

Lesson 9

Sanctity Needs Fulfilled

“Do not bring us to hard testing”

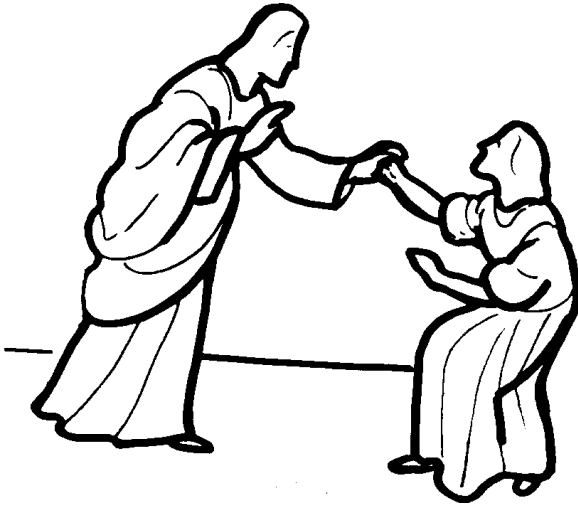
Matthew 6:13

How practical is prayer! How related to our daily walk! But how we need the power of God in our lives if we are to be overcomers! One thing we should say over and over in prayer is, “I can’t do it by myself. I can’t do it by myself. I need help!”

We have learned that the Holy Spirit is called the “Paraclete”—the One called alongside to help. If we are to be overcomers, we must let Jesus baptize us with the Holy Spirit so that He can help.

Here is a wonderful promise: “But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the same time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

But note! The way out is the way of “outside help”—help from the Holy Spirit. You cannot do it by yourself!



lesson outline

The Way to Spiritual Victory

 The Enemy to Fight

 The Armor of God

 The Place of Victory

The Way to Spiritual Maturity

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Understand how to overcome temptation.
- Evaluate your own stage of *spiritual maturity*.

learning activities

1. Draw the illustration on spiritual maturity and learn Romans 7:23 and Romans 8:1-4.
2. Read Ephesians 6:14-17. Make a list of your weaknesses and plan how you are going to overcome them by regular prayer and application of the help God has made available to you.

3. Read the lesson development section by section. Write the answers to the study questions and self-test questions.

key words

enticed

sanctity

victory

lust

spiritual maturity

overcomer

temptation

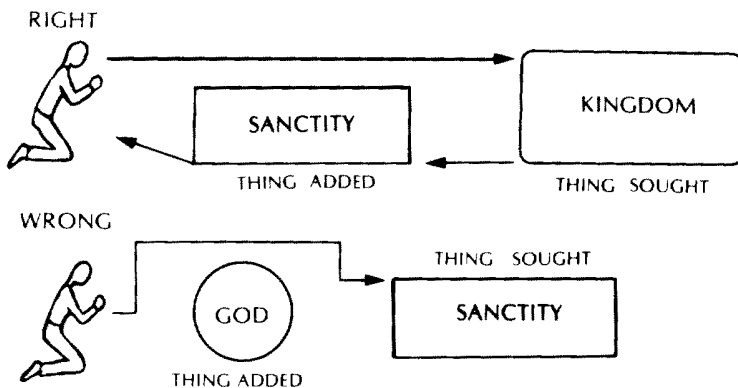
lesson development

THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY

Objective 1. *State the difference between “temptation” and “sin.”*

We have talked about the needs of man. We have said that “support” is “added” to those who are concerned, above everything else, about the kingdom of God. The ability to live at peace with others in the world is given in the same way.

We now speak of the inner struggle of the believer to live righteously and with *sanctity* in order to please God. Keep in mind that by *sanctity* we mean the inward purity that God wants us to have. Now, let us look at a diagram of this.



Again, we see that the *thing sought* is the kingdom of God. As a result, *sanctity* is the thing added.

1 What do we mean by *sanctity*?

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Everyone experiences this inner struggle to live good lives. However, the unbeliever does not have the answer to it. He may know the difference between what is good and what is evil but he lacks the power to do good. He is unable to overcome sin alone.

The believer has the answer! As in the other lessons, the first thing we learned was that we cannot do it alone. We need help from *outside*. Jesus shows us the way to spiritual victory. We need help from above! This is why the answer to overcoming temptation is the same as for finding “support,” or for having peace. We win the victory over sin by being concerned, above everything else, with the kingdom of God. When our affections are set on *things above*, God gives us strength to overcome *things below*!

