

Spiritual Battle

A Believer's Guide to Combat Sin

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Friends,

We are all sinners and we all struggle with sin. This struggle will not end until we are with the Lord.

This guide was written to help us in our battle. It's not a comprehensive study of sin, but a resource we can use in times of testing – it can be stored on the computer, tablet or phone so that it's always ready to hand. It summarises the most fundamental principles of spiritual battle and contains numerous and often abundant scripture quotations. This is in order for us to be able to access biblical truths most pertinent to our trials when we are undergoing them.

You might find different parts of this resource helpful at different times and it is my hope that the structure used will allow every one to locate the relevant section quickly in the time of need. Please feel free to highlight any portions of the scripture quotations or add passages which are applicable to your particular struggles if they have not been included so that you can create a personalised version of this document to serve you.

Many parts of this work are based on the "[The Believer's Dealing with Sin](#)" section of the [Hamartiology](#) study by Dr. Robert Luginbill and I encourage everyone to read not only this section, but the entire study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue of sin and our struggle with it. Other useful resources are listed at the end.

Although the purpose of this guide is to help us endure our trials, resist the temptations and overcome sin, this defensive aspect of our spiritual battle should never be our only, or even primary focus. We know from military or sport parallels that solely trying to avoid defeat often results in one being under constant attack on part of the opponent. This is also the case in our struggle with sin.

Every day we need to grow spiritually by getting to know the Word of God, understanding it through sound biblical teaching, believing it and applying it – all done in the power of the Holy Spirit. The more faithfully we follow God's path and do what is right, the more we will naturally be rejecting all that is wrong. The more we advance and the better our offence, the less exposed defensively we will become.

There will be times, however, when turning away from what is evil to what is good will be a real struggle. It is my hope that this guide will be of some use to You in those times and will help You remain on Lord's path.

Let's follow our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully and bear the most abundant fruit for Him by growing in the truth and fulfilling the ministry He prepared for each one of us.

Time is short now.

In the grace of our Lord,

Bartek

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I. Preparing for the Battle.

The first step in overcoming sin is the resolve in our heart to glorify God by being obedient to Him and to remove everything that draws us away from His path and hinders us from fulfilling His will in our lives.

1. We overcome sin through our free will choice.

Our deliverance from sin can be compared to our deliverance from the ultimate result of it – condemnation.

We are saved “by grace through faith”.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB

“By grace”, because it is a gift from God that He sent His Son to pay for our sins and did not require this payment from us. The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23) and we could not pay this price for our sin ourselves. We were redeemed by Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross.

“Through faith”, because it is our free will choice to believe in Christ and accept His payment for all our sins. God has done everything that needed to be done for us to be saved and what we would never be able to do ourselves. Our only part in our salvation is the free will choice to accept this provision – a free will choice that comes from our desire to be saved.

So it is with overcoming sin. We must make the choice. In His grace God has done all that was necessary for us to be saved and in His grace He has provided everything that we need to fulfil His will and resist sin. We must make the free will decision that we want to stay faithful to our Lord and overcome our sin and we must persevere in this decision by choosing to access the help He has for us. And He *will* empower us to keep our resolve and He *will* deliver us.

Overwhelmed by sin, undergoing a heavy temptation and struggling with an area of our weakness, we may find it hard to even make such a resolve. But if we made the free will decision to put our faith in Christ and achieved salvation at a time when we were alienated from God, in the darkness of unbelief and under complete control of our sin nature, then even in the time of our hardest struggle we are able to make the free will decision to break away from our sin and be delivered from it now that in Christ we are in the light, sons of our God who is helping us through His Spirit that has been given to us.

Our Lord is the Light. In Him we are in the light now.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. **5** The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
John 1:4-5 NASB

12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
John 8:12 NASB

46 “I have come *as* Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.”
John 12:46 NASB

8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light
Ephesians 5:8 NASB

5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;
1 Thessalonians 5:5 NASB

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
1 Peter 2:9 NASB

We were far off from God in the past, but we have been brought near.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
Ephesians 2:13 NASB

We are children of God.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
John 1:12-13 NASB

3 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
1 John 3:1 NASB

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
Romans 8:16 NASB

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:26 NASB

We have the Spirit.

6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
Galatians 4:6 NASB

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, **22** who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.
2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NASB

We can do all things through Him who strengthens us.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13 NASB

We need to remember that no sin, no weakness, even no addiction deprives us of what is God's image in us, the divine spark we all have within – our free will. The question is whether we want to make the choice to be obedient to our Lord and to part with all sin.

It will equally be our free will decision to reach out for this resource and use it when the trial comes.

2. Our position as believers.

Our free will decision to put faith in Christ gave us salvation, but it hasn't removed the issue of sin from our lives. It has, however, changed our status and relationship to sin. Our struggle with sin continues, but it's different now.

2.1. We have been freed from the ultimate power of sin – to condemn us.

The punishment for sin – death (Romans 6:23) and separation from God (Isaiah 59:2; cf. Genesis 2:16-17) – has been paid by Christ on the cross and we have accepted this payment by putting our faith in Him. As those who have believed in Christ we have been freed from the ultimate power of sin – to condemn us.

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1 NASB

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace
Ephesians 1:7 NASB

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
Colossians 1:13-14 NASB

If our battle with sin was to become hard and long, if we were to experience some heavy and demoralising defeats or if sin was to do serious damage in our lives, let's remember that we have been freed from its domain and power to condemn us. As long as we keep the faith in our Lord, our eternal status is safe.

27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one.”
John 10:27-30 NASB

2.2. Our union with Christ and relationship to sin.

Our faith in Christ placed us in union with Him and through it we died to sin.

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? **2** May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; **7** for he who has died is freed from sin.
Romans 6:1-7 NASB

The moment we put our faith in Christ we were placed in union with Him. This baptism into Christ baptized us into His death – we partook in it, so that what happened to Him, in a sense happened to us, as if we were with Him in His death. Our old man given into the slavery of sin died with Him. Through this baptism we entered into a new life and were delivered from the reign of sin.

This is not to say that we cannot sin anymore or are no longer subject to temptation. We can sin and we can be tempted, but a major change has taken place with regard to our spiritual status and relation to sin. Our old self, under the power of sin and a slave to it, is now dead. The choice to sin is no longer what it was in the past – a choice from which we could only refrain for what was usually a limited amount of time, but one we inevitably had to make. Now this choice is bringing this dead man, given over to sin, to life again. It's coming back to things which were ruling our lives but to which we are now dead.

We were slaves to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:6) and we know how dark and empty our life was under this slavery. When we believed, the truth has set us free and this old self enslaved to sin died.

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

John 8:31-32 NASB

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, **13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 6:11-13 NASB

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19** and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. **20** But you did not learn Christ in this way, **21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, **22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Ephesians 4:17-24 NASB

Now in our Lord we are a new creation. Born again, alive from the dead.

24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

John 5:24 NASB

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB

9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, **10** and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—

Colossians 3:9-10 NASB

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13 NASB

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus *said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” **5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ **8** The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 3:3-8 NASB

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

1 John 5:1a NASB

23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
1 Peter 1:23 NASB

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
Ephesians 2:4-5 NASB

13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, **14** having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
Colossians 2:13-14 NASB

2.3. Christ is our life and our purpose is to follow Him and serve Him.

Now Christ is our life – He lives in us and we live for Him.

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Philippians 1:21 NASB

4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.
Colossians 3:4 NASB

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
Galatians 3:26-27 NASB

27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:27 NASB

We live for Christ. The purpose of our life – of everything we do every day – should be to follow Him and serve Him. To bear the most bountiful fruit for our Lord without letting any sin, worldly matter or any weed distract us and slow us down.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NASB

20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
Galatians 2:20 NASB

26 “If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”
John 12:26 NASB

22 “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **23** And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”
Matthew 13:22-23 NASB (also Mark 4:19-20 and Luke 8:14-15)

3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB

Following Him means that we will have to deny ourselves.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

Matthew 16:24 NASB (also Matthew 10:38; Luke 9:23, 14:27)

2.4. God's power is present in us through the Holy Spirit.

As believers in Christ, we all have God's power present in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who enables and empowers us to follow our Lord and serve Him.

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17** *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

John 14:16-17 NASB

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 3:24 NASB

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

1 John 4:13 NASB

16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16 NASB

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, **22** who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NASB

6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Galatians 4:6 NASB

5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 5:5 NASB

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. **10** If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Romans 8:9-10

14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.

2 Timothy 1:14 NASB

3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. **4** But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, **5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:3-7 NASB

And now it is by the power of the Spirit that we overcome sin. Not by our own strength, which we know would eventually always fail us when we were still unbelievers. Now we have God's power indwelling us and if we only choose to access this power, we will win any battle.

