

10 Practical Steps in Following Jesus

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Step 9: What to Watch Out For

Temptation and how to deal with it

We are born with a bias to go off course just like a lawn bowl. The Bible says our old nature is responsible for this. As a result we always turn away from the straight course set by God's Word. When we are born again and we become one of God's children, we are still able to sin but we no longer have to. We are free to learn to achieve what God wants and not to mess it up as we did in the past. It is not necessary for a Christian to sin because God has given us the power to resist the temptation to sin.

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

(I Corinthians 10:13)

We do not have to yield to any temptation to sin because God will give us help and strength to resist and overcome if we look to Him.

What if we do sin?

Temptation to sin is not sin. Even Jesus was tempted (see Matthew 4:1-11). It is yielding to temptation that is sin. Even if we do fail, we have forgiveness available to us in Jesus. All we have to do is confess to God that we have let Him down in whatever area and ask Him to forgive us and He will. God will forget we ever did wrong. Jesus was punished, judged and condemned for all sins, therefore, if we ask God for forgiveness, we can forget about that sin and go on with life, clean and right before God (see I John 1:9).

Jesus can help us

"For we do not have a high priest (Jesus) who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin."

(Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus experienced the same temptations to sin as we do and yet He resisted them all and didn't sin once. He can help us to do the same if we give our lives over to Him.

Reap what you sow

There is a principle in God's Kingdom that is universal: You reap what you sow (see Luke 6:38). If you sow living in wilful sin and disobedience to God you will reap misery, selfishness and a sense of failure. But if you sow a life that is pleasing to God you will be fulfilled in your life on earth. This means we have to live as God wants and not as we feel we want to. God will help us to turn away from any temptation to sin if we let Him. Our rewards in heaven depend on what we do now (see I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Who is satan anyway?

Satan or the devil is a fallen angel of God who rebelled against God because of pride. He is our enemy because he stands against everything that is of God.

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.”

(I Peter 5:8,9)

God shows us in the Bible that we need to watch out in case the devil gets a foothold in our lives (see Ephesians 4:27). The devil is not a gentleman. He wants our destruction and he will look for our weaknesses and play on them at the worst possible moments. We need to submit ourselves to God and resist the devil and he will flee from us (see James 4:7).

“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”

(I John 3:8)

“Having disarmed the powers and authorities (of the devil), he (Jesus) made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross.”

(Colossians 2:15)

The devil is real and he is your enemy. One of his most effective weapons is discouragement, so watch out for him (see II Corinthians 2:11). Remember though, Jesus did triumph over the devil and all his powers (called demons) on the Cross. We are in Jesus (see Colossians 3:3) and therefore we have also been given authority over the devil and his demons. The devil has to give way if we resist him with a clean heart before God and in the authority of the name of Jesus.

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

(I Peter 2:9)

Questions and tips:

1. Do you think a Christian just stops sinning and begins to live righteously without having to do anything about it himself? (Colossians 3:5-14; Philippians 2:12,13; I John 1:8-2:2)
2. Does God ever tempt us? (James 1:13-15)
3. Where is the devil now in relation to Jesus? (Ephesians 1:19-23)
4. Will the devil (or satan) try to influence our thinking? (II Corinthians 4:4; II Corinthians 11:3,14)
5. Read the following verses for your encouragement: Philippians 4:13; James 1:2-4; I John 4:4.

Prayer

Almighty God, I thank you that you have taken from me the natural bias towards sinful living. I know that I will be tempted to sin but I ask you to give me the strength to resist any temptation that comes my way. I want to follow you and please you. I recognise also that satan will attempt to cause me to fail you. I thank you that you have won a complete victory over satan and all his works in Jesus and I again submit my life to you. Having done this I know that when I resist the devil he will flee from me. I pray this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.