

ARMED FOR WAR Discipleship Course

SECTION 8 – Overcoming Temptation

Lesson 31 - Overcoming Temptation Part 3

Seven Lies About Temptation (continued)

Lie #7 - As long as I'm in the flesh, I'm going to sin. (continued)

Jesus came for a much greater purpose than simply to forgive us of our sins. He came to deliver us from the power of sin. For this purpose the son of God was made manifest that He might destroy all the works of the devil, which includes the power of the sin nature. We began to study Romans chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. Beginning in Romans 5:12 Paul begins to talk about sin, singular, as the sin nature. He goes on in Romans 6:11-14 and teaches that sin shall no longer be our master and we should no longer obey it or be ruled by it. Sin does not have the legal right of authority or dominion over us.

Romans 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

He is not talking about sins, he is talking about the sin nature; the carnal nature, that nature that makes us sin. He says we have been made free from sin, from the sin nature.

But then we read in Romans 7:15, where it appears that Paul is talking about himself and saying he's not free from sin. So many Christians say, "Oh that is my experience. I am just like Paul." But Paul just said, you are not to be this way. Sin, the sin nature, shall not have dominion over you.

Here he is talking about that nature that makes you sin. It appears he is saying that he is under that bondage. Many people have mistaken this writing in Romans 7 as Paul talking about what a Christian experience is supposed to be like, especially a younger Christian that hasn't yet learned how to overcome. But he says a few key things here. He says, "I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Verses 21-23)

Now you must remember that Paul was a Pharisee. Paul was in line to become the high priest. Paul was a zealot. He was adamantly committed to obeying the Law. He wanted to obey the Law, but he found that he was unable to obey the Law, because the Law was powerless to deliver him from the sin nature.

In Romans 7 Paul was talking about his pre-Christian experience, not post-salvation. Let's back up a few verses and see if we can find the context. Context is everything when studying the Word of God. Beginning in verse 7 he discusses the power of sin and the Law and how the Law does not free us from sin. The Law came to expose and reveal to us what sin really was.

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Romans 7:7-9 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.*

What is he talking about? Everyone is born with a sin nature because that sin nature is transferred through the blood. But where there is no law, there is no trespass. Paul said, “Once I was alive apart from the law.” Now when was Paul ever alive apart from the law? And he only said it happened once. That is what we call the age of accountability. It is before he came to be the age where he could understand the Law. When was that in the Jewish culture? They began to train up the children and they began to prepare them for the Bar Mitzvah. They introduced them to the Law.

Paul is saying that the sin nature was in him, but it couldn't rise up until the commandment came. But once the commandment came, then he was confronted with the Law and a nature that now wants to violate the Law.

Romans 7:9 *I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.*

Anyone that has children knows this. You do not have to teach your children to sin. All you have to do is give them some rules, and you will find out they are going to break them. Because once a commandment comes it gives opportunity for that sin nature to manifest. And once that sin nature manifested he said he died. Wait! He said what? He said, “I died.”

Romans 7:10-11 *And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.*

Now I have a question for you. If Romans 7 is Paul talking about after he was born again, is he saying that every time that we sin we die again? Does that mean that we have to be born-again again? Does that mean we have to be born-again again every time we fail, every time we sin? Every time we sin do we die and have to get alive again? No, that's not what he says.

He is saying it happened one time, when the commandment first came. When did it come? When he was a child, when the commandment first came to him. Then he died. Sin took occasion, by the commandment, and it slew him, and he died. Then as he grew up in the Jewish tradition and understood more and more of the Law, he had this Law in his mind which told him to obey one way, but he also had a sin nature warring in him, which told him to obey that way.

He had this war going on within him, and that is what Paul is talking about in Romans 7. He is talking about the pre-Christian experience, not the post-Christian experience. And that's why he cries out at the end of the Romans 7.

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Romans 7:24-25 *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

That was the summary of what he was just saying. We need to understand the Jewish culture. Often it was common, especially in this kind of storytelling, to talk about past situations in the present tense.

Therefore having said everything he said for the last few chapters, that you should no longer be bound by the sin nature and sin should no longer have dominion over you that you should obey its lusts, he says there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:1-2 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

We are made free, not just in some ethereal, mystical, out-there semblance of freedom, but in a literal reality of being free from the power of the law of sin. When he says the law of sin and death he is not talking about the written law now. He is talking about that sin nature. Remember he said there is another law warring in my members. That's the law of sin and death. There's another rule, there's another authority in our members that is warring against the law of our mind. He says the law of the spirit of life has made me free from that sin nature.

Romans 8:3 *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh*

In this verse the law refers to the Word of God or written Law.

Romans 8:3 AMP *For God has done what the Law could not do, [its power] being weakened by the flesh [the entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit]. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh [subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power over all who accept that sacrifice],*

What did Jesus accomplish for our old sin nature?

Jesus came to destroy the power of the sin nature so we would no longer have a nature in us that made us disobey God. The natural Law in the Old Testament only exposed our sin, but did not have the power to deliver us from sin. But the blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit of God in your life has the power to break you free from the nature of sin so that you should no longer have to obey it.