6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts."
Zechariah 4:6 NASB

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, **16** that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;
Ephesians 3:14-17a NASB

Our part is the choice. Our moment by moment struggle is between abiding in the Spirit or yielding to the sin nature.

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.
Galatians 5:17 NASB

All sin comes from the inside and is conceived in our thoughts (Matthew 15:18-19; Mark 7:20-23) and so the first battlefield where we exercise our choice between the Holy Spirit and the sin nature is our mind.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **6** For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, **7** because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to *do so*, **8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
Romans 8:5-8 NASB

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
1 Peter 1:13 NASB

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.
Philippians 4:8 NASB

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit we now have the mind of Christ within us. By Spirit's power we need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, **13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. **15** But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. **16** For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.
1 Corinthians 2:12-16 NASB

5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,
2 Corinthians 10:5 NASB

The deeds we produce will be in accordance with who we give our allegiance to in our heart.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
Galatians 5:19-21 NASB

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
Galatians 5:22-24 NASB

This is the continuous choice we make. This is our daily fight in which we need to walk by the Spirit (Romans 8:4), rather than quench His voice guiding us to remain on Lord's path.

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – **13** for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
Romans 8:12-13 NASB

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
Galatians 5:25 NASB

19 Do not quench the Spirit;
1 Thessalonians 5:19 NASB

The Holy Spirit will always win in this battle – if we only let Him.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
Galatians 5:16 NASB

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed (the Holy Spirit using the Word of God to empower us) abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
1 John 3:9 NASB

2.5. We are God's sons, His chosen people and His priesthood. We were called to be holy and to be the light in the world of darkness.

We know what the right choice is. But entangled by sin we've struggled to overcome or undergoing a temptation we find particularly enticing, we may still struggle to make it.

This is when we need to remind ourselves of our calling. We are God's sons, His chosen people and His priesthood.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:26 NASB

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
1 Peter 2:9 NASB

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, **4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
Ephesians 1:3-5 NASB

6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
Revelation 1:6 NASB

With regard to our eternal status, having through faith appropriated Christ's righteousness (Romans 3:21-25, 4:1-5, 5:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-9; Philippians 3:9; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:1; Jeremiah 33:15-16), we are saints in God's eyes and that's how we are called in the scripture (Romans 8:27, 12:13; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; etc.).

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
1 Corinthians 6:11 NASB

7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 1:7 NASB

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus
Ephesians 1:1 NASB

But although we will not be free from sin before we are resurrected, we need to pursue sanctification in this life, fulfilling the will of our Lord and giving a testimony of our eternal status in our conduct here on earth. He called us to be holy, for He is holy.

2 "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'
Leviticus 19:2 NASB

48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
Matthew 5:38 NASB

13 "You shall be blameless before the Lord your God."
Deuteronomy 18:13 NASB

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, **15** but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; **16** because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy".
1 Peter 1:14-16 NASB

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
2 Corinthians 7:1 NASB

14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14 NASB

We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our thoughts, words and deeds should be a testimony to the truth, so that our light shines and brings glory to God.

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **15** nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16** Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 5:13-16 NASB

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life,
Philippians 2:15-16a NASB

3. We need to put God over our every sinful desire.

3.1. We are to love our God and hate evil.

We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our might. Jesus taught us that this is the first and greatest commandment.

5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
Deuteronomy 6:5 NASB

37 And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” **38** This is the great and foremost commandment.”
Matthew 22:37-38 NASB

As those who love our God we are to hate all evil. Sin is a direct violation of God’s will for us.

10 Hate evil, you who love the Lord,
Psalm 97:10a NASB

13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil”
Proverbs 8:13a NASB

Sin may bring us short-lived pleasure, but we know that in the end it only results in spiritual damage. It causes us to lose our fellowship with God, it reduces our productivity for Him and makes us subject to divine discipline.

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.
1 Peter 2:11 NASB

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
Galatians 6:8 NASB

3 For the lips of an adulteress drip honey
And smoother than oil is her speech;
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
Her steps take hold of Sheol.
Proverbs 5:3-5 NASB

21 With her many persuasions she entices him;
With her flattering lips she seduces him.
22 Suddenly he follows her
As an ox goes to the slaughter,
Or as *one in* fetters to the discipline of a fool,
23 Until an arrow pierces through his liver;
As a bird hastens to the snare,
So he does not know that it *will cost him* his life.
Proverbs 7:21-23 NASB

In accordance with our calling we must put God's will above any our sinful desire, any such short-lived pleasure. Regardless of how enticing it might be to us and how strong the urge for it has become, we must see it for what it is in God's eyes – evil. We know that eventually it only causes harm.

29 “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”
Matthew 5:29-30 NASB

The words of our Lord teach us that we must not compromise in our dealing with sin, but they are not to be taken literally – otherwise we would soon have to mutilate our sinful body until nothing would be left out of it. They consequently show us that sinlessness is unachievable by our own effort and so point us to grace. It is by grace that we are saved – we could never achieve salvation by our own efforts. And it is with God's help through the Holy Spirit that we resist sin.

We must do our very best to stay faithful to our Lord. But we must at the same time remember that we cannot rely on ourselves – at all times we need His help.

3.2. We cannot leave any room for sin.

We get to know the Word of God to apply it and live it. We need to be doers of the Word, not forgetful hearers who delude themselves.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror (i.e., hears the Word); **24** for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away (i.e., has averted his mind from what the Word just heard), he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was (i.e., he ignored what was heard and failed to fulfil the Word). **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty (i.e., the New Testament in contrast to the Old Testament Law), and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.
James 1:21-25 NASB

The Word of God commends us to love our Lord and to hate all evil, so in our battle with sin we need to be ruthless. We shouldn't somewhere in the dark spot of our heart leave space for what we know we need to cut off or begin our fight with a concealed plan to gratify our lust at some future point. Our desire to overcome sin must be genuine. God knows our heart (Psalm 139:1; Proverbs 21:2; Jeremiah 17:10).

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
1 John 1:5-7 NASB

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
Romans 13:12-14 NASB

On the one hand, we will never be perfectly obedient, also in our intentions. Our spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41). And God knows our weakness. On the other hand, we should do our best to follow God's Word faithfully and with an undivided heart. Then we will be able to cut through the sin which entangles our thoughts, words and deeds.

3.3. If we call upon Him in truth, God will deliver us.

Our sinful desire may be strong. By giving in to a certain sin for a period of time it may have become our area of weakness. But if we truly want to overcome it and if we truly want to follow the path that God would have us follow, then with His help we will overcome it.

As it was with salvation it is God who is our Deliverer. And if we call upon Him in truth, with a genuine desire to be faithful to Him and to cut off all sin that entangles us, He will deliver us.

18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;
He will also hear their cry and will save them.
Psalm 145:18-19 NASB

7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
John 15:7 NASB

4. We need to keep the faith.

In all this we need to keep the faith (Hebrews 11). We may have attempted to pick ourselves up many times only to stumble and fall again. We may have fought a losing battle for a long time. We may have now abandoned hope and we may think it is impossible for us to be freed from the snare we got ourselves into. We may feel enslaved to sin.

Whatever we think or feel, we must not lose our faith that all things are possible for God and that He can deliver us out of any sin, any sinful tendency or addiction. Nothing is impossible for God and nothing is impossible for him who believes. To believe this truth is also our free will choice.

14 “Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”
Genesis 18:14 NASB

27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”
Jeremiah 32:27 NASB

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?” **20** And He *said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”
Matthew 17:20 NASB (also Mark 9:23)

26 And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
Matthew 19:26 NASB (also Mark 10:27)

So when we ask God for help, we must do it in faith.

24 “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.”
Mark 11:24 NASB

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
James 1:5-8 NASB

Some temptations may be so strong that it may be hard for us to even imagine overcoming them. Even as believers we may develop an area of weakness and become so ensnared to sin that regaining freedom will seem unachievable. We may also have entangled ourselves into a sinful habit or even addiction before we came to Christ. In our spiritual battle we may truly feel like we are facing a Goliath.

Let's follow the example of David and let's face him with faith.

41 Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. **42** When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. **43** The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. **44** The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."

45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. **46** This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, **47** and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

48 Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. **49** And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.

50 Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. **51** Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

1 Samuel 17:41-51 NASB

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the defense of my life;
Whom shall I dread?
Psalm 27:1 NASB

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13 NASB

5. Taking up the full armour of God.

We start our battle with a resolve to be obedient to God, to fulfil His will for us and to completely part with all sin. We make this resolve in a firm belief that nothing is impossible for God and with His help we will be able to keep it.

This resolve should bring about specific measures. Paul compares these measures to taking up the full armour of God. We know that sooner or later we will be tempted and we will have to stand up against sin face to face. Since that is the case, we need to be prepared for the trials that await us and we shouldn't allow ourselves to be caught off guard.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. **14** Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:10-17 NASB

Firstly, we are strong by God's strength, not ours (verse 10). We stand firm against the schemes of the devil by relying on His armour (verses 11 and 13).

