

# Overcoming Temptation

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A Burmese folk tale tells of a huge elephant who died beside a river bank. His body fell into the water and began floating down the river. A crow saw it and said, "I have a big feast waiting for me." He perched on the elephant. "I shall never be hungry again," he crowed. The dead elephant floated clear into the sea, but the bird never left him. He never called any other crows to join him. He was so pleased with himself. But in the sea, the rotting flesh slowly began to sink and the bird had to fly. There was no place for him to rest. Finally, exhausted, his wings failed him and he fell into the sea and drowned.

Sometimes we are like the crow. This is like the ancient proverb, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is death." (Proverbs 14:12) We can know clearly that sin always leads to suffering, which we don't want. But often temptation looks so good that we don't want to think about the suffering it will lead to. We jump on it and it carries us away like the elephant and the crow. But when we fall into that temptation, we can't get away from the sadness and pain. It's like the Bible says "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown gives birth to death" (James 1:14,15). It's also like a Khmer proverb which says, "The firefly tries to face the fire and he dies." Fireflies are fond of flying by the fire and this makes them die. We know what is bad but we love to go after it. What should we do to win over temptation and do what is right? What should we do in order to choose the correct path for our family and ourselves? This lesson will show a path that can help us overcome temptation in order to have victory.

Do you ever want to do what is wrong to strangers or even

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to the ones who have loved you? Have you ever had a strong temptation press down upon you? Those of you who are students, have you ever skipped school? Have you ever cheated and looked at your lessons during a test? Men, have you ever been greedy, wanting other ladies besides your wives? Ladies, have you ever coveted the beautiful gold necklaces that others are wearing? Those of you who sell in the markets, have you cheated the poor because you want a lot of profit only for yourselves? Yes, these temptations are very strong and no one can escape. These temptations are in everyone's hearts. Because of this, every day people must choose one of two ways--to do good or to do bad. But it seems that doing bad is easier to do than good. It is like the Bible says in Romans 7:19,20, "I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. If I do what I don't want to do, this means that I am no longer the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me."

In past lessons we've seen how Jesus helped people with all kinds of problems. He helped people overcome evil spirits and He showed them how to overcome sin and live a new life of freedom. Did he do this as an angel, as a super being? No. The story of Jesus birth shows us that though He was the God who exists everywhere and knows all things, He left His power and glory behind to become a baby. He became an example to us on how to connect with the Father of Life's great strength. In fact Jesus took a body like ours so that He could show us the kind of righteous life we can have when the mighty God fills us with His Holy Spirit.

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## Jesus Prepared for Temptation

Satan saw that Jesus had come to take the world back from him and free people from his oppression. That is why he motivated Herod to try and kill Jesus just after He was born. Satan clearly knew that Jesus was the Son of God and had come from heaven, with great power. But he hoped that because Jesus had taken a human body he could overcome him with sin. Then Jesus would be unable to help anyone else.

Jesus knew that Satan and the evil spirits would try to destroy His work. He knew many temptations would come on Him. Therefore Jesus went into the desert to have a quiet place to pray to the Father of Life and be strengthened for the test. He chose to fast so that His mind would be clear.

We also must prepare to face temptations. If we will take time to reflect on in what ways we have failed in the past, we can learn how to overcome the next time. We should ask ourselves, “What desires usually pull me into sin?” “What mistakes do I frequently make?”

Then we should read the ancient scriptures for wisdom. We can focus on why these things will hurt us. We can ask God to make us strong and help us overcome. We must not be foolish and try to face our temptations by ourselves. We should flee to God for help. If a child sees an angry dog, he will run to his father and climb into his arms. There he is safe. In the same way, we can run to the Father of Life and ask Him for help.

## Jesus Followed Scripture not Satan

Jesus fasted for forty days. It was an incredibly long time to

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go without food. Satan came to Him at this time, hoping to overcome Jesus since he was extremely weak and hungry. Evil spirits had often led people into doing wrong things simply because it tastes and feels good. Others who live moral lives, see their true heart when their lives become difficult and they have little to eat. Then they lie, cheat or steal in order to survive. Jesus went without food for forty days in order to show that with God’s strength any person can overcome evil, even if they are so hungry they are about to die.

