

## Successfully Fighting Sin Through Submission

(James 4:7)

- I. Sin is a reality in all men except Jesus Christ Who had to be legally made to be sin to save us. **ROM 3:23; 2CO 5:21.**
  - A. Sin is imputed to all of Adam's posterity. **ROM 5:12.**
  - B. Sin is a genetic spiritual law working in us. **ROM 7:23.**
  - C. All sin, no matter how good they are. **ECC 7:20.**
  - D. To deny this is to commit the sin of *lying against the truth*. **JAM 3:14; 1JO 1:10.**
  - E. Sin is of the devil. **1JO 3:8.**
  
- II. Sin must be renounced.
  - A. When we fail in our walk with God and transgress His law (which is sin, **1JO 3:4**), we are to *confess* and *forsake* that sin. **PSA 32:5; 1JO 1:9; PRO 28:13.**
    1. confess: To declare or disclose (something which one has kept or allowed to remain secret as being prejudicial or inconvenient to oneself); to acknowledge, own, or admit (a crime, charge, fault, weakness, or the like).
    2. forsake: To deny, renounce, or repudiate allegiance to; To give up, renounce. To break off from, renounce (an employment, design, esp. an evil practice or sin; also, a belief, doctrine).
    3. renounce: *trans.* To give up, to resign (†to another), to surrender; *esp.* to give up in a complete and formal manner.
  - B. The only acceptable response to the knowledge of sin in our lives is a verbal disclosure of that specific sin and a forsaking of it by renunciation (the surrender of that area of our life in which we failed and the steps which led to that failure).
  
- III. Successful resistance of sin and the devil requires first a submission to God. **JAM 4:7.**
  - A. submit: To place oneself under the control of a person in authority or power; to become subject, surrender oneself, or yield to a person or his rule, etc.
  - B. This is the fundamental renouncing that must occur: renouncing of self. **MAT 16:24.**
    1. There is an initial renouncing of self in conversion wherein the sinner surrenders his foolish self-government under the lordship of Satan to dependent government under the lordship and authority of Jesus Christ. **ACT 2:36-38.**
    2. This principle of renouncing and submitting must continually be applied in whatever area of our thoughts, words or actions is restricting us from being conformed to "...the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (**EPH 4:13**).
      - a. This is provoked by self-examination measured against the Scripture and by the scrutiny of others who bring Scripture to bear upon the relics of the old man which we have not yet renounced (**2CO 13:5; HEB 3:13**) and should be considered an answer to Biblical prayer like **PSA 139:23-24.**
      - b. As areas of unsubmission are brought to our attention, we must acknowledge their reality and mortify them. **COL 3:5-10.**
      - c. Mind that the *outward* areas of unsubmission are the easier ones to renounce; it is the *inward* ones which are known only to God, Satan and ourselves that are most difficult.
      - d. ANY area of our life where we are not submitting to God is a weakness in our defenses where we give Satan a toehold to build a stronghold.
    3. The genuineness of one's love for God is measured by submission or the lack thereof. **JOH 14:21 c/w PSA 81:15.**

