

STUDIES IN TEMPTATION

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Submitted to Dr. Abramson as a mentoring research assignment, Fiji, 1997-98

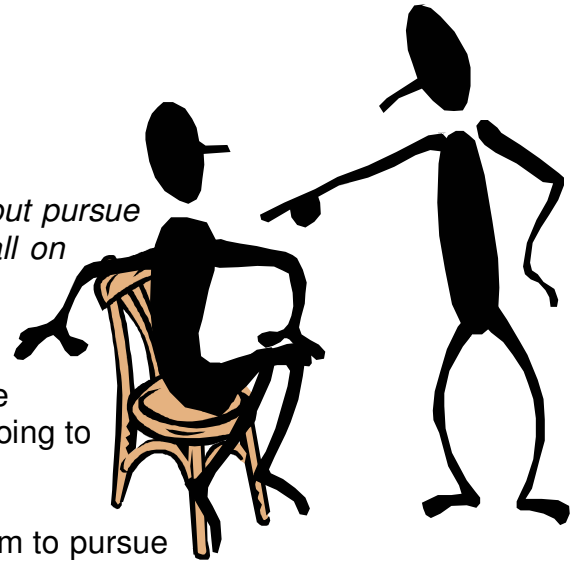
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Lesson Four

Paul's Counsel To Timothy

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

In the last lesson, we ended with this verse, but I want to draw your attention to it once again, because it is the foundation for this lesson and what we are going to discuss.



Paul not only told Timothy to run, but he also told him to pursue something. Notice the first thing that Paul said, "Pursue righteousness..." Who is righteous? Yes, it is God. He is the Righteous One (see Deuteronomy 32:4)! We could say, "Pursue God." Paul then refers to faith. This is vital, because without faith it is impossible to please God (see Hebrews 11:6). Paul tells Timothy to pursue God in faith. Pursuing God is the act of fleeing lust! You cannot run after both at the same time. Set your sights upon God and pursue Him!

Paul was telling Timothy to run away from the lusts that would pull him away or distract his eyes from God. Notice once again that Paul did not say, "Flee also youthful lust..." He told Timothy to flee lusts – plural. This signifies that there are more than one. There are two and I will be going over them in this lesson.

(1 John 2:16 NKJV) *"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."*

In this verse, we see the two types of lust and then we see something that is very interesting. We see, "the pride of life." When I first noticed this, I was confused because it did not just say pride. In fact, this is the only place in the Bible where it mentions "the pride of life." In this lesson, we will discuss what the pride of life is.

Remember, John said the lust (singular) of the flesh and the lust (singular) of the eyes. Also, remember that Paul told Timothy to flee youthful lusts (plural). We can easily say that these are the two lusts that Paul was referring to. I will show you later when we talk about the lust of the flesh that Paul described what they are.

In the Bible, the word *flesh* is used in two ways. One means your skin, meat, and bones – your body. Jesus came to earth in the flesh (see Romans 1:3). I am not

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talking about that type of flesh. The other type of flesh is what we are going to discuss in this lesson. Let us get started!

The Lust of the Flesh

Before we begin to talk about the lust of the flesh, you must understand that there is a war going on inside of you. There are two forces pulling at you and you must choose whom you will follow.

The war between the flesh and Spirit

(Galatians 5:17-21 NKJV) *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. {18} But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."*

From these two verses, we see that there is a battle going on inside every believer. The flesh is fighting against the Spirit of God that dwells within you. This is important to know because it shows that the Holy Spirit is willing to guide you in the ways of God. In order to do that He has to go against what your flesh wants. This will cause a war and leave you with a choice of two options. Firstly, to do what your flesh wants and not what God tells you to do or secondly, be lead by the Holy Spirit. Life is full of choices, is it not?

Why is there a war between the flesh and the Spirit? The flesh wants you to do as it wants, but the Spirit of God wants you to do what the Word of God says. They are opposite and against each other. They cannot and do not agree (see Romans 8:7). Each is fighting to have its way in you. The difference is that the Holy Spirit will not force you do what He wants. The flesh, however, will use your mind and everything else to get you to submit to it.

If you are not lead by the Spirit of God, then you are under the law. This means that you remove yourself from under the grace of God. You will either be under the law or you will be under God's grace. The law steps in when you step aside from following God. If you are lead by the Spirit of God, then you will not be under the law or its consequences. If you walk according to your flesh then you will come under the law and its consequences.

