

Keys to Overcoming Temptations in your life.
Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

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I have been asked lately how a person can overcome addictions and sin in their lives. Many people have testified that they have tried to quit harmful habits and are successful for a short period of time and sometimes even for long periods of time, but eventually they fall back into the same old lifestyle that they struggle to get away from.

Today I want to speak the Word of God to you that you might gain faith to believe and receive the deliverance that God has promised to every believer.

First of all, you need faith that God will forgive you for your sins and deliver you. In Romans chapter 10, verses 8-17.

The Scriptures tell us to declare the word of faith that is in our mouth and in our hearts as it is preached by God's servant. If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. Salvation comes through hearing the Word of God delivered, believing it and confessing it with your mouth. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Verse 11 says that whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. This promise is to anyone who believes as God is Lord over Jews and Gentiles alike. He is rich unto all who call upon him and those who call upon his name (Jesus) shall be saved.

The question is "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they are sent? As it is Written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things?"

Not everyone who hears the gospel believes the words that are spoken through the servants of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing from the word of God. Even in the Old Testament days, people rebelled and scoffed at the warnings and instructions of the prophets of God who tried to reach out and deliver the people from God's judgment on a sinful people.

Accepting Christ as your Savior is a major step in being delivered from the bondages of sinful habits and addictions.

Isaiah 40:31 reads like this: "Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They will soar on wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Satan would like to put it in your mind that there is no hope for you to be delivered. You may have tried many times but every time you failed. With each failure, you have less hope of ever being free from the bondage.

Look at Luke 8:43. A woman had a disease that caused her to bleed and she suffered with it for 12 long years. She had spent all of her money on physicians who offered her no relief or deliverance from her problem.

When she learned that Jesus was in the area, she came to where he was and said within herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." See Matthew 9:20. But Jesus turned around and when he saw her, he said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole." And the woman was made whole that same hour.

In Matthew 21:21, Jesus declares that if you have faith and don't doubt, you can say to this mountain "Be thou removed and be cast into the sea and it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

A mountain is anything that is an obstacle in your path. What is hindering you from enjoying freedom in the Holy Spirit? Speak the words of faith that God has given to you and he promises that it will be done for you.

Cast into the sea refers to distancing yourself from the habit, the addiction, or the works of the flesh that hinder you from living a victorious life. Jesus also said that your sins will be cast into the sea of forgetfulness never to be remembered against you again. He delivers, he forgives and he forgets! You can have victory in your life where you will remember the past but it will not have the hold on your life that produces regrets, remorse, guilt, shame, and steals your hope that you can ever be free from the burdens of the past. Jesus desires to make you a new creature.

Look at 1 Corinthians 5:17. This is what it says. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things become new." We can be reconciled to God and it is like we had never transgressed his commandments. We are forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ and we can have a relationship with our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Luke chapter 17, Jesus taught about forgiveness. This is a key to gaining freedom from addictions. I have counseled with people who have deep bitterness and hatred in their hearts towards others who have committed wrong acts against them. Jesus addressed this issue by stating that if we don't forgive others of the wrongs they have done unto us, then our heavenly Father will not forgive us of our transgressions. In the Lord's Prayer, it states, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." That sometimes is a hard pill to swallow. As Jesus was speaking to his disciples, they realized that they didn't measure up to the yardstick that Jesus was holding up for them. They proclaimed, "Lord, increase our faith."

Jesus answered them by saying this: "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

Look at how Jesus handled the tempter in Matthew chapter 4. There are three areas in which Satan tempts mankind. It was what he used with Eve in the Garden of Eden, and he has never

changed his tactics. The three areas are lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Jesus was led out into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and he was hungry.

Satan came to him and said, "Since you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread." Jesus answered Satan with the Word of God, Deuteronomy 8:3.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"

Then the devil took him up into the holy city and set him on a pinnacle of the temple. He said to him, "Since you are the Son of God, cast yourself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and in their hands they shall bear you up lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. Psalm 91:11.

Satan used Scripture to persuade Jesus, but he distorted the meaning of the verses. Jesus once again used Scripture to overcome the temptation, See Deuteronomy 6:16 "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Then the devil took him up on an exceeding high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He told Jesus that he would give them all to Jesus if he would bow down and worship Satan. Jesus responded with these words:

"Get behind me Satan for it is written, you shall worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." Deuteronomy 6:13.

Then Satan left him and angels came and ministered to Jesus.

The word of God is powerful and is the tool that Jesus has given to us to overcome temptation. King David said, "Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11.

I encourage you to memorize the word of God that applies to the area that is troubling you and use the verses to help you gain victory over Satan's temptations that he uses on you to cause you to fall.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Hear the Word of God, believe, repent, be baptized in Jesus' name and be filled with the spirit of God. Grow by reading the word, fellowshiping with other believers and spend time in prayer and being thankful to God for his wonder working power in your life. You will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony!

Revelation 12:11.