

SEVEN STEPS TO ESCAPE TEMPTATION

The temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (NLT)

It is not a sin to be tempted. The Bible says Jesus was tempted just like we are, but he never sinned. God will never get angry with you when you are tempted. He wants to show you a way out. Here are seven biblical steps that will help you escape temptation.

Step 1: Get into the Word

When Jesus was tempted, his only defense was the Word of God. He said, "It is written ... It is written ... It is written." You cannot say, "It is written," if you don't know what is written.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

PSALM 119:11 (NIV)

Step 2: Identify your vulnerabilities

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

MATTHEW 26:41 (NIV)

Notice that Jesus said it's not enough just to pray. You also have to watch. Be on your guard. Ask yourself these questions:

When am I most tempted?

What day of the week? What time of day?

Where am I most tempted?

At work? At a friend's house? At the mall? At a sports bar? Perhaps it's in the kitchen or in front of the computer? You need to be honest with yourself and admit your area of vulnerability.

Who is with me when I'm most tempted?

Am I most tempted when I'm alone? When I'm with friends who lead me in the wrong direction? When I'm with a crowd of strangers, and I think nobody would know me?

How do I feel before I'm tempted?

What is the emotional trigger? Is it frustration, exhaustion, anger, stress? Is it boredom or restlessness? Is it loneliness or self-pity?

Step 3: Plan what you're not going to do

Plan carefully what you do...Avoid evil and walk straight ahead. Don't go one step off the right way.

PROVERBS 4:26-27 (GNT)

Plan in advance to stay away from people, places, or circumstances that cause you to be vulnerable to temptation. If you don't want to get stung, stay away from the bees. Plan what you're not going to do and then stick to your plan.

Step 4: Guard your heart

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.

JAMES 1:14 (NLT)

Temptation is an inside job. The Devil can't make you do anything. He can try to lure you into temptation, but your actions come from your own decisions and your decisions reflect the condition of your heart.

Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.

PROVERBS 4:23 (NLT)

Step 5: Pray for deliverance

The prayer of deliverance can be boiled down to just one word: Help! When your back is against the wall, when you're in over your head, when it seems everything and everyone is conspiring for your downfall, pray the prayer of deliverance. Call out to God for help.

God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (NLT)

Step 6: Refocus your attention

Whatever gets your attention gets you. The battle for sin always starts in your mind. The only way to win that battle and escape temptation is to change your focus and think about something else.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)

Step 7: Find a friend

You need a spiritual partner to live a spiritual life. If you had a trusted friend to whom you could confess your temptations, you would have fewer sins to confess to God. If you want to have that kind of friend, you must be that kind of friend.

Two are better than one because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help his friend get up. But how tragic it is for the one who is all alone when he falls. There is no one to help him get up.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 (GNT/GW)