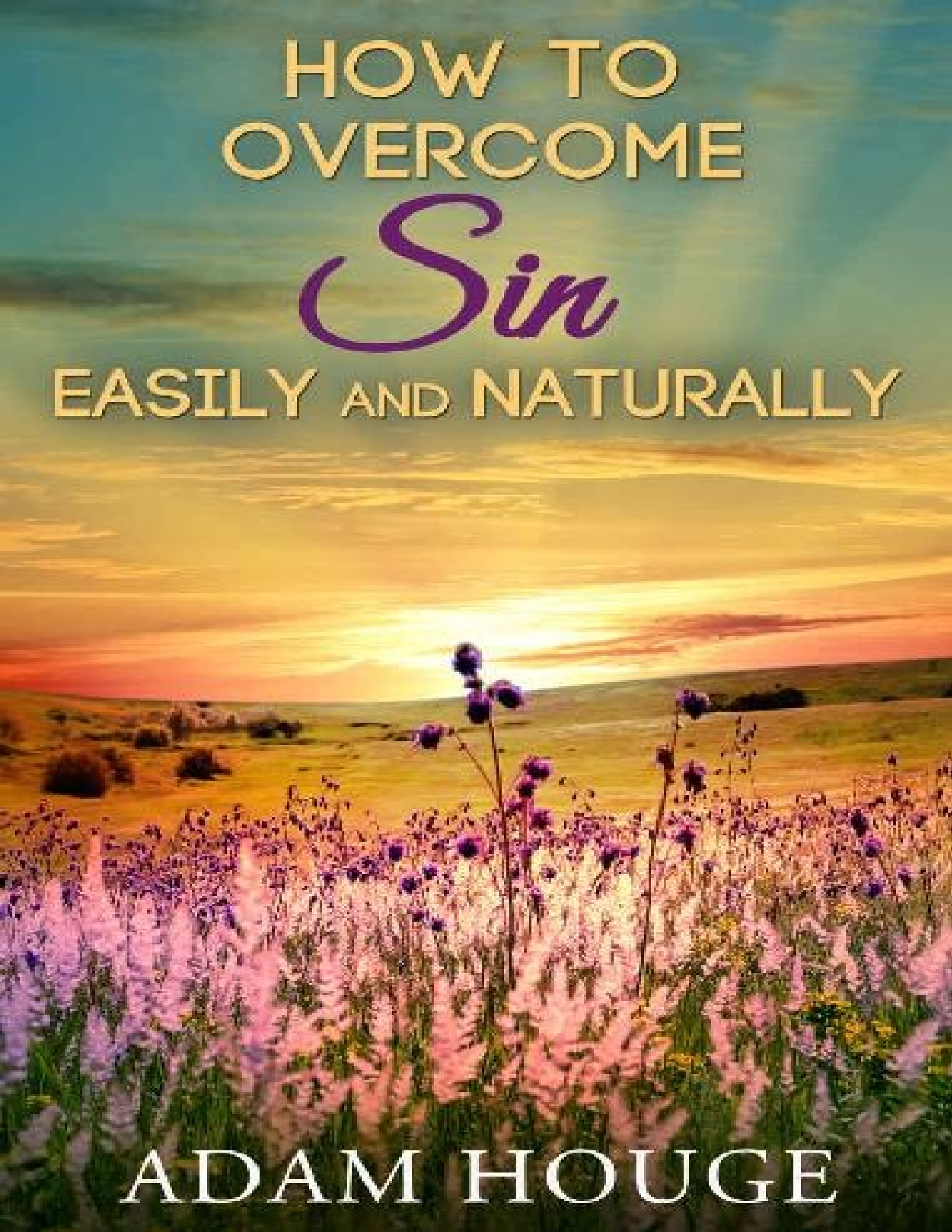
HOW TO
OVERCOME
Sin
EASILY AND NATURALLY
ADAM HOUGE

How to Overcome Sin Easily and Naturally™

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Introduction

Sin has always been the plague of humanity. By it we fell, and because of it we die. Yet we know that there is hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to be free from sin. In Him we have redemption, and because of Him we have strength to overcome all things.

Although we know this, there are times in the Christian life when we may struggle with overcoming a particular issue. Each of us has his or her own individual strengths and weaknesses, but it is by the strength of Jesus that we overcome.

Chapter One

When Sin Become Acceptable

There is no true Christian who automatically accepts his or her sin. At some point, before there is any major issue with sin, there is conviction. When convicted, we seek to turn from our own wickedness to honor the Lord. Yet there are sins that we commit at times without realizing it.