2 What is the believer’s answer for spiritual victory?

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The Enemy to Fight

If we are to pray as we should concerning spiritual victory, we need to know something about the enemy we face and how he fights.

Not many people have seen the devil. Yet he is very real, and his power is seen and felt everywhere. This means that we will not see the real enemy we fight. We will only see the things he uses to overcome us. One of the things the devil uses to fight us is temptation.

- 3 The enemy of the believer
 - a) is everywhere for all to see.
 - b) hides his power so as not to be known.
 - c) tries to cause him to sin by tempting him.

There are several things we should know about temptation. James 1:14 (KJV) says, “Every man is tempted” There are two things to learn from that Scripture:

1. Every man has natural desires. If there were no desires, there could be no temptation. Jesus, Himself, had natural desires.
2. Every man is tempted. Even Jesus was tempted. This indicates that it is not a sin to be tempted.

Then, James 1:14-15 goes on to say, “. . . when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” From this we can learn several more truths:

1. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Jesus was tempted, but Jesus was not drawn away from His obedience to the will of God.

2. To be “drawn away” is to be turned aside from the proper use of natural desires. God gives natural desires, and if used as He intended, they are pure and good. God is pleased when we use them properly.

3. Lust is to be drawn away and enticed to use natural desires improperly. It becomes sin when we allow ourselves to be trapped by evil desires.

4. Lust is the beginning of sin. “Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.”

5. Temptation is NOT sin **if** we do NOT yield to it. Temptation becomes sin if we yield to it.

4 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** It is not wrong to be tempted.
- b** Every man is tempted.
- c** Jesus was not tempted.
- d** The natural desires will always be with us.

Natural desires will always be with us. God put them there, and they are not evil. We should not feel ashamed of them. However, these good desires will become evil if we allow them to “draw us away” from the proper use of them. They will become lust, which is the beginning of sin.

Jesus was tempted, but He did not yield to temptation. Jesus was tempted, but He was never enticed. That is, He never yielded to the temptation to satisfy His natural desires in an improper way.

5 Why do we say that Jesus was tempted but did not sin?

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Perhaps you will say, “Did Jesus have the same natural desires that we have?” Yes, Jesus had the same natural desires that we have. He was tempted in all things that tempt us. You can read this in Hebrews 4:15. How did Jesus resist? He prayed at all times. His words are, “Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). Remember, it is no sin to be tempted—unless we let our natural desires become lust and lead us to thinking and acting in a sinful way. If our natural desires become lust, then we are already on the road to sin.

So, our thoughts must be pure, and our natural desires must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. A Spirit-led person will give no chance for natural desires to become lust which would lead to sinful desires and sinful acts.

6 To lust means to

- a) be tempted to satisfy natural desires.
- b) be drawn away from the proper use of natural desires.
- c) have natural desires common to all men.

Some Christians think that our natural desires leave us when we are saved. This is not so. God shows us a way to control our desires and use them in a pure and righteous way, but He does not take them away from us. If there were no desires to control, it would be no effort to live a sanctified life. Times of temptation are times of opportunity for God to show His power. Let us, then, make use of the “way out” (1 Corinthians 10:13) that God has provided for us.

The glory of holy living is the fact that it takes place in the midst of temptation! It is a very dangerous thing to think that the Christian has no natural desires after he is saved. If a Christian

believes this, he will not admit that he has temptations, and he will not be watchful. The Christian who knows that he has natural desires is more likely to be a man of prayer. He will avail himself of the strength that God gives by His Spirit for controlling them. Times of temptations are times of opportunity for God to show His power. It is in times of our greatest weakness that the power of God is the greatest.

7 What happens to a believer's natural desires when he is saved?

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We must always be watchful and not give place to wrong desires. We must remember that the devil is real, and that he uses everything he can to get the believer to fall. He knows the proper desires of man. He knows that they were given by God to be used properly. But he also knows how strong the desires within man are, and he tries to cause men to be "drawn away" by turning good desires into evil ones. This is why we must be on guard against the devil.

Two things we should remember concerning temptation are:

1. All of us have desires that tempt us, but Jesus gives us the power to control them.
2. There is a real devil who tempts us, but Jesus gives us the power to resist him.

The Armor of God

The source of power with which to fight the devil's temptation is prayer and worship. We come back once more to what we have said before concerning "support" and "social" needs. If we want *sanctity*, if we want the overcoming life, or if we want victory, we must seek God, His kingdom, and His will above everything else. In other words, we seek "Him" who is the source of all that we need.