(Romans 8:13-14 NKJV) *"For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. {14} For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."*

If the Spirit of God leads you, you will not do the works of the flesh. Why is this? The Holy Spirit will only lead you to and teach you about God. He will never lead you away from Christ.

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(John 15:26 NKJV) *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."*

(John 16:13-14 NKJV) *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. {14} He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."*



Which way
Lord?

A distinguishing factor between a true Christian and a professing Christian is that the Spirit will lead one and the other will be lead by the flesh.

We could also say that the distinguishing factor between a child of God and a child of the devil is that the child of God is led by the Holy Spirit.

There is a very clear warning in Romans 8:13. If you live according to the flesh you will die. Why is this? Because the wages of sin is death (see Romans 6:23), but the gift of God is eternal life.

Is it possible to do good things while being lead by the flesh? Paul bluntly talks about this.

(Romans 7:18 NKJV) *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find."*

Paul says that there is nothing good in his flesh. He goes on to say that he desires to do good, but his flesh does not know how. Even if you wanted to live a godly life with your flesh leading you, it would be impossible, because the flesh does not know how! The only thing that the flesh does well is sin. That is why whoever lives by the flesh will die. You will only be living in sin when you follow your flesh.

(1 John 2:17 NKJV) *"And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*

This is unconditional. You will only be living in sin when you follow your flesh. If you live according to the flesh then you will not inherit or enter into the kingdom of heaven. We could safely say that living according to the flesh will rob you of a long and successful life on earth, and also of a wonderful eternal life. It will cause you to have a short and miserable life on earth and an even worse eternity.

John voiced the same thing in 1 John 2:17, "...he who does the will of God abides forever." Remember that the flesh and the Spirit of God are against each other. The Spirit of God wants you to do the will of God, but your flesh wants you

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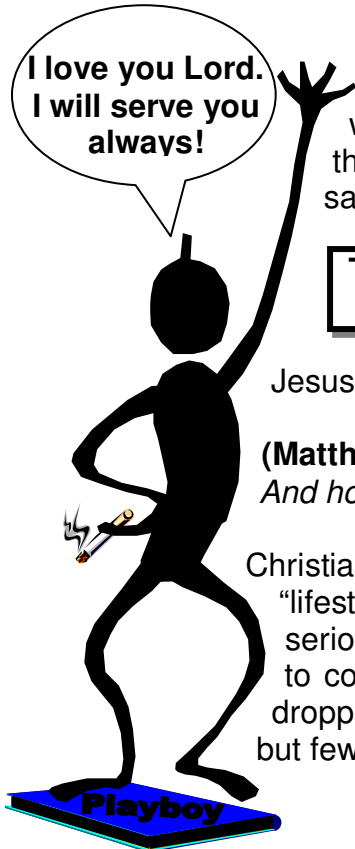
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to fulfill its lusts. With one comes life and with the other comes death. Who you are lead by will determine if you accomplish the will of God.

What does doing the will of God mean? Is it a one-time thing or is it something that is daily and hourly?

(Philippians 2:12 NKJV) *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;"*



Paul is not telling us that our salvation is based on works. If that were so, then Christ died in vain (see Galatians 2:29) and we would be no different than the Muslims whose salvation depends on their works. What is Paul saying here? He is telling us that our salvation is not just words that we say at the altar.

The salvation that you have been given is something that you must live every hour of every day.

Jesus encountered this situation and made a very interesting statement.

(Matthew 15:8 NKJV) *"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me."*

Christianity is not lip service – it is a lifestyle. We tend to use that word "lifestyle" very lightly, but it is something that must be taken extremely seriously. Your actions need to correspond with your words. They need to compliment each other. I was in evening prayer one night and God dropped a phrase into my heart. He said, "Many are Christian by name but few are Christian by action!"

The Flesh – What is it?

(1 John 2:16 NKJV) *"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."*

The first thing that John mentions here is the lust of the flesh. Just what is the lust of the flesh? Look at what Paul writes to the church in Galatia, concerning the lust of the flesh.

(Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV) *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, {20} idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, {21} envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell*

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you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Here Paul says, "the works of the flesh." These are simply the products of the lust of flesh. Paul then refers to "the fruit of the Spirit" in the following verses. The works of the flesh are a product of the lust of the flesh like the fruits of the Spirit are products of the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote to the Romans and told them that he also had trouble with his flesh and that sometimes he would even do the things that he knew was wrong.

(Romans 7:15 NKJV) *"For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do."*

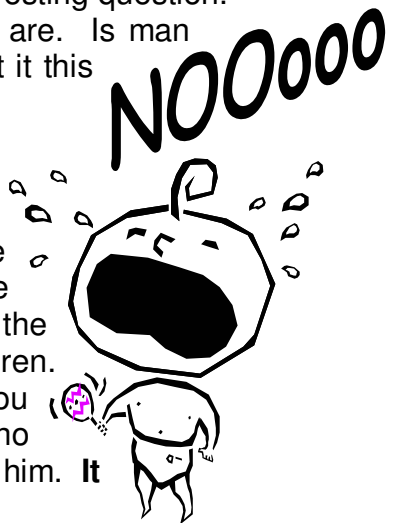
What is it in Paul that caused him to do what he did not want to do? Paul again answers that question for us.

(Romans 7:18 NKJV) *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find."*

(Romans 7:22-23 NKJV) *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. {23} But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."*

Paul's flesh would cause him to sin. This brings us to a very interesting question. What is the flesh? We have seen what the works of the flesh are. Is man born with the lust of the flesh or does he acquire it? Let me put it this way.

Have you ever seen a young child being selfish with his toys? Have you ever seen a child get angry and hit another child? Who taught the child to do this? Did the parents sit down with the child and teach him or her to be selfish and hit and hate and be unforgiving? Certainly not! Now look back at what the works of the flesh are and see how many of them you see in young children. Naturally you don't see adultery or fornication or murder, but you do see selfish ambitions, hate, envy and so many others. Who taught these to the child? Of course the answer is no one taught him. **It was in him when he was born!**



Let's go back to Paul's words to the Romans. Paul said that there was a law of sin in his members. After seeing how a child has so many works of the flesh we can say that the lust of the flesh is the sin nature that every human is born with. It is a law in itself, but this law is a law without any "do not's". It is simply something that sinners must follow. They cannot go against that law in them

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because they do not know how. It is this sin nature, this law of sin, which keeps us separate from God.

(Ephesians 2:1-3 NLT) *"Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. {2} You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. {3} All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else."*

This translation puts it wonderfully. We were born with an evil nature that is in rebellion to God. That evil nature is the lust of the flesh, which produces all of its works. Sometimes I look at sinners and think, "Why do they act like that. It is so self-centered." Then I have to remember that they are only acting according to who they are. As said in the verse above, "They are obeying Satan." How do you expect them to act? Our job is to love them and point them to Christ.

Notice, what verse two says. "He [Satan] is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God." Satan is the one who controls those that are not saved. All that comes out of them is from Satan. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were children of the devil.

(John 8:44 NKJV) *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*



Look at all the Pharisees did and their motives and then look at what Paul listed in Galatians. Does there seem to be a similarity? Jesus said that they wanted to do the desire of Satan. It is the sin nature that wants to do the desires of Satan. Do Christians suffer from this too? Of course! As long as you are alive on this earth, you will have to fight against what your sin nature wants to do. But Wait! This is not a hopeless fight, and you can overcome.

Paul talks about crucifying the flesh (see Galatians 5:24). What does this mean? Do you think being crucified is a painful experience? The answer is positively yes!

(1 Peter 4:1 NKJV) *"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,"*

This verse is talking about ceasing from sin. How is that done? It is done through the suffering of the flesh. The flesh is made to suffer when it is crucified.

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It is not easy and most times, it is painful to do. Crucifying your flesh is synonymous with not giving into your flesh.

Even Jesus went through this tough time. He wanted to do the will of God, but at the same time, He wanted to do what was convenient for Him. It took Jesus three hours of prayer until He was able to bring His desires under the subjection of God. It was so tough for Him that He sweated blood (see Luke 22:44). The good news is that He overcame. You can too, if you know the secret of why Jesus succeeded. Jesus stated His secret.

(John 5:30 NKJV) *"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."*

(John 6:38 NKJV) *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*

Jesus' secret was that He was totally committed to what God wanted Him to do. He loved His Father more than He loved His own life. He knew that God's desire for Him was more important than what He wanted. Look at what He prayed three times and it will show you His love for God.