Every instance of sin is like a cockroach. Whenever one is spotted, there are more lurking behind the walls. Similarly, whenever a sin is noticed, there are always more lurking in our hearts, whether we see them or not. No matter how old we are in Christ, and no matter how grown we are in Him, we always need more growth. There will always be an area in which we need growth since we're not yet perfect.

Until then, there are always issues in our hearts, even if we don't realize it. In order to grow in these respects we must train ourselves to look for them with humility. In order to overcome the hidden issues, we must be humble enough to admit our weaknesses when they're brought to our attention.

Sometimes, when we discover a weakness for the first time, we don't want to admit to it. Unfortunately, when we do this, we will never overcome the sin but, instead, only justify it and hide it. Pride hides sin, but humility before Christ covers sin through confession and repentance.

Now, it's not that we want to hide our sins. The statement may sound more sinister than our hearts intend to be. But Satan subtly tempts us through the hidden issue of pride. When we can't admit a fault, the enemy steps in immediately to cement that sin in us. Then, when it's cemented, he moves on to cement another. One day, after many sins of which we're unaware have been firmly fixed within us, we begin to notice one of them.

That one particular issue may have always been there, in some cases, but may have grown worse. In some situations the issue seems to pop up out of nowhere, and we struggle with defeating it. For when we see our sin, we want to grow; as a result, our search for strength begins. We absorb every bit of material we can in our hunt for wisdom to overcome.

Yet such a sin is typically cemented and mortared together by other sins. Therefore, we must have humility to admit our weaknesses when we discover them. There is no measure of learning or wisdom that can help us overcome

unless we first prepare ourselves with humility. Sometimes there is a closet full of hidden things, and when Jesus walks in the room and opens that closet, we will be surprised to see the mess that is inside.

When we seek strength to overcome, we begin searching our own hearts to find the root of the issue. When we search our own hearts, however, we can be sure that a myriad of other issues, of which we were never before aware, will be found. Therefore, we must be humble and ready to make confession of our sins before the Lord. Every victory begins with repentance, and every confession begins with humility. In order to overcome perfectly, we must overcome every little issue that is holding up the sin.

Sin, like a weed, must be pulled up by the roots, but sometimes each sin is connected to another. Like a vast root system, sin depends on more sin for balance and support. If, then, there is an issue with sin, there are more likely other sins under the surface, propping up the main issue. In order to overcome, one must pull up all the roots of the weed so that it may not return.

Now, some such sins that go unnoticed are idleness, gluttony, pride, complacency in our walks, and living for this life rather than for Christ, among others. Idleness is indeed a sin. If we choose to partake in idle activities not pertaining to the Lord, then we are opening a door for an idol. ‘Idol’ literally means “thing of nothingness.” When we’re idle (partaking in nothingness), we will form an idol (a thing of nothingness).

Also, idleness goes hand in hand with gluttony. Most of the time when people think of gluttony, they think of someone overeating. Most gluttony ultimately comes from boredom or idleness. Think of a couch potato sipping his soda and chowing down on a bag of chips.

Likewise, idleness can lead to various forms of gluttony and to overindulgence in the desires of the flesh. There are, in fact, many other forms of gluttony that take place in the Christian life: gluttony in games, TV, the Internet, and all manner of entertainment.

We tend to be gluttonous in our shopping patterns as well. Because of gluttony, compulsive buying is a very lucrative market in today’s society. Unfortunately, we’re always buying things we don’t need and end up having unnecessary excess. Remember that the road to excess is always a gluttonous one.

The flesh constantly desires to be gratified. It wants to be filled with pleasure and, so, indulges itself in entertainment and in everything that brings it joy. God

gives us all things abundantly to enjoy, but let our rejoicing be in the Lord and not in the flesh. When the flesh is allowed to have its desires continually, it strengthens itself against the new creation within you.

We only have twenty-four hours in a day; either we can spend our time filling the spiritual creation with Jesus or we can fill the flesh with its desires. You have to pick one or the other, and unfortunately, by their conduct, many people prove that they prefer to gratify the flesh.

Now, there's nothing wrong with a little enjoyment and a little play here and there, with discretion. But there are some people who give themselves over to it daily and constantly. Such rejoicing in the flesh gives continual strength to the flesh.

When we gratify the flesh with its desires, we "feed it," so to speak. When we feed it, it grows stronger and harder to resist. When we first begin the road to excess and gluttony, our flesh is weak and easy to resist. Then, one day, we notice our sin and can't figure out why it's become so hard to resist. Because it's easy to resist in the beginning, our first nature is to attempt to resist it again—only to find this difficult after we have fed the flesh and given it strength for a long time. Then, when we fail, we no longer know how to overcome, so we begin our search for wisdom.

Sin would be easier to overcome if we were to call it what it is and turn from it when it first begins. Although many Christians do this, not all do it in regard to the seemingly "lesser" sins.