We need God's spiritual provision, because our battle is spiritual. Although we don't fight with the devil and his demonic forces directly, they are our enemies who constantly attempt to draw us away from God and entice to sin (verse 12; cf. Genesis 3).

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, **4** for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **5** *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,
2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NASB

We prepare for the battle by taking up the full armour of God.

1. The belt of truth (verse 14a). The truth of the Word of God, studied and correctly understood, is the base of all our spiritual combat.
2. The breastplate of righteousness (verse 14b). Righteousness is the faithful application of God's word in our lives. We get to know the truth to live by it.

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
Romans 6:13 NASB

3. We fit our feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace (verse 15). Just as mobility is key in any combat, so our willingness to serve the Lord and share His truth wherever He would have us do so protects us against straying away from His path by following our own desires or wrong advice. Gospel is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and from the beginning the mission to proclaim this message has been a part of the message itself (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15).

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."
Luke 4:18-19 NASB

Gospel brings us peace, because by it we are reconciled to God (Romans 5:1). This peace is not just a lack of conflict, it is prosperity and blessing which come from being in fellowship with Him and it produces in us calmness amidst most fervent battle. In this world we have tribulation, but in our Lord we have peace.

33 “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”
John 16:33 NASB

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7 NASB

3 The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace,
Because he trusts in You.
Isaiah 26:3 NASB

4. The shield of faith with which we will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one* (verse 16). This is a key piece of our protection, because faith is both the means of growth and the means of application. We need to believe the truth for it to become real and usable to us and we have to believe it in order to apply it in the circumstances we face.

Our faith in biblical truth allows us to defend ourselves from the ubiquitous falsehood and lies of this world, the deceptiveness of sin and the signals our own sin nature sends us through mind and body. We “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*” by believing God’s Word above what the world and even our own body tell us. We walk by faith, not by sight.

1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1 NASB

18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:18 NASB

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight
2 Corinthians 5:7 NASB

5. The helmet of salvation (verse 17a). Just as the helmet is a critical part of an armour because it protects the head, so remembering our salvation in Jesus Christ protects us against any assaults aimed at our eternal life. Even if our spiritual battle was to become very hard and even if we have been experiencing some heavy defeats, we need to remember that as long as we keep the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing can deprive us of our salvation and no enemy can hit us with the ultimate, condemning blow. As long as we belong to our Lord, we are safe and secure, no matter what.

27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father’s hand. **30** I and the Father are one.”
John 10:27-30 NASB

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1 NASB

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? **33** Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; **34** who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. **35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** Just as it is written,
“For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:31-39 NASB

6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (verse 17b). The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit because scriptural truth is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to arm us in combat. He helps us understand it, He makes it real to us and He helps us apply it in spiritual battle. But in order for the Spirit to help us apply the Word of God, we must first know it. No scriptural truth in our heart means no weapon in our hand that the Spirit can use. And on the other hand – the more truth we have accumulated in our heart, the better weapon we will wield. We provide the anchorage, the Spirit propels.

The Word of God is thus not only our defence (verse 14a), but also our offensive weapon. With the scriptural truth ready to hand because we have learned it, believed it and became competent at applying it and with the Spirit empowering us in this process, we can counter all the attacks of the evil one and cut through his lies, following the example of our Lord (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). It is also with this weapon that we come to the defence of our brothers and sisters in Christ – we help them in their trials by means of scriptural truth.

Taking up the full armour of God can be summarised by three basic steps representing the principles of our spiritual growth:

1. Knowing the scriptural truth.
 - Verse 14a – “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth”.
 - Verse 17 – “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”.
2. Believing it.
 - Verse 16 – “taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*”.
3. Living it in the power of the Spirit.
 - Verse 14b – “and having put on the breastplate of righteousness”.
 - Verse 15 – “having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace”.
 - Verse 17 - “the sword of the Spirit”.

What prepares our defence against sin is our spiritual growth – getting to know the Word of God, believing it and applying it in the power of the Spirit. The more we advance in the truth and the more spiritually mature we are, the less susceptible we become to temptation. This principle has several applications in the context of our battle with sin.

Firstly, since biblical truth is the basic element of our armour, we need keep our focus on it. The most fundamental step in achieving that is our daily Bible study – as believers, we should study the Word of God every day. But apart from the daily study, we can concentrate our thoughts on biblical truth throughout the day by using every opportunity to come back to the scripture, even for a short while.

The days are long and many things happen which occupy our mind and which can draw us further away from God. We live in a corrupt world which lies in the power of the devil (1 John 5:19) and we are constantly surrounded by this corruption. We spend a significant part of our time among those who want nothing to do with the truth. Reading the Bible or listening to it whenever we get a chance (e.g., during a break at work, when we are on the road), or, when we are unable to do either, even reciting in our mind the words of scripture pertinent to us (Psalms can be particularly helpful) can help us keep our armour of truth intact and our defences up throughout the day. It is when we are far away from the Word of God that we are most vulnerable.

Secondly, we inevitably find ourselves in circumstances when we are especially susceptible to sin. It may be through a particular weakness of ours or through an exceptionally sinful environment – or both. At least on some occasions we will know about it in advance and that’s when it is our spiritual duty to do all that is within our power to enter these situations diligently prepared. We have to gather up all the relevant scriptural truths and plan how specifically we will apply them so that we don’t stumble and fall. Failing to do so makes us vulnerable to sin, because once we do find ourselves in those situations it is hard to set up a solid defence in haste. And if the circumstances also present us with a temptation we find particularly enticing, we may become increasingly reluctant to even desire to set up a defence.

For example, we may struggle with the sins of the tongue or work in an environment where the sins of the tongue are prevalent. We can prepare by compiling all the relevant scriptures, both pertaining to sinning in the word (e.g., Psalm 34:13, 39:1, 52:2-4, 141:3; Proverbs 10:8b, 10:19a, 10:20b, 11:12, 12:18a, 15:4b, 17:20, 17:27-28, 18:21, 21:23, 26:28; Jeremiah 9:3, 9:8; Ephesians 5:3-5; James 1:26, 3:2-12; 1 Peter 3:10, etc.) and how we can give testimony to the truth and praise the Lord in what we say (e.g., Psalm 35:28, 37:30, 45:1, 66:17, 71:24, 119:172; Proverbs 10:8a, 10:19b, 10:20a, 12:18b, 15:4a, 15:23, 18:21, 21:23, 29:20; Ecclesiastes 3:7; Ephesians 4:25, 29-31, etc.). Based on these scriptures we will know we should not get involved in foolish or immoral discussions and in order to stay faithful to them we may need to be firm with those around us.

We can consider how we will react when an indecent joke is thrown upon us – are we going to pretend it’s funny only to regret it later? Or are we going to keep a straight face, showing that such dead jesting doesn’t make us laugh – even if the consequence of such a reaction be rejection and being treated as outcasts by our coworkers or in any other social circle we find ourselves? We know that being faithful to the truth takes courage.

32 “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. **33** But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. **35** For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; **36** and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household.

Matthew 10:32-36 NASB (also Luke 12:8-9)

We know that in this world we are outcasts anyway.

13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **14** For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. **15** And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; He has thus prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:13-16

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,
and Bithynia, who are chosen

1 Peter 1:1 NASB

And we know that our homeland is in heaven.

20 For our home state is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
Philippians 3:20

We should be prepared to face such scenarios by being filled with the relevant biblical truths, by considering how we ought to apply them and by praying to our God to give us the strength and courage to do so. The first two steps in this process – remaining in the truth of the Word of God throughout the day and preparing for the difficult situations we know we will face – reflect the basic principle that armour should be put on before the battle, not during.

Thirdly, if after following a sinful pattern we have become particularly weak, to the degree that we find ourselves struggling to resist even a small temptation, our primary focus should be on growing spiritually rather than only on avoiding sin. If we grow, we will gradually rebuild our defence and we will repair and strengthen our armour back up. Studying the Word of God helps us refocus our heart back to the truth and away from sin. It is often exactly in the time of spiritual crisis, when we need it most, that we find ourselves most reluctant to do that.

6. Prayer.

Prayer is a key part of our battle. Through it we prepare for our trials, keep spiritually alert, seek refuge in our Lord, ask for His help and empowerment through the Holy Spirit. Through it we meditate on God's Word so that we remain on His path. This whole guide can be taken as a help for our prayer.

Our Lord told us ask for what we need and it will be given to us (Luke 18:1-8).

7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

Matthew 7:7-8 NASB (also Luke 11:9-10)

We need to pray for everything.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 NASB

We need to pray without ceasing.

17 pray without ceasing;
1 Thessalonians 5:17 NASB

And we need to pray in faith.

24 "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you."

