

We are called to be Holy Transformed. To live holy lives. **Holy - Called Out; Set apart for God's service and worship. A separated people.** (Set apart for something special.)

The work of Christ Jesus on the cross, saves us from our sinfulness and we are set on a path of sanctification, being transformed into the image of Christ. This is God's will for us, but we have a responsibility in this process as well, just as the Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians.

1Thessalonians 4:3-7. It is God's will that you should be sanctified (To separate or make something Holy / To free from sin by an act of purification): that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we have told you and warned you before. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

We are free from the bondage of sin, but often we are tempted to willfully return to the sins of the flesh. There is a struggle that is going on.

Sometimes, I feel myself agreeing with Job when he said, "The life of man upon earth is warfare."

Isn't that true about most of us? Our 'not to' isn't always strong. So, let's look at seven principles that will help us overcome temptation.

Seven Keys to Overcome Temptation

Key 1) Realize the Devil Does Have A Plan for Our Life, But He Is A Defeated Foe.

Satan is the prince of the power of the air, the prince or ruler of this world **Eph. 2:2; Jn.12:31**

- Satan has a certain degree of power, but he is not all-powerful.
- He is mighty, but he is not almighty!

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

Key 2) Humbly Submit to God.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Many times, we are guilty of partial or half-hearted submission, but God is calling us to total submission to Him and His will for our lives. When we are walking in God's will, Satan won't be able to stand in our way.

A pattern is developed here. A cycle of sorts.

- Totally submit to God, then resist Satan, submit to God, resist Satan. I do feel that it is important to give God the majority of our time and to give Satan very little.
 - In other words, don't let the problem or temptation rule your life and thoughts.
 - Don't walk around all day saying, I resist you, Satan, I resist you, Satan, etc. The devil doesn't deserve that much of our time and energy.
 - Focus on God, not the temptation or the sin.
- Resist the devil as the Bible tells us to do and then spend the rest of your time submitting to God.
 - Praise Him amid troubles, trials, and temptations.
 - Begin to stand on His Word and thank Him for the victory.

1 Peter 5:6-9 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Note: You stay in steadfast faith by humbly submitting to God.

There is no time for sleep or slumber in our spiritual warfare. Satan doesn't give up easily.

Luke 4: 13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Next Life Transformation Step: This week I will humble myself, submit to God, resist the devil in Jesus name and watch him flee!

Key 3) See Sin for What It Is.

In *Genesis 39*, we have the story of the temptation that presents itself to Joseph.

After overseeing all of Potiphar's household, Potiphar's wife sees that Joseph is a handsome man and asks him to lay with her (6-8). After his refusal, she continues to tempt him daily (10). But what kept Joseph strong amid temptation was seeing sin for what it is, He said, "*How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?*" *Genesis 39:9.*

Joseph saw sin as what it was. He saw sin as wickedness, great evil, and an act against God.

He didn't tell her he wouldn't lay with her because they might get caught, or he might lose his powerful position, or because he loved someone else, or because he was married, or because he was a Sunday school teacher. The only thing that got him through that daily temptation was a clear understanding of what sin really is.

We need to call sin, sin! Stop sugar coating it and referring to it as a little problem, slight imperfection, a weakness, or a back-sliding condition.

Sin is wickedness, great evil, and contrary to God's will in our lives.

After King David had sinned with Bathsheba, he realized that even though other people had been wronged in his sin, ultimately, he had sinned against God.

Psalms 51:4 Against thee, thee only, I have sinned, and done this evil in thy sight... (KJV)

Next Life Transformation Step: I commit to be honest with myself and God, and admit my sin is sin.

Key 4) Look for A Way of Escape.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (NKJ)

Who will make a way of escape? God will. All you must do is find it and take it.

I'm afraid Christians even after seeing an escape path choose not to take it.

Next Life Transformation Step: I will memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Key 5) Allow the Word of God to Cleanse You.

Psalms 119:9-11 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

The Spiritual Washing with the Word.

Ephesians. 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (NKJ)

Spend time in the Word of God and let Jesus clean you and make you holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle, ready to be presented to Him.

Jesus' prayer for you. *John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (NKJ)*

Why is the scripture given to you? *2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJ)*

Key 6) Be a Person of Prayer.

2 Chronicles 7:14 ...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. I think the prayer is the catalyst for turning from your wicked ways.

A Pattern - Pray – Seek His Face – Turn.

Mark 14:38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (NKJ)

In other words, pray so that you don't get into a place of temptation. You won't have to worry about dealing with the sin if you can steer clear of temptation.

Matthew 6:13. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. ... (NKJ)

Avoid temptation altogether. Stay away from situations that lead to temptation. You will find that prayer is a powerful weapon and deterrent against temptation.

Pray with your armor on! *Ephesians 6:13, 18*

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— (NKJ)

It's hard to pray in the Spirit and sin at the same time.

Key 7) Allow Jesus To Sanctify Your Life.

1Thessalonians 5:23-24 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (NKJ)

Jesus is the atonement for our sins, and He is a merciful and faithful high priest who understands our battle with temptation. How? Jesus understands our temptation because He was tempted, yet He was without sin. What an example He has set for us by not sinning.

Hebrews 2:17-18 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (NKJ)

Some of the best-qualified persons to minister to others are people whom God has brought through similar circumstances.

- I've heard people say that they wish they could erase the sin and struggles of the past from their memories.
- But maybe God doesn't want them to forget where they have come from so that they can offer hope to others.
- You may want to ask God to take away the hurt and the sting of your past but remember where you have been and rejoice for what God has done in your life. Then use those experiences to reach out and help others.

When it comes to overcoming temptation whom else would you want on your side other than Christ Jesus?

II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

Satan may have a plan for our lives, but God has a plan also.

If we yield to Him rather than temptation, God will fulfill and accomplish all that He has planned for us!

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. Seeing that Satan is a defeated foe, do you tend to spend more time resisting Satan or submitting to God? How do you submit to God?
2. Do you, or do you know of others who try to rationalize sin as being ok, and something less than an offense to God? Why?
3. Do you really think that the Word of God will cleanse and purify you? Why or how does that work?
4. What do you think Jesus meant when He told His disciples to pray "And do not lead us into temptation"? Why would we ask the Father not to lead us into temptation?
5. What does it mean when we say that Jesus will sanctify a believer? Can you explain sanctification?