Now what do we receive in prayer and worship that will help us at the time of battle? We receive several important things.

1. We learn to know our Leader, Jesus Christ, and to have confidence in His leadership.
2. We learn what His plans and His will are so that we can obey His orders.
3. We are filled with power by the Holy Spirit so that, when the battle comes, we will have strength to fight.
4. We are given weapons with which to fight and the instructions on how to use them.

8 What is the source of power we have with which to fight the enemy?

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In Ephesians 6:14-18 Paul tells us about our weapons. “So stand ready, with *truth* as a belt tight around your waist, with *righteousness* as your breastplate; and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of *peace*. At all times carry *faith* as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. And accept *salvation* as a helmet, and the word of God as the *sword* which the *Spirit* gives you. Do all this in *prayer*, asking for God’s help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God’s people.”



9 What are the items in the believer’s armor?

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Notice two things. First, the armor is spiritual and is given by God to withstand the devil. The armor is truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. Second, the weapons are spiritual. They are the Word of God and prayer. Both of these are used with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Notice, too, that prayer is mentioned three times. You can't get ready for spiritual battles without prayer. You can't overcome temptation without prayer. Prayer provides the character, the power, the armor, and the weapons by which we win the victory!

10 How many times are we told to pray in Ephesians 6:18?

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It is not enough to have the sword in your hand, the Spirit as your helper, and to have prayed before going to battle. You must have on the armor of God to cover and protect you. You must have the righteousness, peace, and the joy that the Holy Spirit gives.

This is why Jesus said, "Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you" (Matthew 6:33). If you have the armor, the Spirit will help you win the victory as you use the sword of the Word of God.

So, Pray! Pray! Pray! Pray as Jesus said to do. Pray for the things of the kingdom, and you will be able to overcome.

11 What can we learn from the believer's armor?

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The Place of Victory

There are several things we should know about victorious living. First, we cannot conquer "outwardly" until we learn to conquer "inwardly." The devil holds many men captive, but God has given us spiritual weapons to pull down Satan's "strongholds" and set men free. We cannot do so until we ourselves are free from the power of sin. We cannot help others overcome temptation until we have learned the secret of overcoming ourselves! The way to overcome temptation is to put God's will above everything else. When we seek only to see His name honored, we overcome the temptation to seek our own pleasure.

12 For those who would conquer outwardly, what must they first learn?

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The second thing to learn about spiritual victories is that they are won on the battlefield—at the place where we have to fight the enemy. Some Christians think we win spiritual victories “on our knees.” But when we are in prayer, we are not fighting the devil. We are talking to our Leader. We are getting a new supply of weapons. We are getting our fighting orders. We are gaining power and knowledge. But we are not winning the battle. Oh, for sure, we gain great confidence in prayer as we realize the great power God is giving us. We shout and praise because of what we know God will help us to do. But we are not winning the battle.

Battles are won on the battlefield! We will be constantly overcome unless we take the strength and the wisdom that God gives us while we are on our knees and go with them to battle. Prayer is preparation for battle! The “praying” of some Christians is nothing more than repeated confessions of failure and begging God for forgiveness. They have no victory because they do not use the power available to them in the hour of temptation!

13 What is the Christian’s preparation for battle?

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THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Objective 2. *Describe the stages in the growth process of a child of God.*

Objective 3. *Compare the three laws mentioned in Romans 7:23 and Romans 8:2 with the three stages of spiritual growth.*

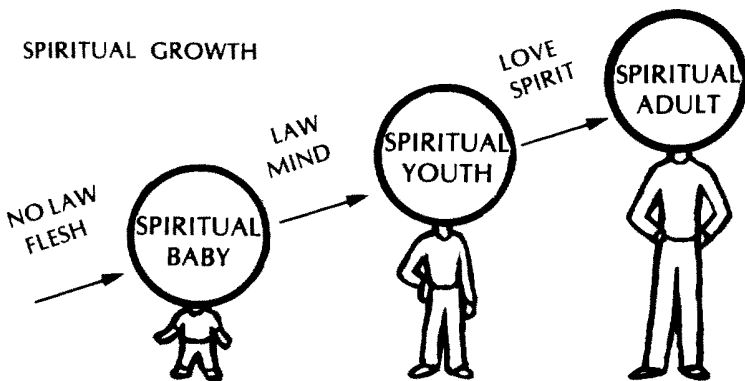
Spiritual maturity is “added” when we seek first the kingdom of God. It is through the Word of God and through speaking together with God that we become like Christ. This is what we mean by becoming spiritually mature.

