

a weapon that will make your thoughts obey Jesus Christ? The Bible says, *“The word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are”* (Hebrews 4:12) [NLT].

Jesus used God’s Word when Satan tempted him. Three times he resisted by saying, *“It is written”* - Matthew 4:4-10. We can use God’s powerful Word as well. It is up to us to exercise faith and obey what God says. This means, to find strength to overcome temptations, we must be equipped with Bible knowledge. It is difficult to face temptation with a *“I do not know what God thinks about this.”* Often our heart deceives us, because the temptation looks and sounds good. By daily Bible reading, we must build up a reservoir of Bible Truth, that rings a bell when we face evil temptations.

Perhaps you think, *“I can look up or Google what God says about this temptation.”* But the truth may be, that you are already hooked and it would not matter what God thinks. However, if you are reading the Bible regularly, you will have the full counsel of God at your disposal.

David said of the Lord, *“I have taken your words to heart so I would not sin against you”* (Psalm 119:11).

4. Refocus your mind with praise

This is often defined as ‘replacement thinking’ or ‘getting your mind on something good.’ How many times have you been tempted to sin, when your heart and mind

were fully concentrated on worship to the Lord? Praising God takes your focus off of yourself and puts it on God.

You may not be strong enough to resist temptation on your own, but as you focus on God, he will come to your aid. He will give you the strength to resist and walk away from the temptation. May I suggest Psalm 147 as a good place to start.

5. Repent quickly when you fail

In several places the Bible tells us, the best way to resist temptation is to flee from it (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). Yet still we all fail from time to time. It is then that we must obey 1 John 1:9. We must turn to the Lord, confess our sins and failures, receive his forgiveness and seek to recover appropriately from the damage done. Notice I didn’t say, repent quickly ‘if’ you fail, but ‘when’ you fail. Having a more realistic view—knowing that at times you will fail—should help you to repent sincerely when you do. It is not the end of the world when you fail, but it is very dangerous to persist in your sin.

These **Five Steps** can help you in the struggle with temptations from within and without. Be strong in the power of the Lord!

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“PMA provides Bible Correspondence courses in English and Spanish at no cost to inmates”

**Five Steps
To Avoid
Temptation**

By Pastor Andy Hollier

**Bible
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2 TIMOTHY 2:15, 3:15-17

FIVE STEPS TO AVOID TEMPTATION

1 Corinthians 10:13

We live in a world of temptations. They come in all shapes and sizes. The News Media along with Television, and the Internet etc., flood our minds with emotive material that stimulates the desire to seek after pleasures that can 'justify the means to an end.' The Banks tell us, that if we want it we can get it! Anything is within our reach.

The results of Temptations are witnessed daily, with the abuse of alcohol, drugs, over eating, gambling, sexual immorality, greed and crime. From government down to the regular worker, there is the ever present temptation to steal, exploit privileges and have a good time doing it.

It doesn't matter what age we are, the daily bombardment of the senses can draw us into any type of wrong thinking and behavior that can have disastrous results like marriage break ups, family fights, financial debt or ruin - just to mention a few.

Christians face temptation like everyone else. Nor do they disappear with age, no matter how long we have been following Christ. There are a few practical things, however, that we can do to grow stronger and smarter in our struggle against sin.

We can learn how to avoid temptation by practicing these **five steps** to give us victory. But remember these steps will be needed for our entire life on earth.

1. Recognize your tendency toward sin

Sometimes as Christians we think we are immune to temptation. We take Biblical texts that talk about God's provisions and we hide in them. The reality is that there are other Bible passages that warn us to be careful how we think and behave because temptations to sin are everywhere and we must be conscious of this.

James 1:12-16 explains that we are tempted when we become enticed by our own natural instincts and desires.

Here's what the Lord says to us through James. *"When a person is tempted and still continues strong, he should be happy. After he has proved his faith, God will reward him with life forever. God promised this to all people who love him. When someone is being tempted, he should not say, 'God is tempting me.' Evil cannot tempt God, and God himself does not tempt anyone. It is the evil that a person wants that tempts him. His own evil desire leads him away and holds him. 15 This desire causes sin. Then the sin grows and brings death. My dear brothers, do not be fooled about this" [ICB].*

The first step toward avoiding temptation, is recognizing our human tendency to be tempted by our own personal desires. Temptation is a fact of life, so don't be surprised by it. Rather, expect to be tempted. Be prepared for it and carefully examine what is going on in your thoughts and emotions, in the light of reality and the consequences.

2. Run away from the temptation

It helps to read other Bible translations

like the New Living Translation of 1 Corinthians 10:13. It says, *"But remember that 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" [NLT].*

Sometimes Christians quote this verse to support their idea of the action they are taking. They are so influenced by the philosophies of the world, that 'any' direction can be justified, so long as they are not caught and seem to overcome.

The truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13, is not that 'the way out' provided by the Lord is what we think makes us feel good or justified to act in our own way, but rather 'facing the temptation' and getting away from it via God's methods. The 'way out' or 'way of escape' will always be based on his revealed will in the Bible and your desire to do what is right and proper in accordance with his will. Often it is a clear 'NO' - God says in the Bible, do not do this! Sometimes it is a prayerful evaluation with no action taken, unless other godly Christians give counsel and help.

When you are face to face with temptation, whatever it is, look for the way out that God has promised and then run as fast as you can.

3. Resist with the Word of Truth

The Bible is different from all other books, in that it is God's Word. God's Word is living and active. Did you know you can carry