

Overcoming the Power of Sin/7 Steps to Conquer Sinful Habits

Discipleship is a Relationship

1. With God
2. With Family
3. With the Church
4. With the Lost

Suggested Memory Verses

Romans 6:1-2

Purpose: To show God's plan for empowering man to live by the Spirit

1. What is God's attitude toward sin as revealed in Romans 1:18?
2. Who is our sin against according to Genesis 39:9?
3. Remember, temptation itself is not a sin. When does temptation become a sin? James 1:13-15
4. What sins are you dealing with right now? Remember James 5:16
5. God wants us to overcome sin. He doesn't want us to "co-exist" with sin. Consider the following promises God has given in the face of temptation.
 - A. 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - B. 2 Thessalonians 3:3
 - C. 1 John 2:1-2
 - D. Deuteronomy 31:6
 - E. 1 John 4:4
6. You have certain responsibilities to God in the face of temptation. What are your responsibilities according to the following verses?
 - A. Psalm 119:9-11
 - B. Matthew 26:41
 - C. James 4:7-8
 - D. Romans 6:11-13
 - E. 1 John 5:4
7. Read the following article entitled, "Seven Steps to Conquer Sinful Habits".

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SEVEN STEPS TO CONQUER SINFUL HABITS

1. Engraft Romans 6 and 8 into your soul.

What does it mean to “engraft”? To engraft scripture into our soul means to make it a living extension of our life so that it can produce spiritual fruit. The more scripture we engraft into our soul, the more types of spiritual fruit we will have in our life. If we engraft 1 Corinthians 13 into our soul, we will have the fruit of genuine love. If we engraft 1 Peter into our soul, we will have the fruit of patience during suffering. If we engraft Romans 6 and 8 into our soul, we will have victory over sin.

How does engrafting the Word begin? The first step to engrafting Scripture is to memorize it word for word.

2. Picture yourself dead to sin.

God’s Word states that we are dead to sin. Regardless of our own feeling to the contrary, God wants us to “reckon” ourselves dead indeed unto sin. To “reckon” is to count it to be so. In reality, what would this mean? If a dead man was propped up against a wall and a seductive woman was to walk in front of him, he would not even blink an eye. This is precisely the response that God wants us to have towards the appeal of sin.

When did we die to sin? We died to sin when we became Christians. At that moment, we became part of Christ; we share in all His past achievements. When He was crucified, we were crucified with Him: “I am crucified with Christ...” (Galatians 2:20). When He was buried, we were buried: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death...” (Romans 6:4). When Christ arose, we rose from the dead: “If ye then be risen with Christ...” (Colossians 3:1).

3. Compare the Law of Sin to the Law of Gravity.

It is one thing to say that we are dead to sin. It is quite a different matter to experience it. Yet, this is precisely what God wants us to do on a continuing basis. We can do this by picturing the law of gravity and the law of the Spirit as the principle of aerodynamics.

Picture an eagle soaring in the air. If that eagle folded in its wings, it would begin falling to the ground because it always operated the same way under the same conditions. All that the eagle must do to stop falling is to stretch out its wings. The air rushing over its wings sets up a new force. It is the principle of aerodynamics. This principle is greater than the law of gravity. It does not annihilate the law of gravity – it overcomes it. If we stop meditating in the face of a temptation we begin to fall. Falling is a very real experience. It does not take very many seconds to be defeated.

How do we overcome the law of sin? God designed the eagle to soar in the air and God designed the Christian to speak His truth in his heart day and night. God tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), to meditate on His truth day and night (Psalm 1), and to speak the truth in our hearts (Psalm 15:2).

This weaving of the Word into our thoughts is equivalent to the Hebrew phrase of “waiting upon the Lord.” God promises that as long as we meditate on His truth, we will soar above the power of temptations. “But they that wait upon the Lord... shall mount up with wings as eagles...” (Isaiah 40:31).

Satan wants us to believe that when we start falling, there is nothing that we can do but surrender to the temptation. However, all we need to do is to stretch out those spiritual wings by quoting Romans 6. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin....”