- C. This submission to God can only happen if we truly believe that there is a God Who can be pleased by our submission. **HEB 11:6.**
  - D. It is not just a matter of believing God's existence but also His concern and approachability.
  - E. If we are to submit to God, we must acknowledge God for Who He is, renouncing all distorted perceptions of God that Satan uses to hold us in bondage.
    - 1. Scripture declares that God is eternal, holy, just, intolerant of sin, separate from sinners, etc.
    - 2. Scripture also declares that God is loving, caring, merciful, present, available, approachable, gracious, a Giver of good gifts, nurturing, affirming, accepting, comforting, forgiving, and considerate of our plight. He proved this in Christ.
    - 3. To only see His holiness and enmity against sin to the exclusion of His lovingkindness and mercy paints a distorted picture of God.
    - 4. The truth about God is sometimes filtered through a negative grid of ignorance, false teachers, blasphemous thoughts, unhealthy interpersonal relationships during early developmental years, poor role models of authority figures, etc.
    - 5. As a result, a person's concept of God may be that He is hateful and unconcerned, mean and unforgiving, absent when needed, a "killjoy" who only takes away pleasure, critical and unpleasable, unapproachable, unjust, unfair, arbitrary, unpredictable and untrustworthy.
    - 6. Perhaps the most dangerous distorted perception of God is the delusion that He is like us (**PSA 50:21**), which conveniently justifies our unwillingness to change.
  - F. Submission to God obviously depends upon submission to the truth; therefore we had better be completely convinced that we have a totally reliable source of truth. **1TH 2:13.**
    - 1. Satan must be resisted "...stedfast in the faith..." (**1PE 5:8-9**). c/w **2TH 2:13.**
    - 2. Scripture reveals not only the truth about God, but about Satan and ourselves. This is why the world, the flesh and Satan disparage or hate Scripture: not because of errors but because of its accuracy.
  - G. In submitting to God, we must renounce any blaming of God for our own mistakes. **PRO 19:3; JAM 1:13-14.**
    - 1. Adam tried to cover his error of *commission* wrongly by shifting blame to Eve and ultimately to God. **GEN 3:12.**
    - 2. The wicked, slothful, one-talent servant tried to cover his error of *omission* by the same means. **MAT 25:24.**
    - 3. When we blame any other creature than ourselves for our sins, we are ultimately blaming God Who made that creature. This includes Satan who can only entice but not force you to sin!
    - 4. We must stop justifying ourselves and rather justify God, Whose truth has through one means or another exposed our sin. **JOB 32:2; LUK 7:35.**
  - H. The concept of submission to God begs a critical question: how much do you sincerely desire and intend to submit? Will you stop at being a King Agrippa (**ACT 26:27-28**) or lay it all on the line like Paul? **ACT 26:29; PHIL 3:7-8.**
  - I. Remember that submission precedes resistance.
    - 1. If you are failing to resist temptation in something, could it be because that is an area of your life which you are reluctant to submit to God?
    - 2. Resistance is not futile for the Scripture-submitted soul. **LUK 4:13.**
- IV. By submission to God, resistance of Satan and sin is an attainable reality. **JAM 4:7.**
- A. A major advance in this warfare is the abandonment of all forms of self-righteousness in favor of submission to the righteousness of God. **ROM 10:3-4.**

1. One cannot be a victor over Satan and sin when living a lie that sinners have the power of mustering the righteousness which would fit them to live with God.
  2. Therefore, one must renounce national righteousness, ceremonial righteousness, decisional righteousness, works righteousness, hereditary righteousness, etc. or these delusions will be used against one to hobble him in warfare.
- B. In ourselves we have not the power to resist and overcome Satan; we can of our own selves do nothing. **JOH 15:5 c/w EPH 6:10.**
1. We deceive ourselves if we think we can outwit or outfight Satan at his own game.
  2. Satan brought down sinless Adam and Eve; how much more power does he have over sinful human flesh?
- C. Christ has the power and appeals to Him for deliverance are honored. **1JO 4:4; ROM 10:13.**
1. We appeal to Christ through prayer. **MAT 6:13 c/w PSA 138:3.**
  2. We appeal to Christ through appealing to His word. **MAT 4:1-11.**
  3. Appeals to Christ for deliverance from sin must be sincere.
    - a. Be not as the remnant of Judah who dissembled in their hearts about seeking the right way. **JER 42:1-3, 20.**
    - b. Do you genuinely seek deliverance from sin on God's terms, or is it more of a matter of seeking deliverance on your terms? God is only nigh unto the former. **PSA 145:18.**
- D. Resistance of Satan is to be "...stedfast in the faith..." (**1PE 5:9**). c/w **1JO 5:4.**
1. This brings us again to the word of God. **ROM 10:17.**
  2. Our personal faith is a major piece of armour in this warfare. **EPH 6:16.**
  3. But faith must be grounded in truth! Faith in a deception, delusion, fantasy, fable or any other lie only helps your enemy whose power is the lie. **JOH 8:44.**
  4. Every aspect of resisting Satan, including knowing his power, God's power, and our power through Christ must be based upon the plain truth of Scripture.
    - a. Truth is a frontline piece of armor that of necessity precedes faith. **EPH 6:14.**
    - b. Truth must be consciously chosen over a lie. **PSA 119:30.**
    - c. Truth is vital to our personal sanctification. **PRO 16:6; JOH 17:17.**
    - d. The more we are familiar with Scripture, the greater our ability to resist and overcome him. **1JO 2:14; PSA 119:11.**
    - e. We are thus able to spot Satan's tactics and approach and so *avoid* unnecessary entanglements. c/w **2KI 6:8-10.**
    - f. We see the cover ripped off our own self-deceptions and hypocrisies and renounce them, which deprives Satan of some of his greatest allies.
    - g. We see our hope of deliverance entirely grounded in Christ to Whom we flee for refuge, Who pleads for us when we fail. This strips Satan of the power he wields against us by accusing our consciences. **HEB 6:18; 1JO 2:1-2.**
    - h. We need grace to bear up under tribulation and trials which tend to wear us down, and grace is multiplied through the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus. **2PE 1:2.**
    - i. We gain understanding which facilitates true joy that strengthens us and true hatred of the false ways which corrupt us. **NEH 8:10-12; PSA 119:104.**
  5. Victorious faith is an applied faith that walks in keeping with the knowledge of the truth it embraces. **JAM 1:22-25; 2:19-20.**
- E. Satan is frustrated by the saint who "...keepeth himself..." (**1JO 5:18**).
1. We are to keep ourselves from idols. **1JO 5:21.**