In God's eyes, all sin is alike. Sin is sin, and Jesus hates it. It was on account of sin that He was crucified and because of your sin that He died. He endured the cross not so you can continue to sin or to justify it; rather, He died so that you would be free from it forever, having power over it and being justified by His love, grace, and blood.

The reason why these lesser sins are more common is because of modern conveniences and the heart of the believer. They justify themselves in asking, "What's wrong with a little entertainment?" But a little here and a little there adds up to a whole lot in the end. You should ask yourself instead, "What do I spend more time doing?"

Do you seek to be entertained, buying whatever you feel like just because you can afford it—whether or not you need it? Do you give more time to God or to idle things? How much time do you give to idleness and how much time do you

put into to seeking the Lord, praying, worshiping, meditating on the Holy Spirit, and reading the word?

Seriously, count the amount of time and consider it. Many Christians spend hours everyday day channel surfing, surfing the Internet, filling up their flesh to the full, and just skidding by in their time with God.

“Well, I give God a twenty-minute devotion every day!” some may offer in rebuttal. “Sometimes twice a day—every morning and evening!” But what defines your relationship with the Lord is not only the morning and evening but also everything you do in between. We give entertainment hours of our attention, but God only gets twenty minutes a day?

Whatever you spend more time with is your god. If you’re glorifying the entertainment of the flesh, then you have an idol. Change your heart, and it will transform your life. Learn to spend more time with the Lord than with idle things. If you don’t feel like doing that, then your flesh is attached to your sin and, thus, you’re being complacent and justifying sin.

Jesus gave up His entire life to save you. Is He asking too much by requiring you to do the same for Him? Whatever happened to carrying our crosses and dying to this life? We ***must*** die to this life, that we may truly live for Christ!

Because of sin, people end up living for the here and now in this world rather than for a future and a hope in Christ. They put off in their thoughts the future for which they are reaching in Christ, and they think idly about the next entertaining thing. Such people, without realizing, begin to live for themselves and their desires rather than for the Lord. In this case, they’re feeding the flesh and giving sin strength to rule over them.

Because of this state of heart, such believers end up being complacent in their walk, feeling that they “do enough for God” and are “good with Him.” Although God has grace, He isn’t pleased when we constantly sin without regard for growth. He doesn’t want us to continually stumble in the darkness but, rather, to be filled with the light. When a believer becomes complacent, bondage comes naturally. Then, when we have bondage, sometimes God makes us hate our sin so that we should desire to grow.

Yet all of this could be avoided if a believer would grow sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and obey Him. When we sin regularly, we stop feeling conviction—not only in the sins we commit but over other sins as well.

Conviction is the voice of the Spirit. If you drown His voice out, it won’t be

louder in one area and quieter in another. When some people lose conviction in a particular sin, they feel as if they hear God just fine everywhere else in life. But as with plugging your ears, everything gets harder to hear. When we do this, our flesh begins to rule over us and all we hear are the desires of our own heart, as the whisper of the Spirit grows more and more faint.

It's unfortunate that most churches don't put a lot of emphasis on discerning God's inward voice and obeying conviction. Every church would adamantly agree that one should listen to God and obey Him, but there are many churches where it doesn't come up in the sermon. Some will talk about it, but they don't make sure every believer understands exactly how to operate in the Holy Spirit.

This is a serious tragedy and the major reason for almost every issue that plagues the church today—from church splits to false doctrine to the suffering and broken in the church who go without help, among many other problems. If we were to listen to and obey conviction, we would take care of one another so that there would be less suffering. We would seek the truth together rather than having our own spiritual quests that cause church splits. We would be a body and seek the Lord together as on whole unit. We would seek the truth, speak the same things, and be a body in Christ.

It's a shame that people don't call things for what they are. Rather than calling false doctrine what it is, they say, "You believe something else." Then, because we live in an era of social acceptance and political correctness, they say, "You believe your thing, and I'll believe mine. It's my own personal relationship, anyway." Rather than leading one another to the truth and seeking to be unified in the Spirit, we embark on our own, personal "spiritual" quests.

Whatever happened to being a body and functioning as one unit in Christ? Whatever happened to truth—the one and only doctrine that Jesus handed down to us? Indeed, the Lord calls us to be unified. Even as we read,

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you." 1 Corinthians 1:10–11

All of these sins are too commonly accepted. From idleness and self-indulgence to divisions in doctrine, we should call all things for what they are and seek growth together as one body in Christ. But unfortunately, too many people are interested in maintaining their own opinions of the gospel and calling these

opinions “truths.” They all go about believing their own version of “truth,” thinking that they’re the closest to God and that they have it right.