Mark 11:24 NASB

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:5-8 NASB

But in all this there is one thing we must always remember – our prayer must be genuine and come from the heart. It cannot be an empty uttering of words done as a legalistic ritual for the sake keeping an appearance that we have done all we should have done.

Whether we pray in the quiet of our room or in the midst of a battle taking place in the most hostile circumstances, our prayer must flow from the heart. By prayer we withdraw ourselves from the world, we enter the sanctuary of God and approach His throne of grace. Let us always do so solemnly and in truth.

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. **16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16 NASB

16 When I pondered to understand this,
It was troublesome in my sight
17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God;
Psalm 73:16-17a NASB

II. The Battle.

1. Staying away from everything that may lead us to sin.

A critical step in staying away from sin is staying away from everything that may lead us to sin. We must stay clear of situations where we know we will be vulnerable and the temptation is more likely to come upon us. We need to abstain from every form of evil.

16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”
Matthew 10:16 NASB

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.
Romans 16:19 NASB

20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.
1 Corinthians 14:20 NASB

3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; **4** and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. **5** For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not be partakers with them; **8** for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light **9** (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), **10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; **12** for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. **13** But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. **14** For this reason it says,
“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
Ephesians 5:3-16 NASB

15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life,
Philippians 2:15-16a NASB

21 But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; **22** abstain from every form of evil.
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 NASB

22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
2 Timothy 2:22 NASB

27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.
James 1:27 NASB

1.1. Remaining in the fear of the Lord.

What helps us stay away from all evil is the fear of the Lord. Fear as genuine reverence and awe – not terror. We are commanded to fear the Lord our God.

24 “So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival, as *it is today*.”
Deuteronomy 6:24 NASB

12 “Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,”
Deuteronomy 10:12 NASB

28 “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
Matthew 10:28 NASB

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*;
1 Peter 1:17 NASB

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of our wisdom through which we remain on God’s path.

28 “And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.’”
Job 28:28 NASB

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*;
His praise endures forever.
Psalm 111:10 NASB

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Proverbs 1:7 NASB

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
Proverbs 9:10 NASB

To fear the Lord is to hate evil. It is by fearing the Lord that we turn away from all evil not to violate His will.

13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil”
Proverbs 8:13a NASB

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.
Proverbs 3:7 NASB

6b And by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.
Proverbs 16:6 NASB

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
2 Corinthians 7:1 NASB

It is when we fear the Lord that He protects us, instructs us and blesses us.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope for His lovingkindness,
19 To deliver their soul from death
And to keep them alive in famine.
Psalm 33:18-19 NASB

12 Who is the man who fears the Lord?
He will instruct him in the way he should choose.
Psalm 25:12 NASB

1 How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,
Who walks in His ways.
Psalm 128:1 NASB

19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;
He will also hear their cry and will save them.
Psalm 145:19 NASB

11 Teach me Your way, O Lord;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.
Psalm 86:11 NASB

13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments,
because this *applies to* every person.
Ecclesiastes 12:13 NASB

1.2. Keeping spiritually alert to avoid entering into temptation.

We need to keep alert, so that as soon as we perceive that a sinful intention might begin to appear, it is quenched at its inception before it gains any momentum. We must not let even a small crack appear in our armour. We must not let the enemy through the gate. We know that if we do, the battle becomes much harder. As soon as the dam loses its watertightness through a small fissure, things can get worse quickly.

7 “If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”
Genesis 4:7 NASB

23 Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it *flow* the springs of life.
24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth
And put devious speech far from you.
25 Let your eyes look directly ahead
And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.
26 Watch the path of your feet
And all your ways will be established.
27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left;
Turn your foot from evil.
Proverbs 4:23-27 NASB

13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
1 Corinthians 16:13 NASB

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*,
1 Peter 1:13a NASB

We all have the sinful nature within us which constantly draws us towards sin. We easily go astray in our thoughts and we are easily deceived. It is often hard for us to discern the motives of our own heart.

9 “The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?
10 I, the Lord, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds.”
Jeremiah 17:9-10 NASB

We shouldn't trust ourselves, but should ask God to help us recognise any sinful intent that may be present in us, so that we stay on His path.

23 “How many are my iniquities and sins?
Make known to me my rebellion and my sin.”
Job 13:23 NASB

2 Examine me, O Lord, and try me;
Test my mind and my heart.
Psalm 26:2 NASB

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way.
Psalm 139:23-24 NASB

We must be vigilant and stay in prayer at all times.

41 “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing,
but the flesh is weak.”
Matthew 26:41 NASB

17 pray without ceasing;
1 Thessalonians 5:17 NASB

37 Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity,
And revive me in Your ways.
Psalm 119:37 NASB

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. **7** For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. **8** But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.
1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 NASB

1.3. Standing firm against the schemes of the devil.

Our enemy the devil “prowls around like a roaring lion” and unceasingly attempts to cause us to sin by presenting us with enticements that particularly appeal to our sinful nature – his ally inside all of us.

8 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **9** But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.
1 Peter 5:8-9 NASB

Satan masquerades as an angel of light and lie and deception have been his primary methods from the very beginning (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 13:13-14, 19:20, 20:3).

4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! **5** For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
Genesis 3:4-5 NASB

44 “You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
John 8:44 NASB

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
2 Corinthians 11:14 NASB

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
Revelation 12:9 NASB

And so all thoughts and images which lead to sin will look attractive and innocuous – or at least not very harmful. And definitely pleasant. But keeping scriptural truth in our heart, we will see through the lie and we will have to reject it.

Particularly in any area of our weakness we must not let ourselves be deceived by the same enticement over and over again. If we know that something leads us to sin, we must stay completely clear out of it and reject all the satanic lies designed to drag us away from God’s path and in to sin (e.g., “No harm will befall you if you only look”, “There is no harm if you only try it”, etc.).

We are tempted when we are carried away by our lust, so we must stay away from everything that may arise it. We have to remove all stumbling blocks and deprive the devil of any opportunity.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
James 1:13-15 NASB

29 “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”
Matthew 5:29-30 NASB

27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.
Ephesians 4:27 NASB

If that’s what’s needed, we might have to part company with those who draw us away from the Lord and make us susceptible to any sinful activity.

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
2 Corinthians 6:14 NASB

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.
Romans 16:17 NASB

33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”
1 Corinthians 15:33 NASB

1.4. We are in enemy territory.

We need to remember at all times that we are fighting this inner battle in enemy territory – this corrupt world.

By the fall man surrendered the regency over the world to Satan and now, through a system of lies, enticements and all the worthless things designed to occupy our minds and time, he holds it firmly in his grasp. He is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) and has been so influencing it as to make remaining faithful as hard as possible for every believer.

5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. **6** And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.”
Luke 4:5-6 NASB

19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.
1 John 5:19 NASB

Like any soldier treading on enemy territory, we must stay alert at all times, firmly holding on to the truth of the Word of God in faith. By our faith we overcome this world with all its evil.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.
1 John 5:4 NASB

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight
2 Corinthians 5:7 NASB

2. We are never tempted beyond what we are able.

When we do find ourselves being tempted, we have to remember that however strong the temptation might be and however weak we may feel in a certain area, God never lets us be tempted beyond what we can bear and He always provides a way out.

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
1 Corinthians 10:13 NASB

This verse is often quoted, but how often do we keep it firmly set in our heart when we are undergoing temptation? Some temptations may seem impossible for us to resist and some trials impossible to complete, but we need to remember that they are never that – regardless of how they seem.

Our God is infinitely more powerful than our enemy who tempts us and leads us to sin.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
1 John 4:4 NASB

This is why when tempted we rely on the Lord.

3. In our battle we rely on God, not ourselves.

In all our spiritual battles we seek refuge in our God. As we rely on His mercy and grace with our salvation, so we rely on them with deliverance from temptation and sin.

11 You, O Lord, will not withhold Your compassion from me;
Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me.

12 For evils beyond number have surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see;
They are more numerous than the hairs of my head,
And my heart has failed me.

13 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
Make haste, O Lord, to help me.
Psalm 40:11-13 NASB

17 Since I am afflicted and needy,
Let the Lord be mindful of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.
Psalm 40:17 NASB

20 God is to us a God of deliverances;
And to God the Lord belong escapes from death.
Psalm 68:20 NASB

We are weak, but God's power is perfected in our weakness.

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! **8** Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. **9** And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **10** Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NASB

We need to look to our Lord for deliverance and not rely on our own strength or discipline. Only in Him is our true rescue.

1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;
From where shall my help come?

2 My help *comes* from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.

6 The sun will not smite you by day,
Nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will protect you from all evil;
He will keep your soul.

8 The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in
From this time forth and forever.

Psalm 121 NASB

1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain.
Psalm 127:1 NASB

7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
James 4:7 NASB

9 the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation,
2 Peter 2:9a NASB

As soon as we see that the battle is about to commence, we strengthen ourselves in the Lord.

