



CONNECT

FIRST STEPS - LESSON 13: VICTORY IN GOD



Objectives

- New believers to understand the truth about trials and temptations, and how to cope with it.
- New believers to understand the Biblical principles of how to overcome trials and temptations.
- New believers to demonstrate the right attitude toward facing problems.
- New believers to experience victory over trials and temptations.

Introduction

In different countries that are prone to natural disasters, it is important for the community to be prepared when those seasons come. The stocking up of batteries, canned goods, water and other daily necessities are needed in case of an emergency and evacuation.

It seems like a normal thing to prepare ahead of a time for hurricanes, tornados or other potential natural disasters. What about the storms of life? Should we prepare in advance for periods of trials and temptations?

It is important for Christians to prepare our hearts and minds for the trials and temptations that are inevitable in life and knowing that we could come out of those stormy seasons victorious because we have Christ!

Why Do We Have Trials And Temptations?

The origin of trials and temptations:

1. Consequences of sin

The world was cursed because man chose to sin against God. No one is free from hardship and suffering. When Adam and Eve sinned, curses came into the world. This is why we face the consequences of sin even though Jesus has died for us.

To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Genesis 3:16-19

As a result of sin, all of us have fallen short of the perfect standard of God and the consequence is eternal separation from God. That is the reason why Jesus has to be our sacrifice; He took the punishment that we rightfully deserved.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

2. Satan's control over the earth

The devil has temporary control over the world because we yielded to his power when we fell into sin. Ultimately, Satan's aim is to destroy our relationship with God.

In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 2:2

Facts About Trials And Temptations

Trials and temptations are normal in the Christian life. We should not be fearful that trials and temptations will seize us, but instead, make a decision to stand firm and overcome every temptation that comes into our lives.

1. They come from two sources with two different purposes

God allows trials to happen to us in order to test our faith in Him. His goal is that we will pass the test. When we successfully overcome trials, our faith in God will be strengthened. We need to have this mindset as we face trials in our lives.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

On the other hand, Satan tempts us to forsake our faith and fall away from God. His goal is that we will be defeated. Hence trials are intended by God to test and strengthen our faith, while temptations are intended by Satan to destroy our faith. If we respond to it the right way, we will overcome and our faith will grow. It is those who have shallow foundations of faith who are in danger of falling away when tested.

Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

Luke 8:13

3. Through the trials and temptations, we share in Christ's suffering

Through the difficulties of trials and temptations, we taste a small portion of what Christ endured on the road to the cross for the sake of our sins. God will give us sufficient grace when we face suffering and persecution for Him.

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 Peter 2:21

4. They are normal in the life of every Christian

Knowing that trials and temptations are normal in the life of every Christian, we should not be fearful when they confront us. Instead, let us choose to stand firm and be prepared to overcome each trial with courage. God is with us through it all to strengthen us. The realisation that it is normal to face trials and temptations will help believers have courage in facing difficulties. We know that we are not alone in facing trials and temptations but every Christian faces them too.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

Examples of people who have faced trials and temptations:

Abraham was tested in his faith to sacrifice his son to God as a burnt offering.

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Genesis 22:1-2

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay

his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Genesis 22:9-12

Job was tempted to curse God because of the difficulties he faced.

His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Job 2:9

Joseph was tested for his faith in God's vision by being sold as a slave and later put into jail. Read **Genesis 37-41**.

Moses was tested for his faith in God by giving up his position in the Egyptian royal court.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

Hebrews 11:24-25

Christians in the early church were tested in their faith by being persecuted.

And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:1

We Can Be Victorious In Overcoming Our Trials And Temptations

The question therefore is not whether we may be tested or tempted, but how to overcome these trials and temptations.

1. They will not be beyond what we can bear

When God allows trials and temptations into our lives, they will only be to the extent that we can bear. All the afflictions that Satan wants to bring upon us has to firstly be authorised by God. His intention is to mould and strengthen, not to

break us. Hence when we are tested, He will provide the grace and strength for us to overcome. We need to have a heaven-ward focus towards trials and temptations, seeing them as opportunities to build our character, especially our hope and trust in the Lord.

And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.
1 Corinthians 10:13b

2. There is always a way out in every temptation

God does not want us to crumble under temptations. He expects us to stand firm and overcome them. When we persevere, God will show us the way out.

But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out.
1 Corinthians 10:13c

God has a goal for us to pass the trials and overcome the temptations.

So that you can endure it.
1 Corinthians 10:13d

Reflection Station

1. What are the temptations and/or trials that you are facing? What do you think God is teaching you in this season?

Jesus was truly amazed by the centurion's faith. He demonstrated such faith in recognising the greatness of God's authority and power.

How Can We Overcome Our Trials And Temptations?

The trials from God are for testing our faith so that when we pass the tests we will grow in the spirit. For example, God may test us in our pride, anger, unforgiveness and trust in the Lord.

