

Lesson 7: January 22, 2006: “Why is it so hard to not give in to temptations?”
--Learning perseverance in trials

One of the most difficult things a Christian has to deal with is the reality of constant defeat. Why is it that I cannot keep myself from sinning in this way? People ask themselves this question everyday. The most likely reason is that their accountability program isn't working. You should always be aware of the effectiveness of your program to see if you need to make changes or find a new accountability partner. But even with a good accountability partner, some people simply cannot shake the sin in their lives off of them. This is when it comes down to the power of Satan to keep you in bondage against your will. What you have to do is rely on the Holy Spirit to deliver you through prayer and spiritual disciplines. Your desire should be to gain spiritual perseverance, like a runner trying to complete a marathon. Read these scriptures and think about what they are saying and how it applies to your battles with temptation right now.

I know your deeds, your hard work and your *perseverance*. I know that you cannot *tolerate* wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. (Revelation 2:2)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because the testing of your faith develops *perseverance*. *Perseverance* must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)...Blessed is the man who *perseveres* under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:14-25)

(continuing on from the passage in Revelation...)

You have *persevered* and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place...He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:3-7)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. And when you are tempted, he will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)