Yet no one can agree on doctrine, and as a result, many go about their walks arguing with others while struggling with sin issues and not always understanding what they are, how deep they are, or how to overcome them. The Bride of Christ is in disarray and in serious need of an awakening. If we would just listen to the Spirit, we would be more unified and holy in our conduct.

Conviction is the first thing Jesus listened to. Think about it: How many times did Jesus sin? It’s obvious, then, that He must have maintained a tremendous emphasis for Himself on listening to conviction and obeying it.

We should do likewise. Jesus was always listening to the Father and obeying Him. We likewise should place a great emphasis on seeking God’s voice to know His will, and on obeying the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

When we obey our own heart, however, sin slowly turns into joy and becomes more acceptable. It no longer is sin in our opinions, but rather we begin to feel that these sins are lesser things we think God overlooks or doesn’t care about. Yet these “small” issues are the roots of the larger problems we face, both as individuals and as a corporate body in Christ.

If we don’t listen to the Spirit, His voice becomes hard to hear as we starve the spiritual creation. But if we feed the new creation with the things of God, the voice of the Lord becomes stronger.

When we hear God, we must obey Him. If we love the Lord, we must take His voice seriously, no matter how loud or how small and subtle. We must discern if, indeed, the Lord is speaking to us or if our own heart is speaking. Yet sometimes the enemy manipulates our own heart and mimics God to deceive us and tempt us. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to learn the voice of God and to discern it. Then, when we have understanding, we must obey Him, and His Spirit will strengthen us as we do.

Ultimately, if we accept our sins, we’ll never overcome them. Pride will step in, and we’ll ask, “What sin?” while expecting God to overlook it, even as we do. Just because it’s a small issue to us, however, doesn’t make it a small issue to God.

Besides, when we’ve been sinning, our hearts are no longer aligned with His, so how can we claim to know He approves of us or that we know His will? Rather, we ought to call sin for what it is, hate it, and humble ourselves. Confession

leads to salvation, and repentance to the halls of life.

Chapter Two
A Time to Hate

It is written,

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven…” Ecclesiastes 3:1

And also,

“A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” Ecclesiastes 3:8

There is a time to love and a time to hate. But we should always love the Lord and hate our sin! Sin is sin. We need to call it what it is: It’s a nasty, unloving act that always ends in grief. Although sin has the appearance of joy before committing it, it will always end in grief at some point in your life. It may not always be immediately, but at some point, whether in moments, days, or years, you’ll be grieved by your sin. Even unbelievers who are not grieved by sin but, in fact, reject Jesus as Savior will be grieved by their sins at Judgment. All sin always ends in grief, and the only joy it gives is temporary.

Therefore, there is much reason to hate it. We must hate our sins, or we can’t truly overcome them. If you don’t want to be rid of something, you’ll never throw it out.

Like a lazy bachelor who should take the garbage out, so are those who don’t hate their sins. The bachelor looks at the overflowing garbage and says, “Ugh … I should take that out”—even as he proceeds to pull out a beverage and kick back in a recliner instead. After the garbage stinks, he says, “I really need to take that out!” only to seek refuge from the smell in another room and do something else.

Then, when the girl he likes surprises him at the door, he finds himself embarrassed that he didn’t take care of it earlier. Likewise, when Jesus our Beloved comes, we’ll be embarrassed by our deeds if we don’t take repentance and purity seriously. Let us not be caught off guard being sinful, lest we be embarrassed at His coming. Even as it is written,

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He

is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." 1 John 2:28–9

Therefore, let us be diligent to practice righteousness and seek a pure life in Christ, lest we be ashamed at His coming. If we say, "I shouldn't do this," or "I should do that," we'll never actually commit to the right thing. Rather, we have to be fervent in our hearts and say, "I must not sin—I must honor the Lord because I love Him."

This is the beginning of overcoming all sin. First comes the state of heart, and then comes the method. We can have all knowledge in regard to having victory, but it means nothing if we lack the desire and will to overcome.

Now, if you have bondage, it will be very hard to hate your sin in the heat of the moment. You will hate it every moment in between, but when faced with temptation, you'll ignore the voice of conviction and will stumble.

Therefore, you have to force yourself to hate your sin absolutely in the heat of the moment, or you'll never overcome it. When desire is pressed in your heart, push back against it and tell yourself "no." Choose hatred for sin; you will be choosing life. Hate your sin and love Jesus.

Accordingly, it is written,

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom." James 4:7–9

Remember that hate is the action of pushing away and killing, whereas love is the action of drawing near and holding dear. Therefore, push back on the devil and resist Him. But when tempted, know that while you're pushing back, you're not only pushing against the enemy but against your own flesh.