In each trial God allows some situations to happen in our lives. When we pass each test, we will become more mature Christians. We will grow in our spirits in each issue of our lives. For example, instead of being an arrogant person, we become a humble person; instead of being easily angered, we will be patient and gentle; instead of being unforgiving we will forgive and love others; instead of being anxious, we will have more trust in the Lord.

If we fail a test in some specific issue, God may bring another test into our lives so that we eventually will pass and grow in the Lord for every issue in our lives. The most impressive thing about our Lord is that **He loves us so much that He will not let us continue to be an imperfect person. God's love is so great that He comes to intervene in our lives until we are changed to be like Jesus.** All athletes know that to build their strength and skills, they have to pit themselves against greater loads and greater opponents. These "tests" build them up as athletes.

Therefore, every time we face trials and temptations in our lives, we should realise that God's test comes to us with His love in order to transform us and will help us grow to another level of spiritual maturity.

1. Having the right attitude

The Bible tells us of the importance of our heart attitudes. Along with bitterness, hatred and jealousy brings forth many problems and temptations. Victory comes easily when we are able to focus our dependency on God instead of dealing with destructive thoughts. We need to choose to fill our hearts and minds with the right things.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.
Proverbs 4:23

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent

or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

2. Following biblical principles

As we have learnt, the root of all our trials and temptations is sin. Attempting to solve problems by our own way or by using worldly principles is only temporary. Applying biblical principles to our problems and temptations will ensure that we do not conform to our own desires and world's standards, which may be very wrong. God has given us the Bible as a guide and manual for our lives. The best way to approach our trials and temptations is by using biblical principles that God has provided us with, through His word.

For example, when someone wrongs us, apply the principles from Matthew 18:15-17. First, we try to reconcile with the person, rather than going around to bad mouth that person.

If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17

3. Seeking the Lord and depending on Him

God is the answer to our problems and by seeking and depending on Him, our victory is already won.

But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

Psalms 33:18-19

4. Stay connected and be accountable to the family of believers

God does not intend us to endure hardships on our own. God has given us a spiritual family to care, pray, support and constantly bring us back to Christ when we feel that the trials and temptations are too difficult to endure.

5. Keep doing the good work

Trials and temptations has the tendency to keep us self-absorbed. We might be constantly dwelling in the fact that no one's experience of hardships is more difficult than ours. However, trials and temptations do not exempt us from doing good. Keep praying for others, bless and encourage others in the midst of their difficult times.

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

1 Peter 4:19

Mentor Chat

1. How can I practically overcome trials and temptations in my life?

Some examples:

- a. Committing adultery** - We avoid the temptations of adultery by not being exposed to pornographic books or pictures, and not being alone with a person of the opposite sex in a hidden place.
- b. Stealing** - We avoid stealing and cheating others by not counting money alone without other witnesses; we should always have witnesses in counting money and doing accounts.
- c. Entering into a romantic relationship with a non-believer** - We avoid entering into a romantic relationship with a non-believer by not going out with him/her without other friends around, and avoiding spending too much time with him/her.
- d. Not tithing to God** - We avoid the temptation of not tithing to God by giving our tithes to Him immediately after we have received our salary, and not using the tithe of the Lord for other purposes.

- e. **Seeking honour and praise from others** - We avoid seeking honour or praise from others by doing everything to glorify God.
- f. **Greed** - We avoid becoming a greedy person by thanking the Lord for what we already have, and learning to cultivate an appreciative heart.

The Benefits Of Having Victory Over Trials And Temptations

1. Strengthen our faith in God

Faith does not flourish when it goes untested. Because God cares for us, He allows various trials and problems in our lives to strengthen, grow and mature us. Trials and problems are God's essential means through which He strengthens the faith He has given to us.

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1:6-7

2. By growing in godly character and in the fruit of the Spirit, we become more resistant falling when facing trials and temptations

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

James 1:2-3

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:5-11

3. Make us mature and complete in Christ

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:4

We can see that trials and difficulties benefit our lives. We will be mature and complete in the kingdom. Not only that, when the Lord Jesus comes back, we will also receive praise and glory from Him for overcoming them. The Lord will reward us in heaven.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

Conclusion

Tests from God help us grow in our maturity in our Christian characters. We should desire to pass these tests. Temptations from Satan leads us to destruction and defeat. We should avoid temptations by taking practical steps (avoiding situations where we are likely to be tempted) and spiritual steps by “watching and praying”.

No faith is so precious as that which lives and triumphs through adversity. Tested faith brings experience. You would never have believed your own weakness had you not needed to pass through trials. And you would never have known God’s strength had His strength not been needed to carry you through.

Charles Spurgeon

**Knowing that we are more than conquerors in Christ,
we can triumph over trials and temptations by His grace.**

Memory Verse

GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, AN EVER-PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.

PSALM 46:1



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