



Being useful to the Master . . .

Triumph Over Temptation

Everyone faces temptation. Your response to temptation impacts not only *your* life but, often, the lives of others. The apostle Paul told Timothy, a committed young minister of the first century, that believers can demonstrate God's grace, honor Christ, and be useful in service by cleansing themselves from things that lead to temptation.

2 Timothy 2:20-21, Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. ²¹Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

God's "large house" (all those who claim to be Christian) has precious vessels (true believers) and earthly vessels (Christians in name only). Vessels become precious, not because of skill, talent, or merit, but because God's grace makes them a new creation with a nature where the Holy Spirit dwells through faith in Jesus Christ.

However, believers in Christ can succumb to temptations that detrimentally impact their usefulness to Jesus. When Paul states "if anyone cleanses himself of these *things*" (2 Timothy 2:21 above), to what is he referring? Most commentators agree that he means believers should not associate with vessels of dishonor. But what defines a "vessel of dishonor"? In context, these detrimental vessels are probably people who teach and practice sin mentioned previously in this chapter, such as . . .

- becoming entangled in the affairs of everyday life (2 Timothy 2:4);
2 Timothy 2:4, No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.
- exhibiting faithlessness (2 Timothy 2:13);
2 Timothy 2:13, If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.
- wrangling about words (2 Timothy 2:14);
2 Timothy 2:14, Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.
- accepting worldly and empty chatter (2 Timothy 2:16);
2 Timothy 2:16, But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness
- straying from the truth (2 Timothy 2:18);
2 Timothy 2:18, [Avoid false teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus] men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some *[insert added]*
- accepting wickedness (2 Timothy 2:19).
2 Timothy 2:19, Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

A few years earlier, in a letter to the Ephesians, Paul stated the purpose of a believer, a vessel for honor.

Ephesians 2:10, For we are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. *[insert added]*

Obviously, there are vessels in Christ's church who are useful to the Lord. However, the church also has vessels who may not be useful to the Lord. What causes this difference in usefulness? Believers in Christ who do not resist worldly, fleshly, or demonic temptations become entangled in sin, thereby hindering their usefulness to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Being useful for Christ requires living for Christ, which includes consistent, biblical triumphs over temptation. Realistically, how can a person consistently triumph over temptation?

The specter of temptation impacts everyone, but the well-known phrase "just say no" applies to this common battle. Let's examine Joseph, a biblical figure who was faced with grave temptation yet refused to yield to ungodliness. Joseph

was Jacob's youngest son and was sold by his brothers into slavery to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver, (Genesis 37:26-28),

Genesis 37:26-28, Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?"²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Joseph eventually found himself in the household of Potiphar, an Egyptian officer, who bought him from the Ishmaelites (Genesis 39:1).

Genesis 39:1, Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.

Because the Lord was with Joseph, he became quite successful (Genesis 39:2).

Genesis 39:2, The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.

Potiphar saw and acknowledged that the Lord was with Joseph; thus, Joseph found favor in his master's eyes. As a result, Joseph became Potiphar's personal servant and later overseer of his entire household (Genesis 39:3-4).

Genesis 39:3-4, Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and *how* the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge.

When all seems to be coming up roses, the thorns of temptation often arise to test one's resolve. Joseph's thorns came from Potiphar's wife, who persistently made a bold proposition to Joseph, which he consistently rebuffed.

Genesis 38:6b-12, Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.⁷ It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me *here*, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge.⁹ There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

¹⁰As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her *or* be with her.¹¹ Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside.¹² She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

Joseph did exactly what both Solomon and Paul later commanded God's people to do when tempted with immorality (Proverbs 5:1-8; 1 Corinthians 6:18).

Proverbs 5:1-8, My son, give attention to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding;² That you may observe discretion and your lips may reserve knowledge.³ For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech;⁴ But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.⁵ Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of Sheol.⁶ She does not ponder the path of life; her ways are unstable, she does not know *it*.⁷ Now then, *my* sons, listen to me and do not depart from the words of my mouth.⁸ Keep your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house,

1 Corinthians 6:18, Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

As a result, one would expect Joseph to receive appreciation and accolades as an honorable and trustworthy servant. However, from the world's perspective, no good deed deserves to go unpunished. When Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of immoral conduct toward her, presenting his garment as evidence, Joseph immediately lost his job and his freedom. He resisted temptation, fled Potiphar's house, remained a man of honor . . . and went straight to jail.

Scripture does not promise favorable responses from the world for those who do good works that honor God. However, in God's economy, plummeting to lower circumstances often allows one to become more "useful to the Master."

God did not abandon Joseph in jail. The lower that Joseph's fortune plunged, the more divine grace he received.

Genesis 39:21 & 23b, But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer . . .^{23b} whatever he [Joseph] did, the LORD made to prosper." [*insert added*]

Even though Joseph was an Old Testament personality, he received a New Testament promise.

1 Peter 5:6, Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.

God eventually raised Joseph to the second highest position in Egypt and later reunited him with his family. As the number two man in Egypt, Joseph managed the nation's economy during a severe famine. As a result, Egypt prospered as other nations starved.