Thus, resisting temptation itself isn't the answer but, rather, finding strength in the Holy Spirit is. When we focus on temptation, we're focusing on desire. And when we focus on desire, we'll always succumb to it. So it isn't that we should stop resisting desire and temptation but, instead, that we should simply change our approach.

We need to begin with hating our sin and allowing our hearts to come to gloom. Then we must resist the devil. But what should we do after saying "no" to the devil? What does James go on to to say? That we need to draw near to God. In

this, we find strength to overcome and faith to persist in holiness.

Chapter Three
A Time to Love

As we know, there is a time and a place for every season. Yet we are called to hate sin always. Hating sin and resisting it are not enough for overcoming it, however. We must also love the Lord in everything we do, being the example of His love in all our conduct.

There is no sin that is an act of love. If we love the Lord, we'll hate our sin and desire change. Now, desire can be either good or bad. Good desire can be turned into lewdness by the temptation of the enemy, though for the most part good desire ends in good decisions. But all bad desire ends in sin.

Therefore, it is evident that sin is dictated by what we do with our desires. When resisting sin, it isn't that we should merely wait for the heat of the moment to resist but, rather, that we should control it at its roots—through desire.

In short, we must change our heart so that we can have godly desire. And if we walk in the Spirit, we will be able to resist temptation just as Jesus did.

Unfortunately, the fact that good desire can be used for sin is evident. For Eve desired to be wise, which is a good desire, but she used the wrong means to obtain it. Rather than seeking the Lord for it, she went against the commandment of God and ate of the tree. Yet if she had loved the Lord with all her heart, soul, mind, and strength, she wouldn't have questioned the integrity of God. Thereafter, having loved the Lord, she also would not have handed the fruit of sin to her husband because she would have loved her neighbor as herself. Thus, love fulfills every law and the commandments of God.

As we understand this, our love for God must compel our quest for victory over sin. Although we are called to hate our sin, if all we do is hate it, then we will never overcome it. Hatred doesn't lead to victory, but the love of God does.

Remember that He chose to come down to us because of love. Remember that He gave His life to save us due to love. And remember that His love was so powerful that it overturned the grave, destroying all our sin in His flesh. If, then, we walk in love toward the Lord, He will strengthen us to overcome, even as He has overcome all things. And if we love Him, we will resist our sins and flee from temptations.

Nevertheless, resisting sin is not entirely the answer. Many believers wait for the

heat of the moment and then press against temptation, calling it “resisting sin.” Yet this isn’t necessarily how we’re called to resist sin. Although we should push back against it in the heat of the moment, we must change our hearts to remove the weed of sin from its source. We need to focus on being edified long before temptation ever comes into the picture.

In the end, it all begins with our alone time with God. As we said previously, if we spend much time being idle, we can develop bondage. However, if we spend much time with the Lord, we’ll find constant strength through the Holy Spirit. In this we learn that, to grow in Him and to overcome all things, we must continually express our love and affection for the Lord.

We are called to express our love to Him through constant prayer and worship while meditating on the presence of the Spirit. If we love Him, we will draw near to Him. When we draw near to Him, He strengthens us to overcome.

We also must seek Him in the word to grow a strong knowledge of the Scriptures. How can we rightly obey the word unless we know it from our hearts? Therefore, we must do more than read the Bible: We must study it, memorize it, and absorb it.

Although we must seek the Lord in His word every day, it is not an activity that we can do all day. But prayer and silent worship are indeed, activities in which we can engage continually throughout the day. When we do these things, it keeps us meditating on and walking in the Spirit.

Since we have two natures, both the nature of the Spirit and that of the flesh, we do not always walk in the Spirit as we should. Hence, the need for a new spiritual body, which the Lord will give us at the last trumpet. Until then, we have the flesh with which to deal.

When we walk in the flesh, we walk contrary to the Lord. This is not walking in a pattern of love but in enmity. As it is written,

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” Romans 8:5–7

Therefore, if we love the Lord, we will seek to understand and apply the concept of walking in the Spirit. Yet if we walk in the flesh and do not seek change,

we're walking in enmity against God. Enmity literally means "bitter hatred toward." Thus, it is more than evident that we must learn how to walk in the Spirit, and do so daily, if we love the Lord.

In order to walk in the Spirit, we must focus on the things that benefit us in the Spirit. As we discussed earlier, these things are prayer, worship, and meditating on His presence. As we focus on His presence, we must diligently listen to Him and be faithful to obey Him. We are led by God's Spirit when we hear His voice and obey Him. Thus, we are following after Him as He leads us.

When we continue in the Spirit throughout the day, it strengthens us to overcome the moments of temptation. We must do more than resist sin when tempted, however; we need to seek the Lord on a daily basis, praying continually and meditating on the Spirit constantly. By so doing, we will be strengthened to resist temptation, making it easier to push back when the moment arises.

