

**OVERCOMING TEMPTATION:
PART 1–THE PROBLEM
HEBREWS 12:1**

INTRODUCTION

The term “*temptation*” may bring to mind different things for each of us! We all have weaknesses in our flesh where temptation affects us more! It may involve any number of things in our lives! (Food, drugs, alcohol, sex, or any number of other things—including that thing that came to your mind when I started talking about temptation!)

When you hear the term “*temptation*”, what flashes into your mind? What pictures and emotions does it conjure up in your thinking? This series of messages is about each of us and our particular area of temptation or temptations!

In your mind right now, the prospects of overcoming your greatest temptation may seem rather slim!

Having tried to overcome yet failing to overcome so many times before may have you to the place in your life where you say are saying “*what’s the use to try anymore!*” In fact, you may have already given over to temptation and are presently living your life in bondage to whatever it is that you have given yourself over to!

I. WHY WE MUST NOT GIVE UP THE BATTLE OVER TEMPTATIONS.

- A. A defeating habit in our life will rob us of our confidence in the power of God to give people victory over sin!
- B. Also, we will be hesitant to offer Christ as the answer to others who are controlled by sin. (i.e. It destroys our incentive to share our faith!)
- C. Choosing not to deal with sin ultimately leads to what Scripture calls a hard heart!
 - 1. A hard heart develops when people **hear** the truth, **believe** the truth, but **refuse to apply** the truth!

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- 2. Developing a hard heart doesn’t happen over night. It is a process that takes time!
 - 3. Each time a Christian recognizes sin in their life and feel convicted about it, but yet do nothing about it, they become less and less sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit!
 - 4. Finally, they reach the point where they feel no conviction at all over their particular sins! They become callous, and they quench the Spirit in their lives. (I Thessalonians 5:19)
 - 5. If this process is allowed to continue, God may eventually just turn them over to their sin!
 - 6. At that point a person loses all moral and ethical direction insofar as the Holy Spirit is concerned!
- D. One sin always leads to another. It is like a cancer that spreads.
- E. Whenever there is sin, there is always death of some kind.
- 1. Sin causes physical death! (Accident, murder, disease, suicide)
 - 2. Sin brings death to relationships. (Marital, parental, children, friends, employee, employer,)
- Something is always destroyed, whether it is respect, trust, loyalty, or life itself.

So, we must not give up in this battle over temptations in our life! It is dangerous for us as well as those around us!

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II. THERE ARE EXCUSES PEOPLE MAKE FOR THE SIN THEY ALLOW TO REMAIN IN THEIR LIVES:

These excuses reflect erroneous thinking about God’s attitude toward temptation. **I’ll share the two favorites:**

A. “I’M JUST HUMAN, AND BESIDES, NOBODY’S PERFECT!” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

This excuse ignores the fact that believers have the potential, with the help of God, to do the right thing!

All believers have the potential to say no to temptation, regardless of whether or not we are perfect!

Our imperfect human character may affect our desire to overcome temptation, but not our ability!

B. “WE WILL ALWAYS BE TEMPTED, SO WHY SHOULD WE ADOPT A LIFESTYLE OF CONTINUAL STRUGGLE?”

This excuse says, why not just accept certain things as a part of life and not worry about them! (i.e. It is a defeatist attitude!)

These folks argue that since temptation will continue to harass us regardless of how many times we successfully combat it, is it really worth the continual struggle?

We forget that in the process of struggling with sin—in both our victories and our defeats—God is at work in our lives!

Through the trials of temptation the LORD develops in us patience, endurance, as well as a sensitivity to others, and most of all a sense of moment by moment trust in the sufficiency of Christ. **(James 1:2-4)**

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The awful, never-ending process of combating temptation is God’s means of maturing us and conforming us to the very image of Christ!

So, to throw our hands up in defeat is to abandon the process and to miss out on life’s most important lessons. To be tempted is an opportunity to grow in the LORD!

As long as we take a stand against temptation, even if we fall momentarily, God will use the struggle to make us into the men and women He wants us to be!

Once we give up and allow the forces of sin to dictate our behavior, it will be only a matter of time until our lives are destroyed!

Remember, every big habit had a small beginning! We don’t know the damaging potential of even the smallest sin! If we wait until things get really bad to deal with them, oftentimes we lose our desire to deal with them at all!

CONCLUSION

Are you ready to get back to where you need to be in your life!

Are you ready to experience the power of God in your life once again?

Then you must be willing to get involved again in the process of working with God to gain consistent victory over temptation! There can only be victory through Jesus Christ! **(1 John 5:4-5)**

Now listen, I’m NOT saying its going to be easy or instant. There are no magic prayers to say or buttons to push! There is, however, a loving, powerful, heavenly Father who has provided the “way of escape” if you are ready to take advantage of it!

If you are not a child of God, that is where you must begin!