(Matthew 26:39 NKJV) *"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

(Matthew 26:42 NKJV) *"Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

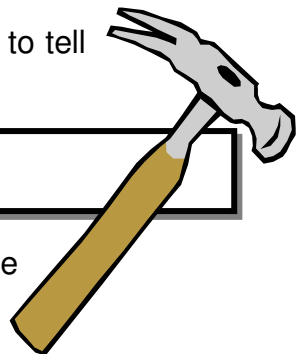
(Matthew 26:44 NKJV) *"So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."*

We will talk more about your love for God in lesson seven, but I want to tell you now that this is a major part in overcoming temptations.

**Your love for God can be the hammer, cross and nails
that crucify your flesh!**

Did you know that Jesus gave a list of the lust of the flesh long before Paul did? He did, but first let me show you what Paul said so that you can compare them to each other.

(Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV) *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, {20} idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions,*



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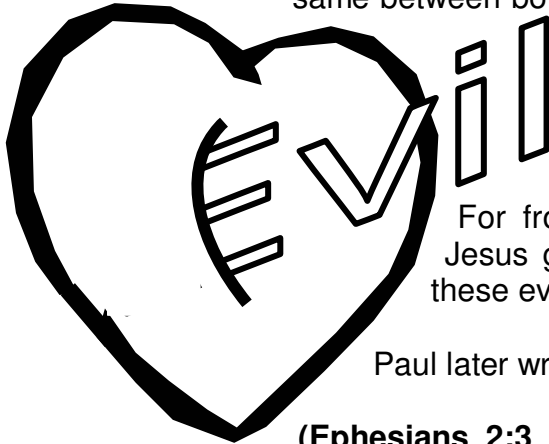
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heresies, {21} envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Now, here is what Jesus said:

(Mark 7:20-23 NKJV) *"And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. {21} For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, {22} thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. {23} All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

Notice that Paul states some works of the flesh that Jesus does not and that Jesus states some that Paul does not. Also, notice how many things are the same between both lists. You now have a comprehensive list of the lust of the flesh. All of these are things that make up the lust of the flesh.



Look closely at what Jesus said in Mark. He began with, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed..." and Jesus goes on to list them. Now notice the last verse, "All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

Paul later wrote:

(Ephesians 2:3 NLT) *"All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else."*

It is the lust of the flesh inside us that defiles us. The lust of the flesh comes out of the heart of man. It was there when you were born. Paul just confirmed what Jesus said.

(Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV) *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

Let us look at a few more translations of this verse.

(Jeremiah 17:9 NASB) *"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"*

(Jeremiah 17:9 NIV) *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*

(Jeremiah 17:9 DNT) *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable; who can know it?"*

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Notice that one verse says that the heart is desperately sick, and then another verse says it is beyond cure and yet another says it is incurable!

This gives you a good view of the condition of man's heart. Any thing that comes out of the heart of man is going to be against God. How could anything godly come out of something so wicked? All that comes from the lust of the flesh is wicked, evil, and contrary to God. Our sin nature is evil and according to Satan's standards (see John 8:44). This is why those that live according to the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (see Galatians 5:21).

Overcoming the Flesh

Why is it so important to know about the flesh and its lust? All that we have studied here is very relevant and needed in overcoming temptation.

You must realize that you are not only fighting Satan and his helpers, but you are also going against your very own sin nature!

It is easy to fight against someone else, but it is another story when you have to fight against yourself. Remember that in lesson two we discussed where temptations came from. They come from Satan, from other people and from your flesh.

Now that we know what the condition of the human heart is and we know the things that it produces, what do we do about it? Can we change the nature of our heart? Can we get rid of the lust of the flesh that proceeds from our heart?

(Romans 12:2 NKJV) *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

If you are conformed to this world then you will do what it does. This world lives according to the lust of the flesh. The Bible tells you not to be conformed to this world. I wanted to know the exact meaning of conformed so I looked it up in the dictionary. It says,

"In agreement with, comply with, adapt oneself, be obedient and submissive to."

Now the question is, "How do we not be conformed to this world?" The Scripture tells you. You are less and less conformed to this world by the renewing of your mind. The Bible says transformed. I also looked up transformed in the dictionary. It says,

"To change the shape, appearance, quality, or nature of."

