

## PART IV

### LIVING IN OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

Non-Christians often view the Bible as a list of do's and don'ts. They may reason that to be a good person and find favor with God is to religiously adhere to this "Rule Book". Obedience from the Christian viewpoint seems foreign to them. And this is only expected because they have yet to experience the joys of a personal relationship with God. Once we have experienced God's forgiveness, and have received the Holy Spirit into our lives, we find that we anxiously desire to please God. It becomes a matter of love for God that we obey, and not a way to "make points" with Him. Part IV helps us to bring a proper perspective of obedience to God into clear focus.

CHAPTER 10

THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE  
AND VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

ASSIGNMENTS:

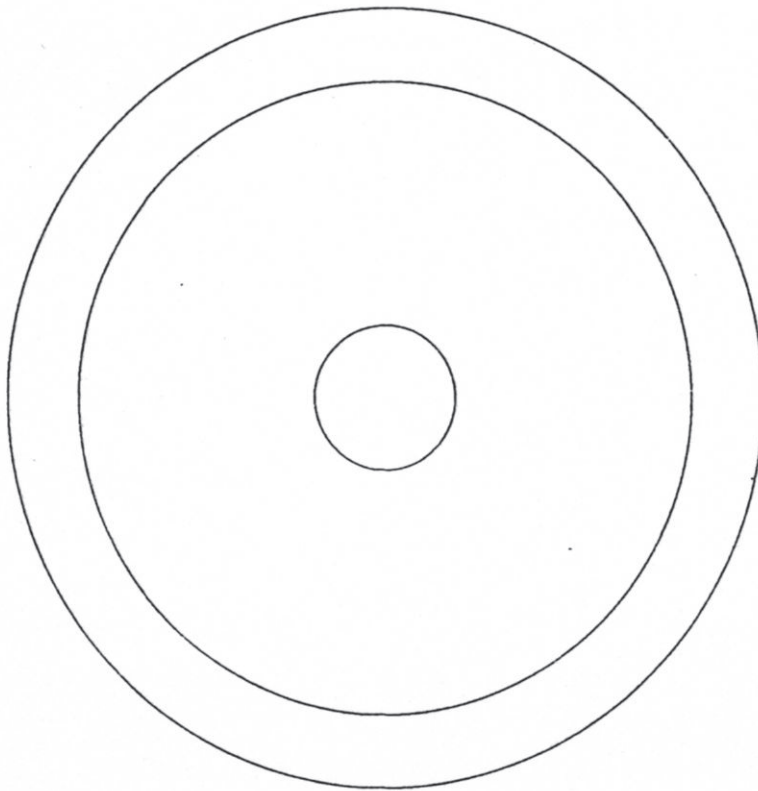
1. Scripture Reading - Acts 15-21  
Read one chapter each day.
2. Prayer - Use the prayer list page to record your requests and answers.
3. Memorize - 1 Corinthians 10:13 and John 14:21
4. Study and complete the material in the chapter.
5. Outline the pastor's Sunday sermon.

Outline your daily progress below:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

CHAPTER 10

THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE  
AND VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION



Obedience in our Christian life is "where the rubber meets the road." We can know all the things God wants us to do but if we do not obey Him, the knowledge is worthless. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). Obedience is knowing God's commands and acting on them.

OBEDIENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK (LIFE)

Jesus said, "If you love me you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). Jesus felt strongly about obedience. It is clear in scripture that obedience is a demonstration of our love for God.

God rewards our obedience. In John 14:21 Jesus says that if we obey Him we will be loved by God and God will make Himself known to us.

*Perfect obedience to the commandments of God must be the object of our constant endeavor.*

-- Merrill F. Unger

Colossians 2:6 says, "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." (NASB)

The term "walk" signifies the whole of the activity of the Christian's life. God calls us to walk in obedience.

How do each of these scriptures say the Christian should walk?

2 Corinthians 5:7

Ephesians 2:10

2 John 6

Obedience

List below how a Christian should not walk.

Psalms 1:1

Romans 8:4

2 Corinthians 5:7

1 John 2:11

A. The Way Of Obedience

When we were brought to spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit He came to live in us and gave us a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). But we still have an old nature with its sinful desires and habits. Our responsibility is to feed and develop the new nature and to starve and deny the old in order to be pleasing and useful to the Lord.