Knowing this, dedicate yourself to becoming a house of prayer for the Lord. At every possible moment, pray and reflect on His heart. This takes a growing process to master, but it is only mastered through faith.

When you try to meditate on the Lord, the enemy will rise up to distract you. People around you may be influenced by the enemy to make noise, constantly interrupt, or otherwise distract you. Also, you may yourself have distracting thoughts, and your mind may trail off.

In this we need to press against the enemy and our own hearts by focusing harder on the Spirit. This is where faith enters. Have faith that God will give you the strength to drown out the noise so that you may be able to press in the Spirit.

The inward distractions will slowly dissipate, but don't always expect the outward distractions to do the same. Sometimes, if it is at all possible, you may need to move away from the distractions around you to be near to the Lord. Although it is not always possible due to being in the world, such as at a workplace, we should make every effort to be alone with God and recharge in Him.

When it is not possible to escape the noise, continue to press in the Lord, for He will give you strength as you persist. But remember that it is a growing process, and it doesn't always work out easily at first. However, as you grow, it will become easier to persist without succumbing to distractions. In other words, we simply need to learn to meditate on the Lord, even if we are in intense situations.

Consider that Peter was in an intense situation when he walked on water in the

midst of a storm. When he focused on Jesus, he walked on water; when he didn’t, he fell in. Therefore consider these things and seek to press in the Spirit. Focus on Him, or you’ll fall into distractions and various temptations.

Whether we are alone or in public, we ought to continue in the Spirit. It is our duty as Christians, and we must take this as a most serious thing. If we love the Lord, we must express it by seeking Him constantly and walking in Him always.

Take every moment that you can to pray and talk to Him. Converse and commune with your God, and you’ll see how intimate He is. Then, as you walk in the Spirit, you will be strengthened to overcome. By nature, then, you’ll be walking in the Spirit and glorifying the Lord.

Chapter Four
The Method

Keeping in the Spirit should be the goal of every believer, whether faced with sin or not. Now, by saying “keeping in the Spirit” or “abiding in the Spirit,” we really mean to say “continuing in the Spirit” or, more specifically, “walking in the Spirit.”

To walk in the Spirit is to operate in the Spirit. Although the Spirit may abide in us and never leave us, nor forsake us, we do not always walk in the Spirit as we should. If we believe that we always walk in the Spirit because we have Him, we would be guilty of blaspheming the Lord. For example, it would be blasphemous against the Holy Spirit to say that we are walking and operating in Him when we are sinning.

So, quite obviously, we do not walk in the Spirit at all times. There are times when we succumb to temptation or sit in idleness without focusing on the Spirit. It is a lifelong effort to meditate continually on the Spirit while simultaneously taking care of the practical necessities of life. Yet remember, there is nothing more practical than walking in the Spirit.

Even so, it should be the goal of every believer to continually operate and walk in the Spirit. And unless we meditate on His presence while listening to Him, we will never be led by Him. For we are led when He speaks and we obey. As we discussed previously, we are commanded to obey the words of God. He is our Lord and Master and must be obeyed. We were not created for our own selfish will but, rather, to live for His purpose.

Remember that because God had a plan for you, He created you. Having a plan for your life, He knit you in your mother’s womb. Therefore, seek to be a vessel for honor, constantly obeying the Lord and being cleansed from all filthiness of sin and unrighteousness. For righteousness comes by faith, and faith comes by hearing God.

So what, then, is unrighteousness? It is when we do not obey God through faith when we hear Him and, as well, when we choose not to listen to Him at all.

If we turn a deaf ear to God, then we’re walking in unrighteousness. And when do we turn a deaf ear to the Lord? When we have desire and seek to live for our own heart, not God’s. How, then, can we operate in the faith? By listening carefully to God’s voice and obeying it through faith. This, Beloved, is true

righteousness and how you ought to walk in it.

Now, when we are faced with sin, there are various things we are called to do in order to overcome it. As we discussed earlier, if we seek to walk in the Spirit, sin will be overcome both easily and naturally. For it is the nature of the Spirit to be pure, knowing that God does not sin.

Therefore, when we focus on living out the nature of God through the Holy Spirit, sin is overcome by nature. And to live according to nature is quite easy to do. Yet it is difficult when struggling with two natures, unless one becomes more powerful than the other. In this we need to learn to feed our spirits with the things of the Holy Spirit so that our spiritual nature will be strongest.