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It's a lie from the pit of hell that as long as you are in the flesh you are going to sin. It's the reason so many Christians have stayed down for so long. God said clearly in the book of Romans that Jesus came to set you free. You don't have to obey that sin nature any longer.

Now if we are going to overcome, we need to understand a practical, powerful strategy to overcoming temptation.

Seven Keys to Overcoming Temptation

Key #1 - Close the eye-gate.

Psalms 101:1-3 *I will sing of mercy and justice;*

To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.

Oh, when will You come to me?

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;

I hate the work of those who fall away;

It shall not cling to me.

Listen to the heart cry of David: I will set nothing wicked before my eyes. If any time you need to take that scripture and follow the patterns of David, it's right now. You've got to close the eye-gate. You have to make a choice not to look at things. You are going to have to start turning off the devil-vision. You are going to have to stop going to some of those movies. You are going to have to stop spending so much time on the internet.

It's pretty clear we are talking about pornography, and the obvious things we shouldn't look at. But what about the stuff that is a little more subtle that we keep letting come through our eye-gate? Psychologists and police say that 60% of all teenage crime is an exact, not similar to, but an exact duplicate of something they saw on television or in the movies. They are imitating what they saw through the eye-gate. They saw something and the enemy entered in.

David should have been out in battle when he stood out on his porch and he saw Bathsheba. He looked on her just a little too long and sin was conceived in his body. You have to shut the eye-gate. You have to make a choice to shut the eye-gate.

It's not restrictive. You can choose to live in victory, or you can choose to live in defeat. You can choose to be filled with the holiness of God and fulfill the plans and purposes of God, or you can choose to die and struggle and not even know if you are ever going to make it into the kingdom of heaven. You have to make a decision. Shut that eye-gate. Watch what you are looking at. Be careful.

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Key #2 - Shut the ear-gate.

Mark 4:24-25 *Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”*

Be careful what you listen to. Be careful what you hear. In every area of your life, take heed what you hear because if you start hearing something over and over again and you don't resist it, and you don't shut it out, you will actually begin to take on those philosophies. Adolph Hitler said this: If you tell a lie big enough, and tell it long enough, people will believe it.

We see this in conversations and the opinions we listen to. Everyone does not need an opinion on everything. Opinions are like noses; everybody has got them and they are usually full of a lot of junk. You don't need to hear everybody's opinion. You need to hear one thing and that is the Word of Almighty God. Your opinion and my opinion mean nothing. The only opinion that means anything is the the voice and the Word of Almighty God.

It doesn't matter what I feel. It don't matter what I think. It only matters what God says because He is the way, He is truth, and He is light. (John 14:6) If you are going to guard your spirit and guard your spiritual walk, you better learn to shut the ear-gate.

One of the big ways the devil gets into your ear is through music. I am stunned by how many Christians open their spirits through the ear-gate by listening to unholy, ungodly music. We may think we are not hearing the words but our brains are sharp and pick them up. In many stores around America they play background music that has an inaudible voice saying “Don't steal. We prosecute shoplifters.” You can listened to it, but you can't hear it. But your brain still picks it up. Your ear actually still hears it. They say when they use this subliminal message that shoplifting drops 70%.

You hear everything whether you realize it or not. We don't understand the nature of our brains. You're hearing the words, and those words are preaching at you. They are preaching at you all day long. They are preaching at you violence. They are preaching at you sex. They are preaching at you perversion. They are preaching at you ungodliness and worldliness.

You wonder why you battle and wrestle so much. It's because you have your ear-gate wide open listening to the world. You need to get some Holy Ghost deaf ears to the world and only Mickey Mouse ears with Jesus Christ. Get those big ears and listen to His voice.

Take heed what you hear, because whatever measure you apply to hearing, it will be measured to you. If you apply your hearing to the things of the world and the opinions of men that's what's going to be multiplied in you. If you apply your hearing to the things of God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, that is what is going to be multiplied in your life. You've got to close the ear-gate.

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You have got to be aggressive with this. Jesus didn't just sit around and listen to the garbage. When people are around spewing garbage, sometimes you just need to turn around and walk away, especially when people are out there spewing doubt and unbelief. When you get a bad report chose to believe the report of the Lord according to the Word of God. You have got to learn to put a deaf ear to the voices of doubt and unbelief. Take heed what you hear. Be careful what you listen to.

That is also the reason God hates murmuring and gossip; whether we are the ones speaking the destructive words out of our mouth, or the one listening to those words. If you are the one actively listening you become just as guilty as the one speaking. Don't just sit there and be gossiping about everybody. Don't be influenced in your mind by their words. Take heed what you hear.

Proverbs 19:27 *Cease listening to instruction, my son,
And you will stray from the words of knowledge.*

If you don't take heed what you hear, if you cease from hearing the right instruction, the Godly stuff, you will stray from knowledge. You are going to go the wrong way. That is why the Bible teaches us about getting together with one another all the more so as we see the end approaching. We need to hear the instruction of the Word. Be around the instruction of the Word. Listen to the Word.

For Further Study:

Matthew 6:22 *The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.*

Matthew 18:9 *And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.*

Matthew 13:15 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

*Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.*