1. According to Ephesians 4:22-24

What should be our relationship to our old self?

To our new self?

Obedience

How is our new self described in likeness of God?

2. The key to putting on the "new self" and "bearing fruit" is stated in John 15:4,5. What is the chief element of a fruitful Christian life?

("remain" may also be translated "live in")

3. How does living in Christ affect our walk? (1 John 2:6)

4. What must we do in order to live in Christ? (1 John 3:24)

5. What should characterize our obedience to Christ (Psalm 40:8)

6. What does 1 John 5:3 teach us about God's commands?

Obedience

B. Disobedience In The Christian's Walk

1. What is James' definition of disobedience?  
(James 4:17)

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*Delayed obedience is disobedience.*

2. In 1 Samuel 15:18-23, instead of complete obedience, King Saul substituted excuses and his own way of worship.

What was Samuel's reply?

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To what are stubbornness and rebellion compared?

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3. What does Exodus 34:6-7 teach us about the long term results of our disobedience?

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4. Because we live in God's grace, we do not experience the fullness of God's immediate wrath. What does 2 Corinthians 5:10 say about the day we will meet God face to face?

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Obedience

5. What is God's attitude toward the disobedient Christian in Revelations 3:15-16?

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6. God desires that we do not sin, but what does 1 John 2:1-2 teach us about God's provision for our disobedience?

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7. What should we do when we sin, according to 1 John 1:9?

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What will God do?

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C. Examples of Obedience

Old Testament Examples

Most of God's servants were great in their obedience. The Old Testament contains hundreds of examples. Notice the Old Testament heroes of faith and obedience listed in Hebrews 11.

Obedience

1. What were two of Abraham's great acts of obedience?

Genesis 12:1-4; (Hebrews 11:8)

Genesis 22:1-3; (Hebrews 11:9-12)

2. What was God's remarkable commendation of David in Acts 13:22?

Why?

Christ's Example Of Obedience

1. What was Jesus Christ's main concern on earth? (John 6:38; Hebrews 10:7)

2. Consider Romans 5:19:

What was the result of Adam's disobedience?

What was the result of Christ's obedience?

Obedience

Believer's Example Of Obedience

1. Our obedience indicates: (John 14:15) (Underline correct answer.)

- a. Our sincerity in serving Christ.
- b. Our willingness to sacrifice for Him.
- c. Our love for Jesus.
- d. Our zeal for Christ's kingdom.

2. In 1 John 2:3,4

What does obeying the Word of God prove?

What does disobeying the Word of God prove?

*The key to usefulness, to revelation and to a Holy spirit filled life is obedience to the Word of God.*  
-- John G. Mitchell

D. Promises And Blessings Of Obedience

- 1. What allows us to get answers to prayer? (1 John 3:21-22)

Obedience

2. What are two results of obeying God's truth?  
(1 Peter 1:22) (Underline correct answers.)

- a. It makes us more fervent in His service.
- b. It helps us love other Christians.
- c. It helps us become Christian leaders.
- d. It purifies our souls.
- e. It makes us more popular Christians.

3. To what does Jesus compare the life of a person who hears and obeys His Word? (Matthew 7:24-27)

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4. What blessings are reserved for the obedient Christian?

Jeremiah 7:23

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John 14:23

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John 15:4

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1 John 2:5

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Obedience

An obedient Christian has --

- A mind through which Christ thinks (Philippians 2:5)
- A life through which Christ shows (Matthew 5:16)
- A voice through which Christ speaks (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- A hand through which Christ helps (Galatians 6:9-10)  
-- The Navigators

OBEDIENCE IN TEMPTATION

As Christians we are not immune from temptation and sin. It is important that we know and understand the victory and deliverance that God offers. We cannot live victoriously in our own strength.

To the extent that we appropriate God's provision for victory, we can experience the life of obedience.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

What is true about every temptation we face?

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Who can give us victory when we are tempted?

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What does God do for us?

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Does God remove temptation?