Joseph was "a vessel for honor, sanctified (set apart), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." The good works he performed were far reaching. He later told his brothers, "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 45:7-8).

WHAT DID JOSEPH DO THAT WE CAN EMULATE?

WHAT SCRIPTURAL PRECEPTS AND PRINCIPLES HELP US TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION?

First, develop and maintain a mind set on things of the Spirit and associated divine principles such as loving God and loving others (Matthew 22:36-40, Romans 8:5-8, Colossians 3:1-3).

Matthew 22:36-40, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"³⁷ And He [Jesus] said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment.³⁹ The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." *[insert added]*

Romans 8:5-8, For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Colossians 3:1-3, Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Joseph recognized that acting on the temptation to sin with Potiphar's wife was, first and foremost, a great evil and sin against God, a sad reality that King David experienced centuries later (Psalm 51:4).

Psalm 51:4, [David speaking to God] Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. *[insert added]*

Joseph immediately responded to the temptress, "How then could I do this great evil and sin against God"? (Genesis 39:9b)

Joseph also recognized the potential results of sin and how his deeds would affect his master.

Genesis 39:8-9a, But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge.⁹ There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife . . ."

Effective temptations always make false promises (for example – more, better, or lasting satisfaction, contentment, or happiness). If the tempter had to follow truth in advertising, each temptation would contain a disclaimer listing its harmful effects. Such disclaimers would include adverse mental, physical, emotional, social, relational, financial, and/or spiritual consequences. Joseph recognized those effects, which strengthened his resolve not to sin.

Second, faithfully pray that God keeps you from temptation's presence and influence.

Matthew 26:41, Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. *(Jesus said this to His sleeping disciples prior to His arrest that led to His crucifixion)*

2 Peter 2:9a, the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation . . .

The last nine words in Matthew 26:41 ("the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak") do not provide an excuse for succumbing to temptation as if to say, "I would not have sinned if my flesh wasn't so weak." Instead, these words explain the reason to pray because when one relies on personal willpower, he or she is unable to withstand sinful desires.

Romans 7:18-19, For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

Pray consistently so that you will not succumb to temptation and the evil one.

Third, the fact that our flesh is weak should compel us to seek ever increasing dependence on God. Our inherent weakness should remind us to seek adequacy and confidence through God's wisdom and strength instead of trusting in the world or our flesh.

Proverbs 3:5-7, Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Proverbs 3:26, For the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught [keep you from being tempted and entangled in sin]. *[insert added]*

1 Corinthians 15:10, But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

2 Corinthians 3:5, Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.

Philippians 2:13, For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

1 John 3:9, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot [continually] sin, because he is born of God." *[insert added]*

Other verses indicate that our strength comes from God.

Psalm 46:1, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 73:26, My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Habakkuk 3:19a, The Lord GOD is my strength ...

Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

1 Peter 4:11, Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Believers in Christ have victory in Him, and, therefore, can triumph over temptation if, as genuine disciples of Jesus, they follow their Lord, Savior, and Master.

Luke 9:23b, If anyone wishes to come after Me [Christ], he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. *[insert added]*

1 John 4:4, You are from God, little children, and have overcome them [those who are anti-Christ]; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. *[insert added]*

As a believer, Christ has freed you from the power of sin.

Romans 6:22, But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

The Apostle Paul provides another reason for relying on God, saying:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10, And He [God] has said to me [Paul], "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. *[inserts added]*

Fourth, realize that temptations to sin (through lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life) are not from God but from the world, which is under Satan's power.

2 Corinthians 4:3, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

James 1:13, Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God;" for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

1 John 2:16-17, For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Revelation 12:9a, ... the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world

Temptations will always appeal to your selfish desires in an effort to undermine your faith.

See *Living by Feelings or Living by Faith* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Living%20by%20Feelings%20or%20Living%20by%20Faith.pdf>

Fifth, take up the full armor of God which He provides to believers in Jesus Christ (*see Ephesians 6:11-17, printed below*).

- gird your loins with truth (Ephesians 6:14a)
- put on the breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14b)
- have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15)
- take up the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16)
- put on the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17a)
- use the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17b)

Ephesians 6:11-17, Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,¹⁵ and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*.¹⁷ And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Because Satan is a tempter, a deceiver, and a destroyer, he never has your best interests at heart; and he hates you and every other believer. He wants to destroy you or, at a minimum, derail your usefulness to Jesus Christ, your Master.

John 8:44b [Jesus describing the devil's nature], "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies." [*insert added*]

1 Thessalonians 3:5, For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

2 Thessalonians 3:3, But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.

Hebrews 2:18, For since He Himself [Jesus] was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. [*insert added*]

Hebrews 4:15-16, For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 3:8, the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Never forget that we, as faithful believers, are in a spiritual battle that requires the full armor of God for both protection and provision in our useful service to the Master.