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When you renew your mind by the Word of God, your nature and quality is being changed! The way that you overcome your flesh is to renew your mind. Let's put all of these meanings in the scripture and see what it looks like.

(Romans 12:2) *"And do not be in agreement with, adapted to, obedient or submitted to this world, but change your appearance, quality and nature by the renewing of your mind..."*

I think that this paints a clear picture of overcoming the flesh. You must realize that this will not happen immediately. Sometimes people expect to be totally changed overnight by reading one verse. This rarely happens. God does things in a process and being transformed is one of them. As your mind is renewed, it will be easier and easier for you to not follow the law of your body, but follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Since you gave your life to Christ, you entered into a war. The only time that you will be totally free from your sin nature is when you die and go to be with God. This shows that you must always be aware of your flesh and deal with it. Learning how to deal with your flesh and crucify it is something that we all must do and it is vital in overcoming temptations. Paul continually told Timothy to fight the good fight, run the race and not to lose heart. Jesus tells us the same thing in His Word.

The lust of the flesh will always go against the Word of God. Submitting to the Holy Spirit will always lead you closer to God. Do not forget that there is a war inside of you between the flesh and the Spirit. Following the lust of the flesh results in death. Choose this day to follow the leading of the Spirit, because He will lead you by the Word of God and it will be life to you (see Proverbs 4:20-22).

The Lust of the Eyes



(1 John 2:16 NKJV) *"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."*

The next thing that John states is the lust of the eyes. This is not as difficult as the flesh, because we know what the eyes are, but what is the lust of the eyes? How does it connect with the lust of the flesh?

The Lust of the Eyes – What is it?

Let us remember that the lust of the flesh is your sin nature. It is what you were born with. This is important to remember in order to understand what the lust of the eyes is.

The eyes are the windows to your heart. There is a direct connection between your heart and your eyes. Remember what was said about the heart and its condition. The lust of the eyes begins with what you see and that sparks the lust

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of the flesh. You see something with your eyes and that causes your sinful nature to desire it.

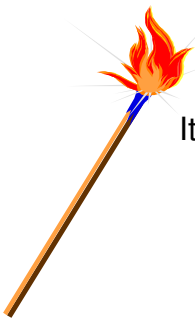
Let us look at it this way. I have never done drugs or been close to doing them because I always knew they were sinful and bad for my health. I never had the desire to do drugs. When I was in Fiji, I had begun to build friendships with some merchants on the streets. They would make woodcarvings or necklaces and try to sell them to the tourists. One day I was speaking to one of them and he said to me, "Do you want to buy some dope?" Of course my answer was a big NO. Why did this have no effect on me? The reason it did not affect me was because the desire to do drugs was never in me. But, what if I had done drugs for many years and just recently broke the habit? Do you think it would be hard for me to say no? Yes, it would have been difficult to turn it down.

This is the same with all of us. The desire to hate, be selfish, fornicate, steal, and so much other wickedness is in us. Whether you want to admit it or not, it is in you and you have to deal with it. This is why the lust of the eyes is so powerful.

The lust of the eyes is not strong in itself, but with the lust of the flesh backing it up, it can be so powerful! If you had no sinful desire in you, then the lust of the eyes would be ineffective.

I like to consider the lust of the eyes as the match that ignites the fire. You see something that you like. It could be drugs, cigarettes, a car, a girl, or a guy. Your eyes, just being set on those things, will ignite those sinful desires in you! If you see the car of your dreams sitting in the parking lot, the door is unlocked, and the keys are in the ignition, I can guarantee that you will have a thought to get in and drive it away. Of course, this kind of temptation is not always effective because it is very stupid to do something like that. But what if it was with something else? Guys, what if you are with your girlfriend after a movie? What happens when you notice how pretty she is? What do you do? This is a temptation that is brought to all of us. It is your sin nature, but the desire was sparked by what your eyes saw! It is not the lust of the eyes that causes you to have the evil desires. They are already there. Your eyes just awoke the evil desire.

So, what is the lust of the eyes? It is the match that will ignite, arouse, or awaken the sinful nature that you have! It works entirely from the lust of the flesh. It gains its strength from your flesh's lusts. If you gain control over your sin nature, then the lust of the eyes will be rendered useless. It will have no power over you.