The Bible says that Satan said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Matthew 4:3). Perhaps Satan appeared like a beautiful angel who had a hard time recognizing this mighty Son of God. Could this skinny man really be God come to earth? If so, He could prove it by a little miracle.

Satan then said, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” Ever since Satan was an angel in heaven, he has been jealous of God and wanted people to worship him. He does whatever he can to turn people’s hearts away from the living, true Creator God and to himself.

Have you seen this? People worship many things. They ask for help from all kinds of powers. Most of them have forgotten the Father of Life. Jesus quickly answered, “Go Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord Your God, and serve Him only.’” (Matthew 4:10) Jesus knew who has the greatest power and authority of all. He refused to worship anyone else.

Today God also wants to help us to turn away from the power of evil spirits. We must choose to worship the One who has great compassion for us and has such mighty power. It is the only safe way.

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Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan!" Satan went away, waiting to tempt Him another time. We also can say to temptation and evil spirits, "In the name of Jesus, go away!" They will go.

## We can be Victorious

From Jesus' story we learn that those who humbly follow God's teachings and run to God for help will find victory. Is that what you want? Will you seek His help today?

A handsome man named Ray had struggled for many years with drug and alcohol addiction. He was an excellent salesman who could make money quickly and have the money for his temptations. The drugs and alcohol slowly destroyed his life. He lost many jobs and finally his wife divorced him. All he had that he really loved was his son Brandon. Somehow he had kept Brandon from knowing about his problem. He really wanted to overcome drugs and alcohol so that his son would not follow in his footsteps and ruin his life.

Another young man who knew about the Father of Life, shared with Ray about God's compassion and power to help him. They spent much time together until Ray clearly knew that God had a heart of mercy and love towards him. He shoes to humble his heart, seek God's power and turn from the temptations of Satan. God gave him complete victory and he never used drugs again. He enjoys the friendship of his son to this day.

God can do the same for us, no matter what kind of temptation we face. Read God's promise below, memorize it and claim it as your own.

1 Corinthians 10:13. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are

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tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

### Points to Remember

\* Doing evil is easy and doing good is hard, but doing evil brings destruction whereas doing good brings peace.

\* The desire of people is money, power and position, but Jesus didn't need to take any of these.

\* The three steps to overcome temptation are: Turn from sin.

Ask God to come and help.

Keep God's Word in your heart.

## Prayer

Dear Lord, Please help me be free from all temptations by taking from my heart anger, hatred, sadness.

Please give me a good heart so that I can love others such as \_\_\_\_\_.

Give me power to stop doing \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you. Amen.

## Questions

1--Please write T in front of the true statements

\_\_\_\_\_ Wickedness is the result of temptation.

\_\_\_\_\_ No one can escape from temptation.

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\_\_\_\_\_ People only want to do what is good.

2--Please underline the correct sentences:

Temptation from evil spirits leads us to sin.

Sin leads to death.

People decide to sin on their own.

3--Please fill in the answers for the sentences below:

Satan commanded Jesus to turn stones into \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone but by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."

Satan commanded Jesus, "if you \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, I will give you the world."

Jesus said, "Worship \_\_\_\_\_ your God and serve  
Him \_\_\_\_\_."

Satan commanded Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_  
from the roof of the temple.

Jesus said, "Do not \_\_\_\_\_ the  
Lord your God."

4--Please answer the following questions:

Can people overcome Satan?

How did Jesus overcome Satan's temptations?

Did Jesus fail in any temptations?

5--Please briefly write a description of one of your tempta-

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tions:

6--Please write how you can overcome that temptation:

7-- If this statement is true of your choice today, check it:

\_\_\_\_\_ I choose to turn from temptations and do what is good  
relying upon the God of Life to help me.