1 Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire; **2** and they took captive the women *and all* who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried *them* off and went their way. **3** When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. **4** Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep. **5** Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. **6** Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. **8** David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue *all*."

1 Samuel 30:1-8 NASB

If we abide in Him, we are secure.

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!"
3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper
And from the deadly pestilence.
4 He will cover you with His pinions,
And under His wings you may seek refuge;
His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.
5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;
6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.
7 A thousand may fall at your side
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.
Psalm 91:1-7 NASB

3.1. God is the One who sustains us, He is our shield, He trains our hands for war, He is our stronghold and refuge.

3 But You, O Lord, are a shield about me,
My glory, and the One who lifts my head.
Psalm 3:3 NASB

7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;
You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.
Psalm 32:7 NASB

17 *The righteous* cry, and the Lord hears
And delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
And saves those who are crushed in spirit.
19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the Lord delivers him out of them all.
Psalm 34:17-19 NASB

5 Through You we will push back our adversaries;
Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us.
6 For I will not trust in my bow,
Nor will my sword save me.
7 But You have saved us from our adversaries,
And You have put to shame those who hate us.
Psalm 44:5-7 NASB

5 How blessed is the man whose strength is in You,
In whose heart are the highways to Zion!
6 Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a spring;
The early rain also covers it with blessings.
7 They go from strength to strength,
Every one of them appears before God in Zion.
Psalm 84:5-7

6 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;
He delivered them out of their distresses.
Psalm 107:6 NASB

1 Blessed be the Lord, my rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle;
2 My lovingkindness and my fortress,
My stronghold and my deliverer,
My shield and He in whom I take refuge,
Who subdues my people under me.
Psalm 144:1-2 NASB

14 The Lord sustains all who fall
And raises up all who are bowed down.
Psalm 145:14 NASB

3.2. He fights for us.

Ultimately, it is He who fights our battles for us.

3 “The Lord is a warrior;
The Lord is His name.”
Exodus 15:3 NASB

13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of
the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen
today, you will never see them again forever. 14 The Lord will fight for you while you keep
silent.”
Exodus 14:13-14 NASB

21 “I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings; so the Lord shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. **22** Do not fear them, for the Lord your God is the one fighting for you.’”
Deuteronomy 3:21-22 NASB

1 “When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. **2** When you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. **3** He shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, **4** for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’”
Deuteronomy 20:1-4 NASB

6 “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6 NASB

9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
Joshua 1:9 NASB

3.3. God knows we need His help and wants us to call upon Him.

God Himself tells us to call upon Him in the day of trouble.

15 “Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”
Psalm 50:15 NASB

Not only God in His omniscience knows how much we need His help, but our Lord Jesus Christ became a man and can sympathize with our weaknesses. Having Him intercede for us we can approach the throne of grace with confidence in time of need.

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. **16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Hebrews 4:15-16 NASB

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.
Romans 8:34 NASB

He hears our supplications.

6 Blessed be the Lord,
Because He has heard the voice of my supplication.
7 The Lord is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart exults,
And with my song I shall thank Him.
8 The Lord is their strength,
And He is a saving defense to His anointed.
9 Save Your people and bless Your inheritance;
Be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.
Psalm 28:6-9 NASB

3.4. God helps us through His Spirit.

We know that God helps us and empowers us through His Spirit which indwells us. If we rely on His power, we will endure the trial.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
Galatians 5:16 NASB

But we need to heed to Him and not quench His still, small voice which we will often hear pointing us to the escape route when we are being tempted.

19 Do not quench the Spirit;
1 Thessalonians 5:19 NASB

11 So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake. **12** After the earthquake a fire, *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. **13** When Elijah heard *it*, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice *came* to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"
1 Kings 19:11-13 NASB

God is always faithful and He never abandons us for us to perish. But we must hold on to Him.

4. Perseverance.

4.1. Many trials can only be overcome by perseverance, but in those trials God is with us.

Although we are never tempted beyond what we are able, although God through His Spirit helps us endure the trial if we only choose to access His help, and although He can eventually deliver us out of every temptation, we still need to persevere in our decision to remain obedient to Him and wait for His deliverance.

Many trials won't end as soon as we choose to stay faithful to God and ask for His strength to resist sin. The hard part is that we may need to persist in that choice for a long time before we are finally delivered. Some of our most difficult tests will not be overcome in an instant – they will have to be outlasted by us remaining faithful moment by moment until the crucible finally comes to an end.

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.
James 1:12 NASB

19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives."
Luke 21:19 NASB

But God is with us in those trials.

9 He keeps the feet of His godly ones,
But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness;
For not by might shall a man prevail.
1 Samuel 2:9 NASB

10 "Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."
Isaiah 41:10 NASB

20b “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20b NASB

3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.
2 Thessalonians 3:3 NASB

4.2. Eventually God’s deliverance always comes.

Our Lord is with us in our trials and He does bring deliverance. We may have to wait for it for an hour, for a day, or for a year. But eventually it always, always comes.

The sea *Will* part.

14 Wait for the Lord;
Be strong and let your heart take courage;
Yes, wait for the Lord.
Psalm 27:14 NASB

5 I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait,
And in His word do I hope.
6 My soul *waits* for the Lord
More than the watchmen for the morning;
Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.
Psalm 130:5-6 NASB

1 I waited patiently for the Lord;
And He inclined to me and heard my cry.
2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay,
And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.
3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;
Many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord.
Psalm 40:1-3 NASB

13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. **14** The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”
Exodus 14:13-14 NASB

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea *back* by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided.
Exodus 14:21 NASB

We need to remember these truths particularly in periods of weakness or when undergoing a heavy temptation. Our Lord told us that the gate is small and the way is narrow which lead to eternal life.

13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. **14** For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
Matthew 7:13-14 NASB

And in those most difficult times this path may seem so narrow that it feels like walking a tightrope. And it may well be a spiritual tightrope walk during which we are praying to our God to help us make the next little step, to strengthen us to last the next short while without falling (Jude 24). It may be a fiery trial during which we cannot escape from an overwhelming pain, temptation, craving or emotional anguish we feel in every single moment. God is with us in this valley of the shadow of death.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Psalm 23:4 NASB

We must turn to Him in prayer and keep hold of Him, focusing only on the step we are presently taking and forgetting all else (Matthew 6:34). If we do that, although we may be inside a fiery furnace, although we be disheartened by the prolonging hardship, crushed and wounded by previous defeats or writhing in pain – God will not let us perish and His power will carry us through. This is true whether we are undergoing a trial or temptation, suffering through divine discipline and the consequences of our sin or being afflicted for our testimony to the truth.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; **8** *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10** always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. **11** For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Corinthians 4:7-11 NASB

If we hold on to the Lord, then moment by moment we will see that the rope starts to feel firmer, that our step is surer. That the fall seems less and less likely. That we are not only able to resist the temptations that some time ago were causing us to stagger each time, often making us fall, but that their allurements have grown weak. Until we realize that sustained by God's strength we are walking on solid ground again. And that we are free. If we only stay faithful to Him, we will see the victory (Psalm 107).

4 I sought the Lord, and He answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces will never be ashamed.
6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
And saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them.
Psalm 34:4-7 NASB

13 For You have delivered my soul from death,
Indeed my feet from stumbling,
So that I may walk before God
In the light of the living.
Psalm 56:13 NASB

David tells us of the deliverance that God wrought for him in Psalm 18 (also 2 Samuel 22).

1 "I love You, O Lord, my strength."
2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
And I am saved from my enemies.
4 The cords of death encompassed me,
And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.
5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
6 In my distress I called upon the Lord,
And cried to my God for help;
He heard my voice out of His temple,
And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.
Psalm 18:1-6 NASB

16 He sent from on high, He took me;
He drew me out of many waters.
17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me.
18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the Lord was my stay.
19 He brought me forth also into a broad place;
He rescued me, because He delighted in me.
Psalm 18:16-19 NASB

But he knows that he was “rewarded according to his righteousness”.

20 The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
22 For all His ordinances were before me,
And I did not put away His statutes from me.
23 I was also blameless with Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
24 Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.
Psalm 18:20-24 NASB

If we remain with the Lord, He gives us all we need to endure even the most difficult trials.

30 As for God, His way is blameless;
The word of the Lord is tried;
He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.
31 For who is God, but the Lord?
And who is a rock, except our God,
32 The God who girds me with strength
And makes my way blameless?
33 He makes my feet like hinds' feet,
And sets me upon my high places.
34 He trains my hands for battle,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation,
And Your right hand upholds me;
And Your gentleness makes me great.
36 You enlarge my steps under me,
And my feet have not slipped.
Psalm 18:30-36 NASB

We have His promise.