When we worship, continually pray, and constantly focus on His presence, giving Him our attention to listen to Him, we begin to be strengthened to overcome. Indeed, all things are overcome by faith. As it is written,

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” 1 John 5:4

Knowing, then, that we overcome all things by faith, we must focus on the things that make for faith. When we focus on the Holy Spirit to listen to His voice, we will live according to faith. For faith comes by hearing God and obeying His word. As it is also written,

“…faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

Therefore, Beloved, I’d like to encourage you to give yourself entirely to listening to the Holy Spirit and obeying Him. If we do not obey His voice or His conviction, then we sin. After all, we have established that faith comes by hearing, and it is also written,

“…for whatever is not from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23

Knowing, then, that we sin if we do not obey faith, we must take obedience as a most serious thing. If we love the Lord, we will trust Him. Every relationship is founded on love and trust.

Therefore, if we want to have a relationship with God, we must learn to have faith in His word and obey it. If we believe God, we should do something with our faith and obey Him.

To believe and not obey is sin. If you would obey your boss at work, how much more should you obey your Lord and Master? If you would obey your parents as a child, how much more should we be subject to the Father of spirits and live

thereby? If you would respect and obey a police officer, how much more should you respect and obey the One who authored the law in our consciences? If you look up to any authority, then how much more should you submit yourself to the Master of all authority, that you may live?

Beloved, surrender to God and so find strength and life. For through Him we have the substance of life while sin is the gateway to death. Death was introduced because of sin, and it reigns over mankind because humanity is enslaved to sin. Nevertheless, we have freedom from sin and death through Christ Jesus if we walk in His Spirit. For when we walk in His Spirit, we overcome sin. As it is written,

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

Beloved, focus on the things that cause you to walk in the Spirit, and you will overcome sin. Think for a moment: What things cause you to feel the presence of the Spirit? All things that pertain to seeking and obeying God, no doubt.

Therefore, set your heart on drawing near to the Spirit all day and every day. Sing songs to the Lord and worship Him through the Spirit. Worship Him, and His Spirit will overcome you. Do you remember that Jesus said the Father desires worshippers in Spirit and in truth? Therefore, worship Him from your heart—because you love Him—and the Spirit will come upon you.

Pray constantly, and He will bless you with His presence. Remember also that when you pray to Him and focus on His presence, the Spirit intercedes for you. Even so, we must learn to pray in the Spirit.

Do all things that cause the Spirit to come upon you, and you will be edified by His presence. If you are idle, or if you’re sinning, the Spirit is not operating through you or, thus, upon you.

Although He is always with you, there is a difference between when we operate in the Spirit and when we don’t. When we permit the Spirit to be upon us, He will be upon us. But if we ignore Him, then we’re in the flesh and operating in the flesh. Therefore, be diligent to do all things that cause the Spirit to come upon you. For when He is upon you, you’re operating in Him.

Now, Beloved, it is God’s desire and will for you to overcome sin. Jesus Christ was crucified to give you life. He conquered your grave when He conquered His own grave. But our sins are the reason we die. Christ came to cleanse us, as we know, that we may live.

But if we choose to operate in the flesh and walk in sin, we are not choosing to be cleansed from our sins. In this case, we are like pigs in the mire—for when the Lord cleanses us, we happily go back to rest in the mud and wallow there.

How, then, can we remain clean for Him if we do not resist sin? If we sit idly in the mud, we will be covered in the mud. For God cleanses and forgives the repentant, not the unrepentant. If He cleansed the unrepentant, then the whole world would be saved—yet it is not. Therefore, we know that we must be diligent to walk by repentance.

Beloved, God desires for every man to be saved and walk in the light of life. In order for Him to save us from death, we must be saved from sin. Sin can be overcome easily if we choose to walk in the Spirit and understand how to do this. As we discussed earlier, when we walk in the Spirit, we don’t fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Yes, God wants you to overcome sin and have eternal life. It is His deepest desire for you to walk continually in the Spirit. For by the Spirit we have been given all we need to overcome every obstacle in life. There is nothing too hard for the Lord, so if we learn to lean on Him as we ought, we will overcome all things.

How to Overcome in the Heat of the Moment

Now, when you are faced with the heat of the moment, there is a way to overcome temptation every time. But we will only overcome if we put forth the appropriate amount of effort. The harder you try, the more likely you will overcome. If your heart is not invested in overcoming, however, you will fall.

No matter what you're tempted about, God will be your strength if you approach Him appropriately for it. Whether you're tempted with anger, sensual lust, or stealing, it doesn't matter—the method will always be the same for all manner of temptation, for we have one God who overcomes all things. Again, this method of overcoming depends upon whether we seek God properly for strength.