Overcoming the Lust of the Eyes

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Remember that the lust of the eyes has no power on its own. It is the lust of the flesh that backs it up. A match cannot light wet wood and leaves! If this is the case, then why even bother with the lust of the eyes? Why not just ignore it? Those are good questions and the answer is found in Paul's writings.

(Ephesians 4:27 NKJV) *"nor give place to the devil."*

If we know that our eyes can be used to awaken and ignite our sinful nature, we need to be wise and know how to lessen the risk of that happening. If your flesh is just aroused by sight, you can be sure that Satan will use that against you. Look at what happened to King David (see 2 Samuel 11).

When you have cancer, you go for many tests, checkups and other things. You might then go into therapy or have an operation. One thing that you never do is just sit and say, "Well, maybe this will go away." Even after the operation, you must go in for checkups to make sure the cancer has not grown back. You give no place to cancer. You do all that you can to keep it out of your body. You should be the same way with the devil. I want him around me as much as I want cancer. You should treat the devil as cancer.

The question still stands, "How do you overcome the lust of the eyes?" As long as you are on this earth, you will battle against the lust of the eyes, as you will have to battle the lust of the flesh because they are part of the human nature.

In Lesson Three, we talked about setting ourselves up for temptation. Sometimes it is done intentionally and sometimes by accident. The same principles apply here. If you have a problem with drinking, do not walk into a bar. The Bible tells you many things to set your eyes on. As you focus on them and keep them in the midst of your heart, you will become less enticed by the world. I am not saying that just by setting your eyes on the things of God that you will never be tempted again, but I am saying that you will have an easier time of seeing the escape that God will provide for you (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Let us look at some of the verses.

(John 4:35 NKJV) *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"*

God tells you to look at the people that are not saved! This makes you realize that you have a job to do.

(Psalms 25:15 NKJV) *"My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net."*

(Psalms 26:3 NKJV) *"For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth."*

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Here David is saying that all the good things that God has done are something that he thinks about and remembers.

(Psalms 101:3 NKJV) *"I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me."*

(Psalms 119:37 NKJV) *"Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way."*

Here the Bible tells you to not waste your time looking at things that will do you no good, or things that will draw you away from God.

(Psalms 119:82 NKJV) *"My eyes fail from searching Your word, Saying, "When will You comfort me?""*

Here the Bible tells us to be live reading the word of God. This goes along with what God told Joshua in Joshua 1:8.

(Psalms 141:8 NKJV) *"But my eyes are upon You, O GOD the Lord; In You I take refuge; Do not leave my soul destitute."*

(Proverbs 4:20-26 NKJV) *"My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. {21} Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; {22} For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. {23} Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. {24} Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. {25} Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. {26} Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established."*

This list could go on and on and on. I just chose some of my favorites. This list progresses from keeping your eyes on God to His Word and then on the lost! God's Word is full of things for you to set before your eyes.

As you continually set God and His Word before your eyes, you will find out that your thought pattern will be changed (we will discuss this more in lesson five). Give the devil and your flesh no place by filling your mind with the Word of God.

As you learn to crucify the flesh and deny its lusts (see overcoming the flesh), you will automatically find that the lust of the eyes' power over you will diminish.

The Pride of Life

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(1 John 2:16 NKJV) *"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."*

The last thing that John refers to here is the pride of life. We know what God says about the proud.

(Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV) *"Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith."*

This is very simple and straight. If you are proud then your soul is not upright or in right standing with God. Here is another one.

(James 4:6 NKJV) *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

This is just as simple as the first one and Peter repeats it in 1 Peter 5:5. If you are proud then God is going to resist you. You will not find the grace of God as long as you are proud. You will only receive grace when you are humble.

It is plain that being proud is a sin. What is the difference between pride and the pride of life? Let us find out.

What is the Pride of Life?

The pride of life is mentioned only in 1 John. Is it possible that the pride of life is different from pride? What is pride? The dictionary describes it as,

"Too high an opinion of oneself."

When we say, "That man is so proud," we are talking about how he sees himself. He probably walks with his chin in the clouds and does not see whom he steps on.

To really understand this, you must realize that everything in the Bible is in a logical progression. An example of this is:

(Hebrews 6:1-2 NKJV) *"Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, {2} of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."*

Here the author of Hebrews states foundation stones and he gives an order in which they must be laid. It is impossible to be baptized meaningfully without truly repenting and having faith towards God. The order that the author has set must be followed. Another example is in Romans.