14 “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him *securely* on high, because he has known My name.
15 He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
16 With a long life I will satisfy him
And let him see My salvation”.
Psalm 91:14-16 NASB

5. Motivation to persevere and not give up in the battle.

5.1. Nothing is hidden from God.

Sin is a deed of darkness and it is often committed in darkness. We should remember that although our sin may be hidden from other people, it is never hidden from God.

9 He who planted the ear, does He not hear?
He who formed the eye, does He not see?
Psalm 94:9 NASB

13 The Lord looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men;
14 From His dwelling place He looks out
On all the inhabitants of the earth,
Psalm 33:13-14 NASB

21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord,
And He watches all his paths.
Proverbs 5:21 NASB

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
Hebrews 4:13 NASB

5.2. All our thoughts, words and deeds will be brought into judgment.

God knows all our thoughts, words and deeds and they will all be brought into judgment. This should motivate us so that we are not ashamed before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 But the Lord abides forever;
He has established His throne for judgment,
8 And He will judge the world in righteousness;
He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.
Psalm 9:7-8 NASB

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
13 Before the Lord, for He is coming,
For He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
And the peoples in His faithfulness.
Psalm 96:11-13 NASB

14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:14 NASB

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”
Acts 17:31 NASB

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB

10b For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **11** For it is written,
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall give praise to God.”
12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
Romans 14:10b-12 NASB

5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
1 Corinthians 4:5 NASB

5.3. Sin damages our testimony and service and consequently – our eternal reward.

We can only bear fruit if we abide in our Lord.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. **5** I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.
John 15:4-6 NASB

Every time we give in to sin we not only do what we shouldn't, but we also lose an opportunity to do what we should. We abandon the task which the Lord prepared exclusively for us and which He commissioned us with.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
Ephesians 2:10 NASB

We've only got so much time on this earth. All time out of fellowship with our Lord is time wasted.

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
Ephesians 5:15-16 NASB

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.
Colossians 4:5 NASB

Some believers will allow the Word of God to be choked, making it unfruitful. Others will produce, but at different levels. Sin always makes us unproductive for the Lord. It hinders our growth and reduces the fruit we bear.

22 “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **23** And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”
Matthew 13:22-23 NASB (also Mark 4:19-20 and Luke 8:14-15)

Our earthly pursuits, whether physical, intellectual or of any other nature, teach us two things. Firstly, achieving a goal requires discipline, sacrifice and effort – often to the point of going through pain. Staying away from sin may at times be exactly the same. It may be painful. Secondly, when in a particular activity we exert ourselves in an effort that seems maximal to us, we afterwards often find that there was still more to give. So it is with our spiritual effort. Even more so given that we can take advantage of the Holy Spirit to empower us – and with His help our human capabilities place no limit to what we can achieve for the Lord.

We often display such commitment and exert ourselves in things of which we know nothing will remain eternally. We see unbelievers showing incredible perseverance, effort and sacrifice striving for an earthly goal. How much more should we give our absolute everything as we fight this battle and run this race if at stake is a reward that lasts for eternity.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. **25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; **27** but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB

11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; **12** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,
Romans 12:11-12 NASB

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, **7** and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-8 NASB

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58 NASB

27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.”

Matthew 16:27 NASB

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Revelation 22:12 NASB

This reward is infinitely greater than any sinful pleasure we can experience here. It’s beyond anything we can presently imagine.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:18 NASB

9 but just as it is written,
“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And *which* have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”

1 Corinthians 2:9 NASB

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NASB

5.4. We need to persevere for our Lord.

There will be times when overwhelmed by temptation or weighed down by our sin we will be ready to give up the fight. But if we are about to give up on ourselves, we should remember that the battle is not about us.

We are taking part in a conflict begun by Satan's rebellion, the central point of which is our Lord's sacrifice on the cross. He paid for all sin and He saved us from eternal condemnation. When undergoing a heavy test we must remind ourselves that we belong to Jesus Christ and our life is a mission to serve Him.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NASB

20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
Galatians 2:20 NASB

We are Christ's soldiers. We should do all within our power to please and honour our Master in our service and cannot let anything distract us away from this objective. To hear a "Well done" from Him at His judgment seat will mean more than any earthly accomplishment.

3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.
2 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB

We express our love and loyalty to our Lord by our obedience to Him.

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him".
John 14:21 NASB

And there will be times when in order to stay obedient, we will have to deny ourselves.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."
Matthew 16:24 NASB (also Matthew 10:38; Luke 9:23, 14:27)

He Himself gave us the greatest example of self-denial and endurance in suffering. We should keep His example always before our eyes. He is the One we follow.

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB

Jesus is our Lord if we follow Him.

29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
Matthew 11:29-30 NASB

46 “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”
Luke 6:46 NASB

26 “If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”
John 12:26 NASB

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: **6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.
1 John 2:3-6 NASB

5.5. Our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

We belong to our Lord and our bodies are His members. They are temples of the Holy Spirit and we should glorify God in them. Let’s remember that when we are about to use our body to sin.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
1 Corinthians 6:15a NASB

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB

We need to present our body as an instrument of righteousness, as a living and holy sacrifice to our God through our spiritual service and worship.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, **13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
Romans 6:11-13 NASB

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.
Romans 12:1 NASB

Now that we are believers and have the indwelling Holy Spirit, our body with its lusts is no longer our master. Now we make it our slave.

27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.
1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB

5.6. We need to persevere for our brothers and sisters and those seeking the truth.

In the time of weakness, when we are ready to give up on ourselves, we should remember not only about our Lord and our allegiance to Him, but also about our brothers and sisters and those seeking the truth.

Our Lord gave us the greatest example of sacrificial love. Co-existing with the Father from eternity past as God (John 1:1-2), He humbled Himself in the ultimate act of humility (Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9) and became a man (John 1:14) in order to pay for our sins on the cross (Romans 3:21-25, 4:25, 5:10; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 3:18).

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not look out for your own interests, but for the interests of others. **5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard being equal to God as plunder to hold on to, **7** but emptied Himself by taking the form of a slave and being born in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, **8** He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
Philippians 2:3-8

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8:9 NASB

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. **26** It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, **27** and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
Matthew 20:25-28 NASB

13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
John 15:13 NASB

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.
1 Peter 2:24 NASB

And we should love our neighbours just as God loved us.

34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13:34-35 NASB

12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."
John 15:12 NASB

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.
1 John 3:14 NASB

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
1 John 3:16 NASB

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
1 John 4:9-11 NASB

19 We love, because He first loved us.
1 John 4:19 NASB

This is the second greatest commandment.

30 "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
Mark 12:30-31 NASB (also Matthew 22:37-40)

Love is obedience and service. We show our love by our service to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?” He *said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He *said to him, “Tend My lambs.” **16** He *said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” He *said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He *said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” **17** He *said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus *said to him, “Tend My sheep.”
John 21:15-17 NASB

Jesus didn't command Peter to feed His lambs three times without reason. If we truly love our Lord, we will serve Him and minister to our brothers and sisters. We will put them above ourselves.

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
Romans 12:10 NASB

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
Galatians 5:13 NASB

21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
Ephesians 5:21 NASB

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
1 Peter 5:5 NASB

There are also those who haven't placed their faith in Christ yet and still live in the darkness of unbelief, but who are seeking the truth. We are the light of this world and we need to make our light shine brightly and not let it be darkened by sin, because we could be the only light that some of these searching unbelievers come across. We could be the ones who lead them to Christ and deliver them from eternal condemnation. All of us should pause and consider how horrible the suffering in the lake of fire must be to which there is no end.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
Revelation 20:15 NASB

46 “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
Matthew 25:46 NASB

9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
2 Thessalonians 1:9 NASB

23 save others, snatching them out of the fire;
Jude 23a NASB

Our brothers and sisters may also stray away from the truth and be in need of our help to be saved from eternal death.

19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
James 5:19-20 NASB

When we choose to sin, we put ourselves and the gratification of our lust above others. We abandon our brothers and sisters in Christ and those seeking the truth. Every one of us has a unique role to fulfil in spiritual path of others – our gift may be to lead others to the truth, to help them grow in it, to encourage and strengthen. If we neglect our service, other members of the body of Christ suffer loss as a result.

10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10 NASB

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9 NASB

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. **27** Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 NASB

15b we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15b-16 NASB

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. **26** It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, **27** and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:25-28 NASB

5.7. We give a testimony in everything we do.

Our thoughts, words and deeds are a testimony before those who observe us. We should persevere for the sake of those who can draw encouragement from it.

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB

And there are always witnesses around us. Angels continually watch us, even if at a particular time no other person does.

10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:10 NASB

9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

1 Corinthians 4:9 NASB

6. Battle is our lot, but we can find joy in it.

6.1. Joy in the trial.

This life, in these bodies and in this world is and will remain a constant battle. Inside we have the sinful nature continuously pulling us towards sin. Outside our enemy the devil unceasingly attempts to get us off the narrow path that leads to eternal life and uses those temptations against us to which we are particularly susceptible. And all this takes place in his territory. We need to accept our fate but – although it may be difficult for us to see in times of hardship – we can find joy in it.