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Obedience

2. What is a major source of temptation according to James 1:13-14?

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3. What are three areas of temptation in the world according to 1 John 2:15-16?

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Give an example of each one.

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4. When the devil tempts us, what is he seeking to do? See 1 Peter 5:8.

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5. What does God do for us as stated in 2 Thessalonians 3:3?

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The following article presents a clear picture of what temptation is and how we can be victorious over it.

Obedience

The Tactics of Temptation  
By Dr. Curtis Mitchell

New Christians sometimes think life will be free from temptation and hassles. But Ephesians 6:12 says, "... our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the powers ..." We are up against a highly organized enemy that has strategy, tactics, and battle plans. Christians must not go up against an organized enemy in a completely disorganized manner. There are different kinds of temptations, and different ways to handle them. God outlines these things in the Bible.

In a battle there are two factors involved. These are power and strategy. Both are important. The Christian must utilize the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. However, even with adequate power, victory is not necessarily assured. You must use the power in the right way at the right time. That's tactics -- that's strategy.

For example, lets imagine an admiral on a battleship with all kinds of power at his disposal. He is attacked by an airplane and gives an order: "Okay, men, throw over the depth charges." He would be defeated! Because depth charges don't do anything against airplanes. They are designed to destroy submarines. Now in that case his defeat would not be due to a lack of power, but a failure in strategy.

There are different kinds of temptation and there are different ways God says to handle these temptations.

When entering a battle, a good general wants to know two basic things. He wants to know what the enemy is going to throw at him and he wants to know where he is vulnerable. So let's take up first of all the source of temptation. What is the enemy going to throw at us?

The ultimate source of all evil is Satan, the devil. But that doesn't mean that the devil always attacks us personally. It would be like saying that Hitler was behind all German aggression in World War 2. That statement is true, but is



## Obedience

doesn't mean that Hitler always attacked each GI personally. Through his submarines and his German Panzer divisions Hitler came at us in various ways. By the same token, the devil comes at us through three basic channels. In Scripture these are called: the devil, the world, and the flesh.

So, let's understand the enemy. Probably the easiest of the three to understand would be the *devil*. Scripture teaches that there is one personal supernatural spirit being known as the *devil* or Satan and there are many fallen angels known as the devil's angels or demons.

The second channel through which the enemy can attack is the *world*. The kind of *world* we are talking about is the one mentioned in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world, or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" or Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world." This kind of world means: *the world of unsaved men ad the society, culture, and value systems that they have established*. The most subtle kinds of temptations we deal with are from this channel -- *the world!* Most of the time when you are tempted by the world, you are not tempted to do anything illegal or nasty; yet, it is devastating to your spiritual welfare.

For example, a young couple is very zealous for the Lord and then suddenly stops attending church. They purchased a new home and are now so busy landscaping it they have no time for God. They actually love the house more than they love God. That is sin and is idolatry! The most difficult type of temptation comes from the *world*.

The final channel of temptation is the *flesh*. The kind of flesh we are talking about is the kind referred to in Galatian 5:17, "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other; so that you do not do what you want." The *flesh* is my enemy. The flesh is also referred to as the "old self" in

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## Obedience

Romans 6; in Romans 7 as "the sinful nature"; and in Romans 8 it is called the "sinful nature." This is referring to your old sin nature, the inborn selfishness and rebellion. You've got an enemy right on the inside. A traitor within the ranks of your own personality through which Satan can operate.

We have a battle on our hands. We must face this evil triad -- the world, the flesh, and the devil -- every day.

But we also want to know where we are *vulnerable*. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we read, "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May our whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The whole man involves the *spirit*, *soul*, and *body*. Any temptation you have will be in one of these areas.

The easiest to understand is the *body*. That is the material you: the flesh, the bones, the eyeballs. Some temptations are directed right at the biological drives of the body such as sex or eating. A Christian is constantly tempted to mis-use and mis-direct these biological drives that God has given us.

The word *soul* as used in a specialized sense in contrast to the spirit means, essentially the *self-consciousness*. That capacity that you have to say, "I". You are aware of yourself in relationship to your environment. Many temptations are directed right at your self-consciousness, because involved in that self-consciousness is this thing called pride or ego!