2. We are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. **JAM 1:27.**
  3. We are to keep under our body. **1CO 9:27.**
  4. We are to keep our soul and heart diligently. **DEU 4:9; PRO 4:23.**
  5. We are to keep ourselves from the path and proximity of temptation. **PSA 17:4; PRO 5:8 c/w 7:8; MAT 6:13.**
  6. We are to keep ourselves from the company of corrupt men. **PRO 4:14; 13:20; 22:24-25.**
  7. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God (**JUDE 1:21**) which is obedience to His commandments. **JOH 15:10.**
  8. By such means we keep ourselves from iniquity. **PSA 18:22-23.**
- F. As noted above, Satan loves to accuse our consciences whenever we fail, implying that we are not even God's child, or that we are nothing but hypocrites, or that resistance is obviously futile, and so we should just give up and give in to sin. Beware of “spiritual Stockholm Syndrome” where you develop a sick bond with Satan your captor as a corrupt means of avoiding conflict of soul.
1. When our heart is convinced that we are only worthless losers, we will act like worthless losers since “...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (**MAT 7:17**).
  2. But there is a big difference between *having sin* and *being sin*.
  3. In Christ we are no longer totally depraved sinners; we have been redeemed by the blood of our Savior and are saints who sometimes sin. **ROM 7:21.**
  4. Satan may disrupt our daily victory but not our position and identity in Christ. **ROM 7:22-8:1.**
    - a. But if he can dupe us into believing that we are not in Christ, we will live as though not in Him.
    - b. This underscores again how important truth is to our walk. The truth of what God's word says about believers must be claimed against the deceptions of Satan.
    - c. This is why we must *gird up the loins of our mind* (**IPE 1:13**) and renounce any voices of bad teaching, emotion, imagination or circumstances, etc., that tell us something different than God wrote in His word.
    - d. When we sin it is because we have in some way rejected the truth about the deceitfulness of sin, the sinfulness of sin, the consequences of sin and the power that we have in Christ to overcome Satan and sin.
  5. Nothing less than repentance to the *acknowledging of the truth* will set us free from our captivity. **2TI 2:25-26.**
    - a. acknowledge: To own the knowledge of; to confess; to recognize or admit as true.
    - b. When we sin, the first acknowledgment of truth in our recovery program is an acknowledgment of the fact of our sin. **PSA 51:3-4.**
    - c. The next is an acknowledgment of the truth that we need to forsake or renounce our sin and the paths that led to the sin. **PRO 28:13.**
    - d. Then we must acknowledge the truth about God's cleansing of the sin to set us at liberty from condemnation and from bondage to our past and our nature. **1JO 1:9; JOH 8:11.**
    - e. Then we must acknowledge the truth that submission to the truth is a needed continual exercise to make us free. **PSA 119:45 c/w JOH 8:31-32.**
- V. Do not confuse knowledge of truth or the acknowledgment of the truth with IQ levels. Satan can capture both the learned and the unlearned. **ISA 29:11-12.**