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
James 1:2-4 NASB

We might often wish that things were easier. That our struggle with sin was not as hard and long as it is. That our particular temptations were not as enticing as they are. But if we silence our heart and consider our fate as soldiers of Christ in this corrupt world, attacked from within and from without at every angle, if we think of these fiery trials we go through, this tightrope walk during which we feel so fragile – we will see that there is a subtle joy in all this that only a believer can understand.

Satisfying our sinful desire brings immediate pleasure to our senses, but leaves only emptiness in the end.

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
James 1:14-15 NASB

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.
Romans 6:21 NASB

However – faithfully enduring the trial, resisting the temptation and overcoming sin brings an inner, quiet and lasting joy which comes only from walking God's path. It's the joy from being a faithful servant and fulfilling our calling to be God's chosen and holy ones, a light in this dark world.

There is joy in seeing how God's power works in us to sustain us through the battle – and we see it only when we realise how weak we are. When things are going well, we all tend to forget God's grace. Time of testing reminds us of it.

9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.
10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NASB

And we need this hardship in order to grow. A muscle needs to be overloaded to get stronger. Faith is a muscle. Our trials are an overload for our faith and without them there is no growth. We should embrace every opportunity to advance spiritually.

3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; **4** and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; **5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
Romans 5:3-5 NASB

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
Philippians 4:4 NASB

6.2. Joy in the victory.

Enduring the trial is a source of true joy to which nothing can be compared. Having remained faithful to the Lord and having seen Him fight our battle for us and deliver us, on the other side of the sea we will be able to sing the victorious song of Moses.

1 Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said,
“I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted;
The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea.
2 “The Lord is my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation;
This is my God, and I will praise Him;
My father’s God, and I will extol Him.
3 “The Lord is a warrior;
The Lord is His name.
4 “Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;
And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea.
5 “The deeps cover them;
They went down into the depths like a stone.
6 “Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power,
Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.
7 “And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You;
You send forth Your burning anger, *and* it consumes them as chaff.
8 “At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up,
The flowing waters stood up like a heap;
The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
9 “The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;
My desire shall be gratified against them;
I will draw out my sword, my hand will destroy them.’
10 “You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them;
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.
11 “Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?
Who is like You, majestic in holiness,
Awesome in praises, working wonders?
12 “You stretched out Your right hand,
The earth swallowed them.
13 “In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed;
In Your strength You have guided *them* to Your holy habitation.
14 “The peoples have heard, they tremble;
Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia.
15 “Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed;
The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
16 “Terror and dread fall upon them;
By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone;
Until Your people pass over, O Lord,
Until the people pass over whom You have purchased.
17 “You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance,
The place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling,
The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.
18 “The Lord shall reign forever and ever.”
Exodus 15:1-18 NASB

Enduring the trial proves the genuineness of our faith and this proof is more precious than gold.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
1 Peter 1:6-7 NASB

Finally, all these difficulties, trials and sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that awaits us. There will only be joy when we are finally with our Lord for eternity.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
Romans 8:18 NASB

9 but just as it is written,
“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And *which* have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”
1 Corinthians 2:9 NASB

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NASB

After we have put our faith in Jesus Christ our life becomes a series of trials. Rather than avoiding these trials, we need to accept them and take joy in them. There is an inner, enduring joy in fighting this hard battle, in being faithful to the Lord in this corrupt world, in seeing His power work in us, in knowing that we have an opportunity to grow. There is real joy in every trial we overcome.

And there is a quiet joy in knowing that despite all the hardship, testing and suffering we must endure here, despite us being weak, often falling and experiencing painful defeats – we are on the winning side of this conflict and our Lord who sustains us is greater than any enemy we might face. In the end, this joy shall be fully realised in a manner we are presently not even able to imagine.

III. Picking ourselves up after we fall.

Inevitably, we all sin. Sin separates us from our Lord and so we need to repent and confess it to return to Him.

1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short
That it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull
That it cannot hear.

2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.
Isaiah 59:1-2 NASB

3 When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.
Psalm 32:3-5 NASB

13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,
But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.
Proverbs 28:13 NASB

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1 John 1:8-10 NASB

Although all our sins were forgiven when we believed in our Lord and accepted His sacrificial death on our behalf, we need to confess any sins as we commit them in order to maintain our fellowship with God. When we believed, we were bathed. Now we need to wash our feet regularly from any dirt as we walk in our bodies of sin through this corrupt world. Without this continuing cleansing we can have "no share" with our Lord (John 13:8).

5 Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. **6** So He *came to Simon Peter. He *said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." **8** Peter *said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." **9** Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." **10** Jesus *said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all *of you*."
John 13:5-10 NASB

Repairing a human relationship requires a change of our attitude and an apology and both should always be done as soon as possible – the more wrong we do against a person, the harder it is to look them in the face. So it is with our relationship with the Lord. We need to repent and confess to Him and the sooner we do that, the better.

All retrogressions in life teach us that the further we stray away from the right path, the harder it is to come back. The greater the damage, the longer it takes to repair. We should always repent and pick ourselves up as quickly as possible, so that sin doesn't draw us far away from the Lord and doesn't cause any serious spiritual damage.

1. Repentance.

In order for us to be restored to our fellowship with God, continue our walk with Christ and service to Him, we need to repent.

16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.

Cease to do evil,
17 Learn to do good;
Isaiah 1:16-17a

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found;
Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
And let him return to the Lord,
And He will have compassion on him,
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
Isaiah 55:6-7 NASB

3 Therefore say to them, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Return to Me,” declares the Lord of hosts, “that I may return to you,” says the Lord of hosts.’
Zechariah 1:3 NASB

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners;
and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your
laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves in the
presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.
James 4:8-10 NASB

The purpose of repentance is for us to draw conclusions from our failure and get ready to resume the battle, so all the points on battle preparation from the first chapter apply here also.

1.1. God’s discipline.

Sin always has consequences. Both natural – related to our earthly life (i.e., sin’s effects on our minds, bodies, relationships with others, professional commitments, etc.) – and divine – referring to our relationship with the Lord. We should always show the initiative to repent as soon as possible in order to reduce not only the earthly consequences of our sin (even unbelievers desire that – Hebrews 12:16-17; Matthew 27:3-4), but above all the spiritual. God also provides us with motivation to do that through His discipline.

God is perfectly holy (Leviticus 11:45; Matthew 5:48; Psalm 99:9; Isaiah 6:1-3, 44:15; Revelation 4:8) and cannot condone anything evil. All our sin is committed against Him (Psalm 41:4, 51:4) and is offensive to Him. It interrupts our fellowship with Him and brings divine discipline. Depending on the gravity of the sin we committed and time during which we decided not to turn to God, but kept on sinning – often wilfully ignoring initial stages of God’s corrective punishment – divine discipline can become severe.

We should always remember, however, that God’s discipline flows out of His love for us. He never disciplines us to make us pay for our sin (which we couldn’t do anyway and which Christ has done for us), to exact vengeance on us or to destroy us. God is our loving Father who is only using His discipline for us to turn away from sin and return to Him.

11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord
Or loathe His reproof,
12 For whom the Lord loves He reproves,
Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.
Proverbs 3:11-12 NASB

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; **5** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,
“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
Nor faint when you are reproved by Him;
6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines,
And He scourges every son whom He receives.”
7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. **11** All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
Hebrews 12:4-11 NASB

19 “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”
Revelation 3:19 NASB

Divine discipline provides us with a strong incentive to repent and come back to our Father. When we do that, we enter the realm of His blessing again and His corrective punishment is lifted, even if sometimes we may have to wait for all the consequences of the divine discipline to cease.

7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord;
I will wait for the God of my salvation.
My God will hear me.
8 Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy.
Though I fall I will rise;
Though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me.
9 I will bear the indignation of the Lord
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me.
He will bring me out to the light,
And I will see His righteousness.
Micah 7:7-9 NASB

1.2. God’s mercy is greater than all our sin.

If we receive severe discipline from our heavenly Father who cannot ignore our wrongdoing, if we are overwhelmed by any earthly consequences of our sin, or if excessive regret, guilt or disappointment were to prevent us from returning to Him, we need to remember our Lord’s mercy. His mercy is greater than all our sin and its consequences.

When we abandon Him, He is waiting for us to return to Him so that He can display His lovingkindness towards us again.