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(Romans 10:14 NKJV) *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"*

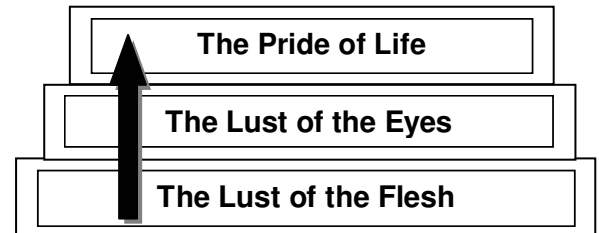
It is impossible for people to hear without a preacher. Again, there is a logical progression that Paul gives here. Before people call on God, they must hear, but before they hear someone must be sent. If no one is sent, then they will not hear.

Here are only two examples of a logical progression in the Bible. Since this happens continually throughout scripture, it most certainly is the same with 1 John.

(1 John 2:16 NKJV) *"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."*

We see that John states three things:

- 1) The lust of the flesh
- 2) The lust of the eyes
- 3) The pride of life.



We have already seen that the lust of the eyes is built on and gains power from the lust of the flesh (see the diagram above). The logical deduction here is that the pride of life is what follows, or is produced by the lust of the eyes.

After seeing all of this, we can confidently say that the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes directly result in the pride of life. So, what exactly is the pride of life? Is it different from regular pride?

Let us look at it in this manner. There is a pastor who begins to be filled with pride. He preaches really well, has an eloquent voice, and can make the entire congregation break into tears with one word or makes them begin to laugh with just a smile. As time goes by, this man begins to depend more on his personality than the Holy Spirit. He begins to think, "Wow, look how I can take these people to where I want them to go. I can make them laugh or cry. They really love me and think I am wonderful...and I am!" This pastor has allowed pride to enter into his life, but he is still in the will of God and doing what God has told him to do. What happens after a time if he sees some famous person on TV and he begins to think that he can make money by preaching because he is so good at it? This is an important decision. He is about to determine if he is going to live in pride or move into the pride of life. Let us say that this preacher decides to begin using the Gospel to his advantage and leaves his church to make money. This man is now living in the pride of life. He has taken his own life into his own hands. He no longer depends on God to lead him. He has told God to hold it and he is

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doing what he wants to do. When he was in pride he was still obeying God to an extent, but now he is in blatant rebellion.

This is the difference between pride and the pride of life. You can still be following God while you are in pride, but of course you will not experience Him and you will be hindered in what you do because God resists the proud. But...

When you are operating in the pride of life, you are not following God, you are openly rebelling to His face.

Operating in the pride of life can last for a few minutes or years. When you repent and bring yourself back under the lordship of Christ, then you are no longer in the pride of life. The bottom line to the pride of life is blatant rebellion towards God!

This brings us to something that is very interesting. If you are under the lordship of Christ, it shows that you have the fear of the Lord.

(Proverbs 8:13 NKJV) *"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate."*

Notice that the fear of the Lord and pride is in direct contradiction. If you fear the Lord, then you will not walk in pride or the pride of life.

(Proverbs 16:6 NKJV) *"In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil."*

Having the fear of the Lord is a safeguard. If you fear the Lord, you will depart from evil. Do not get the fear of the Lord confused with being afraid of the Lord. There is a difference. Being afraid of God will drive you away from Him. A good example of this is with King David.

(2 Samuel 6:9-10 NKJV) *"David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, 'How can the ark of the LORD come to me?' {10} So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite."*

Here David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the city and two of his men touched the ark and died. David became afraid and decided to leave the ark somewhere else. David was afraid of God and this caused him to keep God at a distance.

But, the fear of the Lord will draw you to God!

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(Psalms 111:10 NKJV) *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever."*

Now, if the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, we need to ask, "Who gives wisdom?"

(Proverbs 2:6 NKJV) *"For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;"*

It is God who gives wisdom. None other is able to give it. If someone tells you that he can give you wisdom, then it is a counterfeit wisdom. We see that by fearing the Lord you begin to have wisdom. Wisdom comes from God and you will not get wisdom if you are not close to God. Therefore, we can assuredly say that the fear of the Lord will draw you to God.