- A. Satan himself is “...full of wisdom...” (**EZE 28:12-14**).
1. Do not be deceived into thinking that a high IQ makes one superior in the war against sin. Worldly wisdom is rather commonly a barrier to submission to Christ. **1CO 1:26**.
  2. Satan has seen and heard things in heaven which are not lawful for us now. **2CO 12:3-4**.
  3. He loves to con men into thinking they have “insider information” about the invisible realm (**COL 2:18**), the “mysteries” of which fools think have been revealed to them alone as chosen vessels of insider information.
    - a. This is occultism: the pretended knowledge of the invisible which has not been revealed by God.
    - b. It stands in opposition to Jesus Christ “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words” (**COL 2:3-4**).
  4. He ably beguiles the worldly-wise. **ISA 47:10; ROM 1:22-23**.
    - a. Academic prowess can be a source of pride, the prelude to destruction. **PRO 16:18**.
    - b. He will appeal to your ego to the maximum possible degree. **ACT 12:21-23**.
    - c. Philosophy (love of wisdom or knowledge) which opposes the wisdom of God in Christ and in Scripture can ensnare believers. **COL 2:8**.
  5. Though he opposes it, he knows the scripture very well and will try to use it against you. Remember his approach to Eve and to Jesus. **2CO 11:3; MAT 4:6**.
    - a. In **GEN 3:1**, Satan cast doubt on God’s words which he obviously knew.
    - b. In **MAT 4:6**, Satan misapplied God’s words which were written for the man who loves and trusts God, not the fool who tempts God. **PSA 91:2, 14**.
    - c. The fear of God is the beginning of true knowledge and wisdom. **PRO 1:7; 9:10 c/w ACT 7:22; HEB 11:24-27**.
  6. One can know the truth and hold it in unrighteousness unto his own condemnation. **ROM 1:18-19; JAM 4:17**.
- C. Satan also ably beguiles the *unlearned and unstable*. **2PE 2:14; 3:16**.
1. One may be unlearned in the sense of ignorance or unlearned in the sense of “...ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (**2TI 3:7**).
  2. It is possible for a man to be very learned, even in the Scriptures, yet not come to the knowledge of the truth because pride, covetousness, feelings, etc., demand that he deny or alter the words which require him to repent. Such a man will only come to whatever degree of knowledge of the truth does not conflict with his will.
  3. The double-minded man who wants God but also wants his own way when God is in his way is set up for takedown through instability. **JAM 1:8**.
- D. The above points underscore the importance of knowing, believing, loving and living the truth which is ultimately in Christ (even the uncomfortable parts) to save us from deception by Satan, by others and by self. **EPH 4:13-15 c/w 1CO 3:18**.
- E. The reason that Satan is able to con both the learned and unlearned is that he cheats by appealing to something deeper in man than head knowledge: *lust* (pleasure, delight, desire). These are emotions, and they can be deceitful (**EPH 4:22**), bringing down Solomons and simpletons. **NEH 13:26; PRO 7:6-23**.
1. James makes clear that failure in resisting temptation is owing to our allowing lust to *lead* us. **JAM 1:14-15**.
  2. This is what happened to Eve. **GEN 3:6**.

3. Satan allures through lust: an appeal to our desire for pleasure. **2TI 3:6; 4:3-4; 2PE 2:18.**
  - a. This is how (as a professional con-artist described his tactics), Satan gets you *under the ether*, promising things that are too good to be true or how special you are. The flatterer is not your friend. **PRO 29:5.**
  - b. In this state, feelings overrule rational thought, and we will buy his lies and rationalize away our inheritance in Christ (victory over Satan).
4. There are illicit pleasures which of themselves are sinful (e.g. intoxication) and there are legitimate pleasures for which Satan will offer a corrupt alternative fulfillment (e.g. fornication instead of marriage).
  - a. Therefore, pleasing oneself is a potential for trouble when not governed.
  - b. This is why we must overrule our emotions/lusts/desires with knowledge of truth. **PRO 23:19, 12; PSA 86:11; 119:11.**
5. Since pain is not pleasure, expect Satan to use pain to discourage you from receiving the truth about endurance, patience and deliverance while he offers you a false relief that is pleasant. **EXO 6:9 c/w JAM 5:10-11; 1PE 5:10.**
  - a. Medicating away physical pain with an analgesic is one thing, but medicating away emotional or spiritual pain with intoxicants, adultery, etc. is a different matter.
  - b. Beware also of false psychiatry that convinces you that the real problem is not your sin but your guilt so you should stop feeling guilty about sin.
  - c. Satan will twist your mind into misinterpreting your circumstances as being hopeless so you will deem self-harm a better alternative than life. **ACT 16:27-28.**
  - d. Charity is the chief spiritual gift but do not discount the importance of faith and hope to get you through this world! **1CO 13:13; ROM 8:23-25.**
6. Pleasing oneself is obviously not the answer in the battle against sin since both unlawful and lawful pleasures can be used against us.
  - a. We are, though, on safe ground when our primary motive is pleasing God, even as Jesus showed us. **JOH 8:29; HEB 13:20-21.**
  - b. Even our desires and pleasures must be submitted to God to successfully fight sin.
  - c. With God as your primary delight, your desires will be wholesome, ordered and fulfilled. **PSA 37:4.**