”
 - “I can’t resist this right now.”

Replace it with truth:

- God has already given you a way out
- You are not powerless in this moment. The creator of the universe is fighting your battles.

Then you act on it:

You don’t pour the drink. You don’t place the bet.
You put the phone away. You throw the cigarette or joint in the toilet.
You keep calling on God for strength every minute because you will be taunted by the enemy to go back and pour that drink.

2. Fighting Lust & Fleshly Desires

First Epistle to the Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)



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“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

How to use it:

When lust tries to convince you, “this isn’t a big deal” or “God understands,” this verse brings clarity.

God’s will is not confusing here. It reminds you: this isn’t harmless, it’s something God is calling you away from.

In the moment, you can say: “This is not God’s will for me. I’m choosing something better.”

Then you act, shut it off, look away, walk out.

What this does:



The Battle has already been Won

This verse cuts through the lies and confusion temptation creates in your mind. Lust tries to make sin feel small, normal, or justified, but Scripture brings you back to truth immediately. Instead of arguing with temptation or trying to manage it in your own strength, this verse reminds you clearly that God is calling you to purity and freedom, not slavery to desire. It helps shift your thinking from “How is this going to make me feel?” to “How does God’s love make me feel?” The moment you speak truth over temptation, you interrupt the enemy’s plan and give the Holy Spirit room to guide you.

Example:

You’re scrolling through social media late at night and an image or video pops up that immediately stirs lustful thoughts. Your flesh wants to linger for “just a second,” but the Spirit hits your heart. Instead of ignoring Him, you stop and remind yourself:

Replace it with truth:

“For this is the will of God... that you abstain from sexual immorality.”

You quietly say:

“Lord, this is not what You want for me. Help me walk away.”

Then you act on it:

Then you immediately close the app, put the phone down, and redirect your mind before the temptation grows stronger. The victory happens in that small moment of obedience before lust takes deeper root.

3. Fighting Anxiety & Fear

Epistle to Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

How to use it:

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When fear starts taking over your thoughts—

“What if everything falls apart?”

“What if I can't handle this?”

This verse reminds you that fear is not coming from God.

You can say:

“God didn't give me this fear. He gave me power, love, and a sound mind to overcome it.”

What this does:

It separates you from the fear.

Instead of owning it, you recognize it as something trying to take hold of you.

And that shift alone helps you regain control and stand firm.

Example:

You just lost your job and your mortgage is due. Your spouse is working but until you find a job, you're going to burn through what little savings you had. Immediately feel panic rising. Bills are due, money is tight, and your mind starts spiraling:

“What if I can't provide for my family?”

“What if everything falls apart?”

“What if I never get out of this hole?”

Fear begins taking over your thoughts, making you feel trapped and helpless. Instead of letting anxiety control you, you stop and remind yourself:

Replace it with truth:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear.....” (Epistle to Timothy 1:7 KJV)

You take a breath and say:

“Lord, this fear is not from You. You gave me a sound mind, not panic. Help me trust You and make wise decisions instead of reacting out of fear.”

Then you act on it:

Instead of spiraling deeper into anxiety, you slow down, pray, make a plan, and trust God one step at a time. The financial pressure may still be real, but fear no longer gets to control your heart. God will provide!

4. Fighting Condemnation & Shame

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” (Epistle to the Romans 8:1 KJV)

How to use it:

Before and after you fall, the enemy will try to bury you in shame.

This verse cuts that lie off immediately. You are not condemned. You are still covered.

What this does:

This verse breaks the cycle of shame and self-hatred that the enemy tries to trap you in after you fail. Condemnation tells you that because you messed up, God wants nothing to do with you anymore. It makes you want to hide, give up, and stay stuck in guilt. But this verse reminds you that your identity is not based on your worst moment; it is based on Christ. Conviction from God leads you back to Him for restoration, while condemnation pushes you away in shame. This verse helps you separate the mistake you made from who you are in God's eyes. It reminds you that failure is not the end of your story.

Example:



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You went out drinking, lost control, and said or did things you deeply regret. The next morning you wake up embarrassed, anxious, and replaying everything in your mind. Shame starts speaking immediately:

"You're such an idiot."

"You'll never change."

"How could God still love someone like you?"

Instead of letting those thoughts bury you, you stop and remind yourself:

Replace it with truth:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Epistle to the Romans 8:1 KJV)

"Lord, what I did was wrong, and I need Your help to change, but I will not run from You in shame. Thank You that Your grace is bigger than my failure."

Then You act on it:

Instead of hiding from God for days, you go to Him immediately, repent honestly, and allow His grace to begin restoring your heart instead of letting condemnation destroy it.