Our Lord and Savior used the sword of the Spirit when the devil tempted Him to indulge the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Jesus responded each time using the words: "It is written" (**Matthew 4:4, 7, 10**).

Matthew 4:4, But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

Matthew 4:7, . . . "it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Matthew 4:10, Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Jesus' replies to Satan demonstrated the power and effectiveness of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (described as such in Ephesians 6:17).

Hebrews 4:12, For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Sixth, not only did Jesus use the whole armor of God, relying on Scripture for strength and wisdom in a very difficult circumstance (after fasting 40 days and 40 nights and becoming hungry), but our Savior also trusted the Spirit's leading and empowering.

Matthew 4:1, Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

On the surface, Matthew 4:1 appears to contradict what God's Word says in James 1:13, which claims, "God cannot be tempted by evil." Actually, Matthew 4:1 corroborates, not contradicts, James' words.

James 1:13, Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

The original word for tempt in both Matthew 4:1 and James 1:13 means "**to try, make trial of, test [someone], for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself**" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). When God tests someone, His purpose is to show that His grace and the person's character can withstand the test. On the other hand, the devil will try to use the person's selfish desires to draw the person away from God's grace and into sin's destructiveness.

Scripture says Jesus was *tempted by the devil* . . . not by the Spirit. The Spirit led Him into the wilderness to prepare Him for His public ministry, which involved withstanding temptation and demonstrating consistent obedience to the Father.

Because God is holy, He always does what is right. Because He is Himself truth, Jesus will not fall for lies enticing Him to sin. While on the earth, Jesus laid aside His divine rights as God the Son and lived as a human. The devil undoubtedly believed that Jesus, as a human, was vulnerable to his satanic enticements. Scripture says that Jesus "had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Hebrews 2:17). So Jesus was "tempted in all things as we are yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Rather than succumb to sin, Jesus overcame every enticement to sin and showed that He can help those who face similar temptations today.

Hebrews 2:17-18, Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15, For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we *are*, yet without sin.

As a result, Jesus was the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, despite the devil's efforts to derail His redemptive mission. Jesus obeyed the Spirit before the temptations and received personalized ministry from angels afterward (Matthew 4:11).

Matthew 4:11, Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Regarding temptation, Scripture urges Christ's followers to depend on the Spirit and so guard themselves from anything hindering their growth in Christ. For example:

Galatians 5:13a, 16, 18, 25, ¹³For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh . . . ¹⁶walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh . . . ¹⁸if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law . . . ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18, And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with [controlled by] the Spirit. *[insert added]*

For further reflection . . .

As we pursue Christ-likeness, we need to follow Joseph's and Jesus' examples and set our minds on loving God, loving others, praying, depending on God, recognizing the source of temptation, taking up the full armor of God, and relying upon the Word of truth and its author, the Spirit of truth. In Christ's fleshly absence, both His Word and His Spirit help us acquire wisdom and strength with which to overcome the world and its temptations.

John 16:13a, But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth

John 17:17 [Jesus praying to His Father concerning His followers], Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. *[insert added]*

1. When you succumb to temptation, the basic reason for doing so is either spiritual ignorance or willful

disobedience. (See **Your Way or God's Way . . . Your Choice** at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Your%20Way%20or%20Gods%20Way.pdf>)

2. To avoid the clutches of sin, believers are provided a “way of escape” that involves personal responsibility.

1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

God's Word directs us to:

- Pray
 - at all times in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)
Ephesians 6:18, With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.
 - without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
1 Thessalonians 5:17, Pray without ceasing
- Flee
 - immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18)
1 Corinthians 6:18, Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.
 - idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14)
1 Corinthians 10:14, Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.
 - foolish and harmful desires as well as the love of money (1 Timothy 6:9-12)
1 Timothy 6:9-12, But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses
 - youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22)
2 Timothy 2:22, Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
- Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (**1 Timothy 6:11-12**; **2 Timothy 2:22** printed above)
- Submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7)
James 4:7, Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
- Persevere and acquire hope through the encouragement of God's Word (Romans 15:4)
Romans 15:4, For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- Serve fellow believers (Galatians 5:13) and bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
Galatians 5:13, For you were called to freedom, brethren, *only do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
Galatians 6:2, Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

God's promises are certain

John 15:7, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

1 John 4:4b, greater is He [the Spirit] who is in you than he who is in the world [*insert added*]

1 John 5:4 & 14, For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. . . .¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

As a believer, always remember that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit with a distinct purpose of glorifying God in every aspect of your life.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

3. When believers sin, they are to

- confess to the Lord (1 John 1:9) and to fellow believers as appropriate as well as to pray for one another (James 5:16).

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

James 5:16, Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

- begin again to be a doer of the Word (James 1:25),

James 1:25, But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

- continue onward in your walk in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 3:12-14).

Ephesians 4:1, Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

Philippians 3:12-14, Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Believers have abundant opportunities to be useful to our Lord Jesus Christ. This Christ-honoring usefulness is linked to God-honoring characteristics of dying to self, growing in Christ, and consistently relying on divine power to triumph over temptation. May God receive all the glory.