There are three stages in the growth process of the child of God. He starts as a spiritual baby and passes through a stage of spiritual youth until he becomes a spiritual adult. Let's compare these three stages with the three laws mentioned in Romans 7:23 and Romans 8:2. The three laws are:

1. The law of the flesh.
2. The law of the mind.
3. The law of the Spirit.

The believer still controlled by the law of the flesh is a spiritual baby. He is a "no law" person because, like an animal, he only does what he feels like doing. His idea of life is, "If it feels good, do it." Actually, he acts like an unbeliever.

The believer controlled by the law of the mind is a spiritual youth. He obeys the law, but not with his heart. He does right because the law demands it, whether it is the law of his home, the law of the church, or the Law of Moses.



The believer controlled by the Spirit is a spiritual adult. He obeys the law of God because he loves God. He puts the kingdom of God above everything else. He has the righteousness, peace and the joy that the Holy Spirit gives.

14 Match the letters to the left of the statements with the correct stage (right) of spiritual growth.

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|--------|-----------------------|----------|
| a | The law of the Spirit | 1) Baby |
| b | The law of the flesh | 2) Youth |
| c | The law of the mind | 3) Adult |

How can a spiritual baby grow to be a spiritual adult? The secret is in *how* to pray. If he prays right, he will live right! Right praying leads to right living. Right living becomes prayer without ceasing! The spiritual baby cannot control his anger without help. Neither will he control his desires by himself. The governments of the world seek to control the carnal nature of man by laws and punishment for breaking the law. When the church has many spiritual babies, it often follows the world's way of handling law breakers. It sets *standards* and *laws* to control the lawlessness of the babies.

15 How can a spiritual baby become a spiritual adult?

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When a child is law abiding, he is no longer a baby, but a youth. He acts intelligently like a human being should, and he responds to reason. The same is true of spiritual growth. When a spiritual baby becomes a spiritual youth he honors the authority of the church and obeys its laws. He is a good *church member* and is respected because he is law-abiding.

But to be merely law-abiding is not to be mature, either as a citizen or as a Christian. A citizen is only *adult* when he does right, not because the law tells him to, but because he believes in doing what is right whether the law requires it or not. That is the mark of a mature man, and so is it in the life of a Christian. He is only spiritually mature when the love of Christ motivates him. He is filled with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. He needs no "law" to make him act like Jesus.

16 When is a person *spiritually mature*?

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Then, how can a spiritual baby grow to be a spiritual adult? By working hard to be perfect? By struggling with his desires? By laws? By schools? Never! The answer is in prayer and worship. It is in presenting ourselves to the Son of God. The apostle Paul says it beautifully in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.”

Sanctity, Christlikeness, and spiritual maturity all come to us by the Spirit of the Lord! They cannot be received except by right praying. They cannot be received until we seek, above everything else, to honor God’s name, to seek His kingdom, and to do His will! Let us worship our Lord through our right living.

17 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** Spiritual maturity can be learned by reading books.
- b** We cannot change ourselves.
- c** We are changed by the Holy Spirit.
- d** A spiritual baby can become a spiritual adult by working hard.

self-test

SHORT ANSWERS. Write the correct answers in the space provided.

1 How does the believer differ from the unbeliever in his struggle for sanctity?

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2 Every man is when he is of his own and (James 1:14 KJV).

3 What happens to a believer's natural desires when he is saved?

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4 What is the source of power with which to fight the enemy?

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5 What is prayer in relation to the Bible?

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6 Name three marks of a mature believer.

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7 How can a spiritual baby grow to be a spiritual adult?

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8 Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and tell its meaning.

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9 Why is a law-abiding Christian not necessarily a spiritual adult?

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answers to the study questions

- 9** Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation.
- 1** Inward purity that God wants us to have.
- 10** Three times.
- 2** Jesus shows us the way; help from above.
- 11** It is our protection in battle.
- 3** c) tries to cause him to sin by tempting him.
- 12** To be overcomers inwardly.
- 4** a True.
b True.
c False.
d True.
- 13** Prayer.
- 5** He was tempted, but He was not drawn away and enticed (He did not yield to the temptation).
- 14** a 3) Adult.
b 1) Baby.
c 2) Youth.
- 6** b) be drawn away from the proper use of natural desires.
- 15** By praying right.
- 7** They remain with him, but he is given power to control them by the Holy Spirit.
- 16** When he is motivated by love.
- 8** Prayer and worship.
- 17** a False.
b True.
c True.
d False.

For Your Notes