5. Fighting Lies & Deception



The Battle has already been Won



“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Gospel of John 8:32 KJV)

How to use it:

When temptation tries to convince you that sin will satisfy you, this reminds you:

Freedom is found in truth, not in giving in. The lie leads to bondage. Truth leads to freedom.

What this does:

This verse exposes the lie before it destroys you further. Addiction and hidden sin survive in secrecy and deception. The more you lie to protect the habit, the more trapped and divided you become inside. Truth breaks that cycle. It forces you to stop pretending, stop covering, and finally face what the sin is doing to you and the people you love. Even though honesty feels terrifying at first, it is often the first real step toward freedom, healing, and restoration.

Example:

Imagine you’ve been secretly gambling online and hiding it from your spouse or you’ve been sneaking vodka in a thermos to get you through the day. Maybe you’ve lied about where the money went, deleted transactions, or kept saying everything is fine when it isn’t. The pressure, guilt, and fear keep building, but you continue hiding because you’re afraid of disappointing them.

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Replace it with truth:

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Gospel of John 8:32 (KJV)

Then You act on it:

You realize the gambling or the drinking is no longer the only problem, the deception is now poisoning your relationships too. Instead of covering it up again, you finally admit the truth. You confess the struggle, ask for help, and bring the addiction into the light.

That honesty may be painful in the moment, but it breaks the enemy’s grip. The lies kept you chained. Truth becomes the beginning of freedom.

6. Fighting Jealousy & Envy

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“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Epistle to the Galatians 5:26 KJV)

How to use it:

When jealousy starts creeping in and you begin comparing your life to someone else’s success, appearance, marriage, money, or attention, this verse reminds you that envy is not harmless. Comparison slowly poisons gratitude and blinds you to the blessings God has already given you.

Replace it with truth:

“God has a path and purpose for my life too. I don’t need to resent someone else’s blessings to trust what God is doing in me.”

Then shift your focus away from comparison and back toward gratitude, prayer, and trusting God with your own journey.

What this does:

This verse exposes comparison before it hardens into bitterness. Jealousy convinces you that someone else’s success somehow steals from your worth or your future. It quietly creates resentment, damages relationships, and keeps your heart focused on what you lack instead of what God has already provided.



Envy traps you in constant dissatisfaction because there will always be someone richer, smarter, more attractive, or more successful. But gratitude and trust break jealousy's power. This verse helps pull your eyes off other people's lives and places them back on God. Instead of competing with everyone around you, you begin resting in the truth that God's plan for your life does not require you to hate someone else's blessings.

Example:

A close friend gets promoted at work, buys a new house, and seems to have everything going right in life while you feel stuck financially and emotionally. At first, you try to act happy for them, but inside you start feeling irritated every time they talk about their life. Social media makes it worse. You begin comparing everything about your situation to theirs.

Then conviction hits you. You realize jealousy is slowly hardening your heart.

Instead of feeding it, you stop and remind yourself:

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory... envying one another." (Galatians 5:26 KJV)



Then you act on it:

“Lord, help me stop comparing my life to everyone else’s. Teach me to trust Your timing for my life and be thankful for what You’ve already given me.”

That prayer shifts your heart from resentment to trust. Instead of letting envy destroy your peace, you begin letting gratitude restore it.

7. Fighting Pride & Self-Importance

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (Epistle of James 4:6 KJV)

How to use it:

When pride makes you feel superior to everyone around you, this verse reminds you that arrogance creates distance between you and God. Pride convinces you that you are wiser, better, or more important than others, but humility keeps your heart teachable and dependent on God.

Replace it with truth:

“Everything I have came from God. Without Him, I am no better than anyone else.”

Then choose humility instead of needing to feel above people.

What this does:

This verse crushes the illusion that pride makes you stronger. Pride feeds the ego, but it isolates the heart. It makes correction feel like an attack, causes relationships to suffer, and slowly turns gratitude into self-worship. A prideful heart begins taking credit for blessings, talents, intelligence, or success that ultimately came from God.

Humility reconnects you to truth. It reminds you that every person has value and that none of us stand above grace. God works powerfully through humble people because humble people know they still need Him. This verse helps tear down the false image of superiority and replaces it with dependence on God instead of dependence on ego.

Example:

You begin looking down on your friends and family because you feel more disciplined, more successful, more knowledgeable, or spiritually stronger than they are. When they struggle, fail, or make mistakes, you secretly judge them and think:

“I would never do that.”

“I’m way ahead of them.”

“How did my cousin get so fat?”

“They need to get their lives together.”

Over time, you become harder to talk to, defensive when corrected, and less compassionate toward people.