When tempted in the heat of the moment, first flee the situation both in your thoughts and physically, if at all possible. For it is written,

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Timothy 2:22

Although we're called to resist the devil, we're called to flee sin. The main struggle for most believers is differentiating between resisting the devil and resisting temptation. For when they are tempted, they think that the source of the temptation is Satan. Thus, they press hard to resist it. But in reality, it is their own heart they're resisting because the devil is merely stirring up the desire that already exists. For it is written,

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." James 1:14–15

In order to be carried away in temptation, first we must be carried away by our own desires. Satan only entices us after we've been wallowing in our own sinful desires. We already want to sin, and all he does is make a suggestion; then we go ahead with it.

Therefore, when you resist temptation, you're really resisting your own heart. No person can resist his or her own heart and overcome every time. For we overcome all things by faith, not by our own strength.

A strong Christian is not determined by his or her own strength or ability to overcome. Rather, a truly strong Christian is one who can humbly admit his or her own weaknesses and lean on Christ for strength. Strong Christians are not

strong in themselves, but they make Christ their strength. Thus, they appear strong when it is really Christ who is strong in them. Truly, such people are strong because they walk in the Spirit by faith, and we must do likewise.

So, then, this question remains: How do we overcome when faced with temptation? As we stated earlier, we need to flee the situation. When we resist our own heart, we will fail, but if we submit to the heart of Christ, we will win. Therefore, we must flee the situation both physically—if possible—and in our thoughts.

Now we must ask ourselves: To where do we flee? To the farthest possible place from sin. And what is the farthest possible place from sin? The Lord, no doubt. Therefore, when you're tempted, flee into the arms of Jesus. We are overcome with temptation when we walk in the flesh, but when we walk in the Spirit, temptation is easily overcome by continuing to focus on the Spirit.

Hence, when we are overtaken with temptation, it is obvious that we've been in the flesh. So in order to get out of the situation, we need to focus on the Holy Spirit and the things that cause Him to come upon us.

In this situation, it is generally best to begin with prayer and to continue after prayer with worship. When we're tempted, remember that Jesus said,

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one…" Matthew 6:13

And remember also how Jesus encouraged Paul,

"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness…'" 2 Corinthians 12:9

Knowing these things, Beloved, when you're tempted, let your prayers be thus: "Lord, save me from this moment. I want you! Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil one! Please be my strength in my weakness!" Plead with Him and continue to focus on Him as you pray.

But above all, have faith that He ***will*** be your strength. Remember that you overcome by faith, and this is the moment to exercise that. If you only pray, but don't have faith, it won't do anything for you. But if you pray with all faith that He will help you, and if you turn your focus to His Spirit and not the temptation, you will win.

When you begin to feel strengthened, then continue to take your focus off of the temptation and rest it on the Lord. Don't even think of the tempting thing, but

instead meditate on the Spirit and worship God. Let His Spirit come upon you and continue to focus on the things that bring this about. When you do so, the Spirit strengthens you to overcome naturally.

Then, when your heart is conformed to His, you will desire what He desires. Whenever the Holy Spirit comes upon us, our desires conform to His, our mind to His, and our heart to His. Thus, we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit, through faith, to overcome.

As an example, if you're in an argument and you're tempted with anger, you and the person with whom you're at odds should agree that both of you will step into another room and get in the Spirit. Then, when the Spirit is upon you, come back to discuss the matter. Now being full of the Holy Spirit, you will have the mind of Christ and not the heart of the flesh.

But when you're seeking the Lord in the other room, flee the thoughts of your heart, which the enemy will replay in your mind to keep you abiding in wrath and distract you from the Holy Spirit. Pray for strength, and worship Him.

So, to break it down in an easily understood list, when tempted we need to do these three things:

1) Flee the temptation both physically and in our thoughts.

2) Pray for deliverance and strength.

3) Have faith in the Spirit that He will give us strength *right now* as we pray. He won't do it one minute from now, nor later. It is His will for you to overcome right here and right now.

4) Worship God and keep your focus on Him.

5) Do not approach the temptation again, but continue in the Spirit.

Conclusion

If you follow this method and the various points we have outlined, God will strengthen you to overcome sin both easily and naturally. If you learn to keep in the Spirit continually, bondage will disappear forever and sin will fizzle out. Although we will have moments of mistakes at various points of life, defeating sin will not be an ongoing struggle.

Ultimately, we always need to have the Spirit upon us—not just during Sunday service or at Bible study but continually and always as well, since we are spiritual creatures. Indeed, as spiritual creatures, we should be full of the Spirit. It is God's desire and heart for us to have the Spirit constantly upon us. But since we have free will, it is our decision as to whether or not that will be the case.

Therefore, Beloved, I'd like to urge you to keep in the Spirit and walk in Him. Pray constantly and worship the Lord. Do not merely sing about God but, furthermore, aim your praises at Him. If you make a lifelong commitment to continue in the Spirit through prayer and worship, this will not only help you overcome a singular circumstance of sin or bondage; it will also bless your relationship with the Lord both now and forever.

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