

Moral Issues of Our Time
Lesson 1 - Seeking Wisdom to Overcome Satan
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Introduction: Our Lord *pleads with us* to identify sin and learn to overcome temptation.

- A. God provides *sufficient resources* to keep us in His care. **(Jude 21-23)**
 - 1. Part of God provisions is *our understanding and acting* when sin is presented.
 - 2. When we are honest with ourselves, we will find that we need to find *God's wisdom and help* as we face this world dominated by Satan.
- B. We must be *humble and teachable* for God's power to help each of us. **(1 Pt 5:5-6)**
 - 1. The Lord will in time *test each of us* throughout our lives. A living faith will prevail, but it has to be nourished and developed.
 - 2. Consider the warning given to Peter and what *he learned from failure*.
(Lk 22:31-32)

I. Understanding the arsenal of Satan

- A. The wisdom of God reveals every approach that Satan may use. **(Eph 6:11-12)**
- Wiles** - *μεθοδεία* - method, procedure; in the NT in a bad sense, as scheming to deceive *craftiness, cunning, deception* (EP 4.14); plural *stratagems, cunning attacks, tricks* (EP 6.11)
- 1. God's wisdom will *teach us the approaches Satan uses to deceive* and how we can build divine defenses against the wicked one.
 - 2. Satan is far more powerful and deceptive *than any man on his own*. God's wisdom can only be profitable to the humble that pursue it. **(1 Pt 5:8-11)**
 - 3. How does a Christian take the threat of sin seriously?
- B. The *three avenues of temptation*. **(1 Jn 2:15-17)**
 - 1. All of these involve desires that God has given us. He also provides *a proper place of fulfillment*. Satan offers a perversion of these needs.
 - 2. Each of us has a *genuine need to find fulfillment and purpose*. Pride is a perversion of that. **(Jer 9:23-24)**
 - 3. **Discussion:** Analyze the temptation and sin of Adam and Eve with these three avenues of temptation. Give examples of how this happens today.
 - 4. Temptation can be overcome *by a heart properly trained*. God appeals *to reason and light* while Satan works to destroy reason and have one simply react.
 - 5. God's way works but it *must be chosen and pursued!* **(1 Cor 10:12-13)**

II. The battle is for our hearts

- A. As a young Christian *I did not understand* the dangers in the works of the flesh.
(Gal 5:19-21)
 - 1. It was *hard for me to understand* how men would be overcome by these things.
 - 2. I also thought that Christians would see their sin and repent and then move on!
 - 3. My understanding then was *shallow and incomplete*.
- B. The ultimate goal of Satan is *to destroy the heart*. **(Eph 4:17-20)**

1. Destroying conscience, blocking wisdom, creating the desire to hide and lie and in pride denying one's sin are some of the paths that Satan builds from a single sin.
2. The naïve try to linearly reason the consequences of a single sin.
3. Do not try to “play chess” with the wicked one. We must abhor sin and seek wisdom to stay as far away as possible from sin. (**Prov 1:7; 5:21-23**)

III. We must fight to keep a good conscience

A. What is a conscience? (Acts 24:15-16)

1. συνείδησις {soon-i'-day-sis} conscience 1) the consciousness of anything 2) the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other.
2. The conscience is a judge based upon previous training and experience. (**Rom 2:14-15**)
3. A good conscience will make you feel bad by just thinking of doing wrong!
4. A conscience can be trained in a wrong way. You may do bad and feel good or do that which is not sin and feel bad! (**Acts 23:1, 26:9; 1 Cor 8:7**)
5. A weak conscience is one that has been improperly trained.
6. The conscience is a great gift from God that we must carefully protect!

B. God's holiness the basis of determining right and wrong. God's holiness is revealed by His word! (1 Pt 2:9-12; Heb 12:14)

1. College is a time where you find out where your heart is. You will be tested.
2. One may have worldly standards. One may be greatly ashamed of Christians and their stand! (**Heb 5:12-14; 2 Tim 1:7-8**)

C. One can destroy their conscience. (1 Tim 4:2; 1 Cor 8:7-13; Rom 14:23)

1. When “freedom” comes some think they can live like the world and still be a Christian. Often there is great shame and tears in what they have done.
2. If associations and practice do not change you may eventually not care.
3. A local church must be committed to teach as to promote a “good conscience.” God's standards and wisdom are to be plainly taught. (**2 Cor 4:1-2**)
4. There is power in committing to follow all of God's will! (**1 Tim 1:18-19**)

Questions

1. What are some common temptations encountered in college? How does the majority view the moral stands of the Christian?
2. What are the world's standard of determining right and wrong? How does a Christian know right and wrong?
3. How does Satan work to change our thinking and conduct and how does God work to change our thinking and conduct?
4. Make a list of the characteristics of a Christian that is seeking to avoid and overcome sin. In contrast how does a worldly “Christian” act towards sin?
5. What is a conscience? How does a conscience properly help us in our battle against sin?