Some people say that "fear" means to reverence, honor, or greatly respect. This is not talk about "shaking in your boots" fear. This is the kind of reverence that you would give a king. I have never seen a person openly defy a king. He is to be honored above all others. We serve the King of kings, how much more should we honor and fear Him?

When you are walking in the pride of life, you are not walking in the fear of the Lord. You are actually walking away from God.

When you are living in the pride of life, you are taking your own life into your own hands and not letting God direct you. Those that are not saved are living in the pride of life and many that are saved are walking in the pride of life. They are making their own choices without considering or asking God what He desires.

(James 4:13-15 NKJV) *"Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; {14} whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. {15} Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."*

James clearly says here that tomorrow is not yours. It is God's. The world's wisest man said something that goes along with this.

(Proverbs 3:5-7 NKJV) *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; {6} In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. {7} Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil."*

Notice how this verse puts acknowledging God in ALL your ways and the fear of the Lord together! When you fear the Lord, you are going to trust Him to lead you and you will follow Him. You will not live in the pride of life.

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Now God, you wait just a minute. I am going to go and do what I want to do right now. You stop telling me what to do and get off my back. I am going to do what I want to do and that is that! Leave me alone!!!

Let us review what the pride of life is. It is blatant rebellion against God, and it is the opposite of the fear of the Lord. It is making your own choices without considering what God wants you to do. It is not submitting to God.

Now that we know what the pride of life is, what do you do about it? Remember that it is produced from the lust of the eyes, which comes from the lust of the flesh. **The final step in fulfilling the lust of the flesh is to begin to walk in the pride of life.** It is to do what you want to do even though you know that it is against God. It is choosing to murder, steal, lie, and all of the other things listed in Galatians 5.

If you are willfully fulfilling the lust of the flesh, you are operating in the pride of life. You need to seek God and begin to draw to Him. Ask Him to restore your fear of Him once again. God desires to be with you and to lead you and guide you. He has so much planned for you and He has it all mapped out

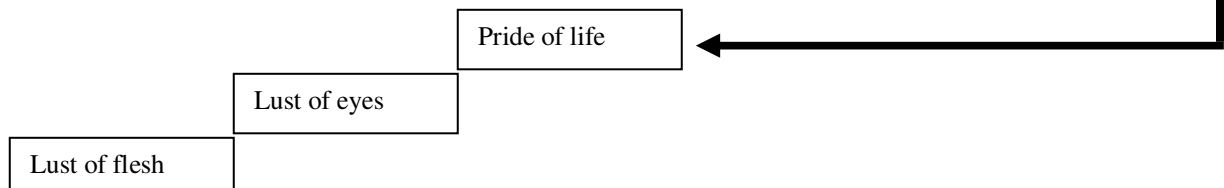
(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

God has wonderful things planned for your life, but you will never accomplish them if you walk in the pride of life. God rejects the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Satan desires you to walk in the pride of life because then he has you walking away from God and rebelling against Him, which is the same as witchcraft (see 1 Samuel 15:23).

As I close this chapter, I want to let you read the key verse to this entire series. God will help you to overcome the lust of the flesh and help you to follow Him. He has given you a helper (see John 14:16, 26).

(1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV) *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

JOSHUA – HERE I WANT YOU TO ADD THE PICTURE OF MOVING UP INTO THE PRIDE OF LIFE AND THEN HOW TO GET BACK TO THE FEAR OF THE LORD! LOOK AT BOB'S LESSON SEVEN ON THE MODEL OF MINISTRY!



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Final Questions

1. Concerning the lust of the flesh, what do you see as being the thing that hinders you the most? How does it hold you?
2. Find five examples in the Bible of people that gave into the lust of the flesh. What happened to them? Who else did it affect other than themselves?
3. What are some things that you see that awaken your sin nature? How do you cope with the temptation to give into them? Write ten ways that you could better control what your eyes see. Find more Scriptures that tell you what too look at.
4. There are many examples in the Bible of people that walked in the pride of life. Find ten and explain what they did and how it affected them and others.
5. How can you recognize the times that you have the temptation to begin to walk in the pride of life? What do you do in those times? What will you do next time you are tempted with it?
6. In one hundred words or less, explain in your own words what you think the fear of the Lord is. Ask God to continue to help you walk in it.

*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
(John 6:38 NKJV)*