Then this verse confronts your heart:

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” James 4:6 (KJV)

You realize pride has been quietly pulling you away from both God and people.

Replace it with truth:

“Lord, forgive me for thinking too highly of myself. Everything good in my life came from You. Help me stay humble, compassionate, and aware of how much I still need Your grace every single day.”

Then you act on it:



The Battle has already been Won

That humility softens your heart again. Instead of needing to feel above everyone else, you begin walking with gratitude, mercy, and dependence on God.

8. Fighting Anger & Harsh Words

“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (Epistle of James 1:19-20 KJV)

How to use it:

When anger starts boiling over and you feel the urge to explode, insult someone, send that text, or say something you can't take back, this verse reminds you to slow down before your emotions take control.

Replace it with truth:

“Lord, help me be slow to anger and not let my emotions control me.”

Then pause before reacting. Walk away if you need to. Pray before speaking.

What this does:



The Battle has already been Won

This verse interrupts emotional reactions before they turn into destruction. Anger makes you feel powerful in the moment, but uncontrolled anger often leaves regret, damaged relationships, guilt, and shame behind. It clouds judgment and pushes you to speak from emotion instead of wisdom.

This verse helps you regain control by slowing the situation down. Instead of feeding the fire, it creates space for the Holy Spirit to calm your heart and guide your response. It reminds you that not every emotion deserves a reaction.

Example:

You come home already stressed from work, and someone in your family says something that irritates you. Suddenly all the frustration you've been carrying starts pouring out. You feel the urge to yell, slam something, or say words meant to hurt them back.

Right before you react, this verse comes to mind:

"Slow to speak, slow to wrath..." James 1:19-20 (KJV)

You stop and take a breath.

Instead of exploding, you quietly pray:

"Lord, help me control my tongue right now. Don't let my anger hurt the people I love."

Then you act on it:

You walk away for a few minutes, calm down, and return to the conversation with a clearer mind. The situation may not be perfect, but you prevented anger from taking control and causing deeper damage.

9. Fighting Greed & Love of Money

"For the love of money is the root of all evil..." (First Epistle to Timothy 6:10 KJV)

How to use it:

When money, success, status, or material things begin controlling your decisions, this verse reminds you that chasing wealth above God will never satisfy your soul.

Replace it with truth:

“Money is not my god. My peace, security, and identity come from God, not possessions.”

Then refocus your heart on trusting God instead of constantly chasing more.

What this does:

This verse exposes how greed quietly takes over the heart. The love of money convinces you that happiness, security, and worth are found in what you own, earn, and accumulate. But greed never stays satisfied. It keeps demanding more and more while leaving your heart anxious, restless, and spiritually empty.

This verse helps loosen money's grip on your identity. It reminds you that success without God still leaves a person empty. True peace comes from trusting God as your provider, not from constantly chasing worldly security.

Example:

You start becoming obsessed with making more money. Over time, it turns into neglecting your family. You begin cutting corners on your jobs to squeeze out extra money, lying about small things to make an extra dime. You come home at night and look at stock charts all night instead of spending quality time with your family.

“If I just had a little more savings. If I get that promotion, everything would be okay.”

Slowly, work and financial success begin replacing your relationship with God and the people you love.

Then conviction hits you:

“For the love of money is the root of all evil...” (1 Timothy 6:10 KJV)

You realize money itself isn't the problem, your heart is beginning to worship it.

Replace it with truth:

“Lord, help me seek You first instead of chasing money to fill places only You can fill. Teach me to trust You as my provider.”

That prayer shifts your focus. Instead of being consumed by greed and pressure, you begin finding peace in God instead of your bank account.

10. Fighting Bitterness & Unforgiveness

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger... be put away from you... And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” (Epistle to the Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV)

How to use it:

When someone hurts you deeply and bitterness starts taking root, this verse reminds you that unforgiveness keeps you chained to the pain. Forgiveness does not mean what happened was okay, it means you are releasing the weight of it to God.

Replace it with truth:

“Lord, help me release this hurt instead of letting it poison my heart.”

Then begin praying for healing instead of replaying the offense over and over.

What this does:

This verse prevents pain from hardening your heart. Bitterness feels justified because you were genuinely hurt, betrayed, ignored, or mistreated. But when anger sits inside too long, it slowly changes you. It steals peace, affects relationships, and keeps wounds constantly open.

Forgiveness breaks that cycle. It allows healing to begin by placing justice into God's hands instead of carrying the burden yourself. This verse helps you let go of the poison without pretending the wound never happened.

Example:

A close friend or family member betrayed your trust. Maybe they lied to you, talked behind your back, cheated you financially, or abandoned you when you needed them most. Maybe your parents treated you poorly and love was not in their vocabulary. Months or years later, you still replay the situation constantly. Every time you think about them, anger rises immediately.