Man was created to not only be aware of himself, but also to be aware of *God!* So let's call the *spirit* the "God-consciousness." Man uniquely has a capacity for God. Some temptation is directed right at your relationship with God. When you are tempted to deny God's goodness, or to deny God's Word, or God's faithfulness, these are attacks right at your God-consciousness (spirit).

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## Obedience

As you study the Bible you'll find that the *world* generally attacks you in the area of your *soul*. Why do you want more money or things money can buy? All too often it is because of ego. A direct *demonic* attack will be in the area of the *spirit* -- the God-consciousness, causing you to doubt. When you are attacked in the area of the *body*, it will usually be coming from the old sin nature, the *flesh*.

- A. Devil -----> Spirit
- B. World -----> Soul
- C. Flesh -----> Body

These are the three basic types of temptation. The devil attacks the God-consciousness or the spirit. The world attacks your self-consciousness or the soul. The old sin nature, the flesh, attacks the appetites of the body.

It is crucial, when you are being tempted, to determine what kind of temptation it is. Is it A, B, or C? Each is handled differently.

Look at three temptations in the Bible and identify each temptation as to basic type. In Genesis 13:5-11 we are dealing with type B temptation. The world was attacking the ego of Lot, who was concerned with personal gain. In 2 Samuel 11:2-4, it is type C where David's appetites of the body were under attack. In Luke 22:54-57, the basic thrust of the temptation was right at Peter's relationship with God. In this type A temptation Satan is attacking Peter's spirit or God-consciousness.

The question is, "How do I handle these different types of temptation?" What does the Bible say to do about it? Probably type B will be the most prominent over the period of your life span: The world attacking the ego. This is true particularly in our materialistic society. Suppose as a woman, you find yourself enamored with the latest fashions. It becomes an inordinate passion that's ever on your mind. Clothes! Clothes! Clothes! Or a fellow

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## Obedience

gets car fever. Cars! Cars! How do we handle it?

In 1 John 2:15 we read, "Do not love the world, or any thing in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If you begin to let your love for God grow cold, then the world will slip into the vacuum. So, if you find yourself loving the world inordinately, that is a *symptom* of a deeper problem. Don't fight the symptom; let the symptom warn you of the real problem, and your real problem is that something has happened to your love for God. *Check out your devotional life*. Get alone with Him and start really having time with Him. Get that love back where it ought to be and the whole problem will disappear. Because if you love Him as you ought to love Him, you won't be loving this world. The more you love Him, the less important the things of this world will become to you. It is absolutely crucial in maintaining a successful Christian life to take time every day to communicate with Him through personal Bible study and prayer. So when tempted with type B (the world), *check out your devotional life*.

In type C the flesh attack the appetites of the body. The big issue in that type of temptation is sex, particularly in our culture. Suppose a college student and his date realize they are getting tempted. They decide how they will handle it. That evening they are going to gather algae off the rocks at the beach for their biology class. If they get tempted down there on that lonely beach they have already decided they will kneel down right on the spot and pray and ask God to help them fight this thing. Now that sounds very pious, but that's very stupid! That's like sticking your head in the lion's mouth and asking God to help it not bite you.

Look at 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee the evil desires of youth." Or, 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Flee from sexual immorality." That's the tactic to use: You are never told to fight but to *flee!* Joseph is a good example of this in Genesis 39. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, did Joseph

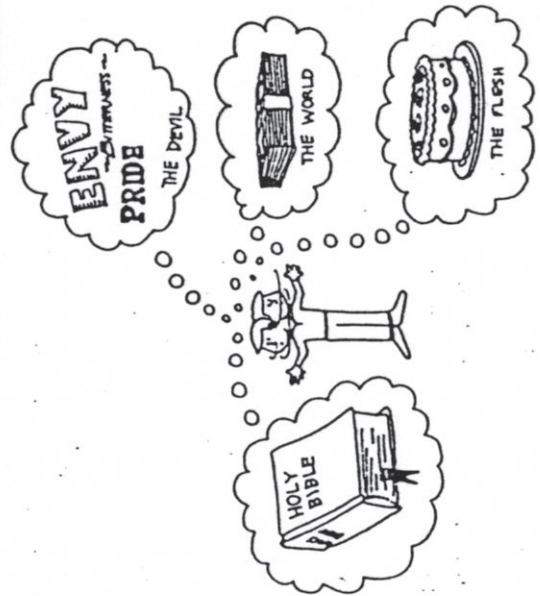
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## Obedience