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In a few moments the temptation will lose its power and appeal, and we will once again soar above temptation. In this way, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus lifts us up above the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:20)

Why it is fruitless to pray for victory: One of Satan's favorite tricks is to get us to pray for victory while we are falling into temptation. The prayer is not very effective because it is not based on Scriptural truth. God does not want us to pray for victory that He has already provided in Christ. We were part of Christ's victory when we died and rose again with Him.

Why we must meditate the moment that we are tempted: Just as the eagle has only a few seconds to stretch out its wings before falling to the ground, so we have only a few moments to visualize Romans 6 before we fall into temptation.

4. Personalize the truth of Romans 6.

Part of the process of engrafting Scripture is turning it into a first-person prayer. As soon as you have a thorough grasp of Romans 6, begin to quote it to the Lord in the following way: "What shall I say then? Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall I, being dead to sin, live any longer therein? Don't I know that when I was baptized into Christ I was baptized into His death?" After personalizing this Scripture, there is one more important step to follow. It is identifying the particular temptation that Satan would bring to us. Rather than using the word "sin", name the temptation. For example, if you are tempted to lust, quote: "What shall I say then? Shall I continue to lust that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall I, being dead to lust, live any longer therein?" If you are tempted to be bitter, quote: "What shall I say then? Shall I continue to be bitter that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall I, being dead to bitterness, live any longer therein?"

5. Make no provision for the flesh.

If we desire Christ's victory over a particular temptation, but we have provided the means to continue the temptation, we are only deceiving ourselves. God commands us: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). This means that we cleanse our life and our home of every item that grieves the Holy Spirit and contributes to spiritual defeat.

PROVISIONS FOR THE FLESH	DATE REMOVED
TV programs presenting humanistic philosophies and sensuality	
Music that violates God's standards	
Sensual books and magazines	
Habit-forming drugs and drinks	
Occult material	
Friends who influence you to violate God's standards	
Objects which have evil or improper associations	
Clothing which defrauds	
Other _____	

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6. Become accountable for consistency.

Go to those who are spiritually responsible for you, such as your parents, your partner, church leaders, or mature Christian friends, and ask them if they would regularly check up on your progress toward spiritual achievement. Tell them what your spiritual goals are and give them precise questions which they can ask.

SAMPLE SPIRITUAL GOALS	SAMPLE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS
Engrafting Scripture into my soul	May I please hear Scripture that you have memorized in the past week?
Reading the Bible daily	What did you get from your Bible reading this morning?
Meditation on Scripture while going to sleep	What Scripture did you use to put yourself to sleep last night?
Claiming Christ's victory over temptation	Did you quote Romans 6 the last time you were tempted? Did you overcome the temptation?

7. Be alert and obedient to promptings which are in harmony with Scripture.

It is not enough to reckon ourselves dead to sin. We must also be alive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This means that we learn how to discern the promptings of God's Spirit and then promptly obey them. God's promptings will always be consistent with God's Word. He will never tell us to do something which is contrary to Scripture. In Romans 6, we are told to obey the prompts of the Holy Spirit in the same way that we obeyed the promptings of our sinful nature. "...As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Romans 6:19).

How We Yield to Sin

1. We experience a sinful desire (e.g., to look at a sensual picture or television program).
2. We visualize (imagine) the sensual pleasure that we would receive from this act.
3. We make a decision to fulfill our sensual desire.
4. We become the servant of sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are..." (Romans 6:16).
5. We yield the members of our body to carry out the sensual pleasure (our hands to pick up the pornographic material or turn on the T.V.; our eyes to look at the lewd material, our minds to imagine further evil).

How We Yield to God

1. We experience a Scriptural prompting (e.g., to invite someone for a meal, to acknowledge we are wrong).
2. We visualize the action required to obey this prompting.
3. We make a decision to obey the prompting.
4. Our decision confirms that we are God's servant.
5. We yield the member of our body to carry out God's prompting (we use our mouth to invite someone for a meal, our hands to prepare it). Romans 12:1-2