You feel justified holding onto it because they truly hurt you.

Replace it with truth:

“Let all bitterness... be put away from you...” (Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV)

You realize the bitterness is no longer just hurting them in your mind, it's hurting you too.

“Lord, what they did hurt deeply, but I don't want this anger controlling my heart anymore. Help me forgive the way You forgive me.”

Then you act on it:

That prayer doesn't erase the pain overnight, but it begins loosening bitterness's grip on your soul. Instead of carrying the wound every day, you begin letting God heal it little by little.

Final Reflection

Here is the truth I have come to understand through every struggle, every fall, and every moment of surrender. Temptation is not proof that you are failing. It is often the very place where God is doing His deepest work in you. The enemy wants you to see your weakness as defeat, but God uses that same weakness to draw you closer to Him. Every time you choose to turn back to God instead of giving in, even if it feels messy and imperfect, you are growing stronger. Victory is not about never being tempted again. It is about who you run to when temptation comes. It is about learning to stay close to Jesus in the middle of the battle, not just after it. Over time, your desires begin to change. The pull of sin weakens, and your hunger for God grows. What once controlled you begins to lose its grip, not because of your strength, but because you are no longer fighting alone. Christ is with you, and He has already secured the victory. Your role is to stay connected to Him, to keep showing up, to keep surrendering, and to trust that even when you feel weak, He is working.



The Battle has already been Won

As you move forward, do not try to walk this out alone. Get grounded in a Bible-based church and surround yourself with other believers who will encourage you, challenge you, and walk with you in truth. We were never meant to do this life in isolation. If you are not sure where to start, look for a church that teaches the Bible as the foundation for faith and life, encourages personal growth in Christ, and prioritizes honest community and prayer. Listen to what is taught and see if it lines up with Scripture. If you are able, talk with the pastor or leadership and ask about their beliefs, their commitment to teaching the whole Bible, and what opportunities they offer to connect with others. Look for a place where people welcome you warmly, genuinely care, and where you see lives being changed by Jesus. If you are new somewhere, visit a few times and trust the Holy Spirit to give you peace about finding the right place.

And if you have not been baptized in water in Christ, make it a priority. Even if you were baptized as a child, take that step now with full understanding and commitment. If Christ Himself chose to be baptized, who are we to think we are above it? There is something powerful about that step of obedience and surrender.

If you are ready to keep moving forward and not fall back into the same cycle, you cannot do this only when things get hard. You need daily encouragement, daily truth, and daily reminders of who you are in Christ. That is why I want to invite you to take the next step. Stay connected with daily encouragement devotionals sent straight to your phone or email. These are not just words to read and forget. They are meant to guide you, strengthen you, and walk with you through real moments of temptation. Each day you will receive encouragement rooted in truth, simple prayers you can speak in the moment, and practical guidance to help you stand firm or run when you need to. To receive these daily devotionals, simply visit our website at VictoryOverTemptation.com and sign up with your email or phone number. If you have any questions or just want to talk about your struggles, you can also contact us directly at Michael@VictoryOverTemptation.com and I will be happy to encourage you and pray for you.

This is about building a daily habit of staying close to God so that when temptation comes, you are already prepared. Do not let this be the end of your journey. Make the decision right now to stay consistent, to stay encouraged, and to stay connected for free. Say yes to walking this out daily, and trust that God will continue the work He has already started in you.

Why are you Still Struggling? The Battle Over Temptation has already been Won

For years, Michael fought silent battles with temptation, guilt, fear, pride, anxiety, and the exhausting cycle of trying to overcome sin through willpower alone. Like so many others, he believed if he just tried harder, hid his struggles better, or became “strong enough,” things would finally change. But the harder he fought in his own strength, the heavier the chains became. In this raw and deeply personal book, Michael opens up about his real-life struggles with temptation, addiction, shame, comparison, anger, lust, and spiritual exhaustion. Through honest reflection, Scripture, and practical spiritual guidance, he reveals the life-changing truth he discovered: victory over temptation was never meant to come from human strength alone. The battle was already won through Jesus Christ. This book is not written from the perspective of someone who has life perfectly figured out. It is written from the heart of someone still walking daily with God, learning how to stand firm in spiritual battles, flee fleshly temptation, and depend fully on the grace and strength of Christ. Through biblical truth and authentic personal experiences, this message offers hope to anyone who feels trapped, discouraged, ashamed, or tired of fighting the same battles over and over again. No matter how many times you have fallen, God has not abandoned you. Freedom, restoration, and victory are still possible through Him.