In conclusion, when tempted by the devil in the area of your God-consciousness, resist with the Word. When tempted by the world in the area of your ego, check out your devotional love for Him. That's where the real problem lies. When tempted by the flesh, in the biological drives of the body, run-baby-run! Needless to say, all of these tactical maneuvers must be carried out by utilizing the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This diagram shows the way temptation moves in our lives from C to B to A as we get older.

OUR WARFARE			
Temptation	Area of Involvement of Sin	Biblical Example of Sin	Strategy to Defeat Sin
A. Devil (old age)	Spirit	Luke 22:54-57	Resist (Jas 4:7)
B. World (maturity)	Soul (ego)	Gen. 13:5-6	Check out love life (1 John 2:15)
C. Flesh (youth)	Body	2 Sam. 11:1	Flee (2 Tim. 2:22)



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## Obedience

suggest they kneel by the couch and pray about it? NO! He ran!

There are different ways to run. Structuring dates at places with lots of bright lights and lots of people is one way of running. If a secretary bats her eyelashes at her boss and seductively suggests they meet back at the office that evening to catch up on their work, the man can invite his mother-in-law to accompany him to the office. That is running from the situation. If one has an appetite for doughnuts, don't stand there looking at them; don't even drive close to the doughnut shop. That's running also.

How does one handle type A: direct demonic attack upon the God-consciousness? James 4:7 says, "submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." How does one resist the devil? There is no better way to resist the devil than the way Jesus Christ handled a direct satanic overture. Each time He used the same tactical maneuver. "It is written." "It is written." "It is written." He hit him over the head with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. He threw Scripture in his teeth. That is the best way to resist the devil.

With type A temptation we are supposed to resist in the power of the Spirit, by using the Word of God. For instance, if Satan tries to tell a new convert that they are not saved, the best thing to do is have a passage that states categorically that all who believe in Christ have everlasting life. Throw a verse like John 5:24 in the enemy's face. Or if you are tempted to doubt God's goodness, the best thing to do is throw the promises of God in the teeth of the devil.

Thus to effectively handle this kind of temptation you must know your Bible. That is why Scripture memorization is so important. David said, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). The more you hide God's Word in your heart, the more you study this Book and master it, the more you will be prepared to deal effectively with his type of temptation.

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Jesus And Temptation

1. What does Hebrew 4:15 tell us about Jesus Christ?  
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 In what areas was Jesus tempted according to this verse?  
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2. From Matthew 4:1-10 give an incident in Christ's life representing each area of temptation?  
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3. What are some of the things we can do to keep temptation from leading to sin?  
 Matthew 26:41  
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 Psalm 119:9,11  
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 Colossians 3:2  
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James 4:7

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When a man is going up in a balloon, he takes bags of sand as weights. When he wants to mount higher, he throws some of the sand out. The more he throws out, the higher he goes. Our Christian walk is the same way. The more of the things of the flesh, the world, and the devil, we throw overboard, the higher we will mount in the heights of spiritual blessings.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. List the results of disobedience.  
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2. List the blessings of obedience.  
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Obedience

3. In what area of your life does God want greater obedience?

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4. Why do we decide to do things that we know are disobedient to God?

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5. What should motivate us to obey God?

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6. Can we ever become sinless while living on this earth? Why or why not?

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Who will experience temptation? (1 Corinthians 10:13)

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Is temptation sin? Why or why not?

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Obedience

According to James 1:14-15 when does temptation become sin? State this in your own words.

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What do you feel is Satan's purpose in temptation?

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7. Write out personal examples, past or present, of each temptation area and how you might escape the temptation.

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"My Heart-Christ's-Home" is a beautiful and clear picture of obedience in the Christian's life. Please turn to this in the addendum for further reading.

Obedience

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Root Of Righteousness , A. W. Tozer

How To Say No To A Stubborn Habit , Erwin Lutzer