4 Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones,
And give thanks to His holy name.
5 For His anger is but for a moment,
His favor is for a lifetime;
Weeping may last for the night,
But a shout of joy *comes* in the morning.
Psalm 30:4-5 NASB

12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say,
“Return, faithless Israel”, declares the Lord;
“I will not look upon you in anger.
For I am gracious”, declares the Lord;
“I will not be angry forever.”
Jeremiah 3:12 NASB

21 This I recall to my mind,
 Therefore I have hope.
22 The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,
 For His compassions never fail.
23 *They* are new every morning;
 Great is Your faithfulness.
24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
 "Therefore I have hope in Him."
25 The Lord is good to those who wait for Him,
 To the person who seeks Him.
26 *It is* good that he waits silently
 For the salvation of the Lord.
27 *It is* good for a man that he should bear
 The yoke in his youth.
28 Let him sit alone and be silent
 Since He has laid *it* on him.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust,
 Perhaps there is hope.
30 Let him give his cheek to the smiter,
 Let him be filled with reproach.
31 For the Lord will not reject forever,
32 For if He causes grief,
 Then He will have compassion
 According to His abundant lovingkindness.
33 For He does not afflict willingly
 Or grieve the sons of men.
 Lamentations 3:21-33 NASB

1 "Come, let us return to the Lord.
 For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us;
 He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us."
 Hosea 6:1 NASB

Just as God was waiting for us to accept His offer of salvation in His Son Jesus Christ and just as He gives us all we need to overcome our sin when we make a decision to do so, so He wants us to come back to Him following our sin, so that we can be restored to fellowship with Him and continue serving Him.

19 Therefore, thus says the Lord,
 "If you return, then I will restore you—
 Before Me you will stand;
 And if you extract the precious from the worthless,
 You will become My spokesman.
 They for their part may turn to you,
 But as for you, you must not turn to them."
 Jeremiah 15:19 NASB

3 Therefore say to them, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the Lord of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the Lord of hosts."
 Zechariah 1:3 NASB

And when we return to Him, He delivers us from the consequences of our disobedience.

10 There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death,
 Prisoners in misery and chains,
11 Because they had rebelled against the words of God
 And spurned the counsel of the Most High.
12 Therefore He humbled their heart with labor;
 They stumbled and there was none to help.

13 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.
14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death
And broke their bands apart.
15 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!
16 For He has shattered gates of bronze
And cut bars of iron asunder.
Psalm 107:10-16 NASB

1 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, **2** and he said,
“I called out of my distress to the Lord,
And He answered me.
I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;
You heard my voice.
3 “For You had cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the current engulfed me.
All Your breakers and billows passed over me.
4 “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight.
Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’
5 “Water encompassed me to the point of death.
The great deep engulfed me,
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
6 “I descended to the roots of the mountains.
The earth with its bars *was* around me forever,
But You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God.
7 “While I was fainting away,
I remembered the Lord,
And my prayer came to You,
Into Your holy temple.
8 “Those who regard vain idols
forfeit the grace that could be theirs,
9 But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving.
That which I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation is from the Lord.”
10 Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.
Jonah 2:1-10

Both the divine discipline and remembrance of God’s mercy should motivate us to repent and return to our Lord as quickly as possible.

1.3. The meaning of repentance.

When we have sinned, we need to first admit our sin to ourselves and look at it from the Lord’s perspective rather than consider it to any degree justifiable or unimportant. Then we must show true determination to turn away from sin and turn back to God.

Repentance is not directed backwards – at looking back at our sin with regret – it is about our desire to be faithful to God from now on. It is a change of our attitude moving forward, as shown by the etymology of the words used for “repent” in both the Old and New Testament – Hebrew שׁוּב means “to turn around, to return” and Greek μετανοέω – “to change one’s mind”. Neither word carries any notion of dwelling on past failure or lamenting it – both mean that a change of course is taking place.

As we repent, we should remember both God's holiness and His love. On the one hand, our sin is offensive to Him. On the other, He loves us and wants us to come back to Him so that He can display His mercy towards us. If we remember God's holiness and perfect righteousness but forget His love, we might be paralysed by our failure and hindered from coming to His throne of grace to confess and move forward in our Christian walk. If we remember His love and mercy but forget His holiness, we might ignore the gravity of our sin in God's eyes and take His mercy for granted, consequently becoming prone to repeating our transgression. We need to keep both in mind at all times, examining ourselves in humility.

1.4. Repentance has to be genuine.

Repentance starts with our free will decision to come back to God and be obedient to Him by putting His will above our every sinful desire. We should not confess to God unless we truly decide to separate ourselves from all our sin (cf. Deuteronomy 29:18-21; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 2:35, 3:10). We need to return to our Lord with all our heart. Then He will accept us back.

18 If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;
Psalm 66:18 NASB

12 "Yet even now," declares the Lord,
"Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
13 And rend your heart and not your garments."
Now return to the Lord your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness
And relenting of evil.
Joel 2:12-13 NASB

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
1 John 1:5-8 NASB

The fact that we regret our sin often doesn't automatically make the temptations to which we are particularly susceptible less enticing. This is when in our obedience to the Lord we will need to be ruthless with sin and all that leads us to it. If we know we shouldn't come back to something, then let's fix our eyes on Jesus, let's put our hand to the plow and not look back.

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
Luke 9:62 NASB

1.5. True repentance brings change.

Genuine repentance is shown by its fruit.

8 “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance”;
Matthew 3:8 NASB (also Luke 3:8)

When we decide to return to God and to part with all our sin, we have to make the necessary changes by removing all that could lead us back to it. We know what can cause us stumble and we need to make straight paths for our feet.

12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, **13** and make straight paths for your feet, so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.
Hebrews 12:12-13 NASB

1.6. We cannot dwell on failure.

Sin breaks our fellowship with God and stops us in following our Lord. It does damage to our testimony and service, reduces our eternal reward and lets our brothers and sisters down. But so does dwelling on our failure.

Sin can cause true mental anguish and the devil knows how to use our emotions against us. All that hinders us from returning to our Lord and continuing to follow Him – inordinate guilt, bitterness, inability to accept failure and move on from it – does not come from God and only causes further damage. We need to remove all obstacles.

As we may struggle with our emotions following failure, we must firstly remember that our time here is short. We have to make most of it.

5 “Behold, You have made my days *as handbreadths*,
And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight;
Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.” Selah.
Psalm 39:5 NASB

4 Man is like a mere breath;
His days are like a passing shadow.
Psalm 144:4 NASB

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16** making the most of your time, because the days are evil. **17** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
Ephesians 5:15-17 NASB

Every hour is an opportunity to grow spiritually, to produce fruit for our Lord, to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ and in this way accumulate our eternal reward.

Secondly, it is only this fruit we bear for the Lord that will remain. The rest will burn. Not only as those who have appropriated Christ’s righteousness by accepting His atonement through faith we will not be judged for our sin – and so after we have truly repented and confessed we shouldn’t dwell on it – but of this current world with all its problems and disappointments nothing will be left.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **11** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! **13** But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
2 Peter 3:10-13 NASB

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

Revelation 21:1 NASB

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:3-4 NASB

Even if the earthly consequences of our sin turned out to be particularly disheartening and hard for us to accept, let’s keep our focus on things eternal and remember where our homeland is.

20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; **21** for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:20-21 NASB

20 For our home state is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Philippians 3:20

Finally, even here in this life God can cause our failures to turn out for good in ways we could never anticipate – if we only stay faithful to Him.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Romans 8:28 NASB

20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

Genesis 50:20 NASB

1.7. Thorough examination.

Finally, before we confess our sins we need to thoroughly examine ourselves.

40 Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:39 NASB

31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

1 Corinthians 11:31 NASB

We should take into account that we can be drawn away from the Lord by things which are not necessarily sinful themselves, but which lead us to sin indirectly. Many activities which are either necessary or potentially beneficial when done in moderation (e.g., sport, physical training) could begin to occupy our mind and time to such a degree that they cause us to turn away from the Lord. We could start to neglect our spiritual growth and production and be lead to such sins greed or pride.

Satan will not refrain from using anything He can to cause us to stray away from God’s path. Many of his traps are obvious, but some are not – and he is a master liar and deceiver (Genesis 3:4-5; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 12:9). We must be careful not to let anything stand between us and the Lord.

We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our might. This is the greatest commandment.

5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Deuteronomy 6:5 NASB

37 And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the great and foremost commandment.”

Matthew 22:37-38 NASB

When we prepare for confession, let’s consider if there be something that occupies our heart more than serving Him or distracts us and hinders us in following His path.

29 “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Matthew 5:29-30 NASB

12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 6:12 NASB

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:13 NASB

2. Confession.

Having repented and prepared ourselves, we should confess all our sins to the Lord in prayer. Psalms can help us express what we have in our heart when we come before Lord – both those which include the prayer of confession (e.g., Psalm 32, 51, 130, 143) as well as some others (e.g. Psalm 25). We should choose the ones most helpful and applicable to us ourselves.

12b “Return, faithless Israel”, declares the Lord;

“I will not look upon you in anger.

For I am gracious”, declares the Lord;

“I will not be angry forever.

13 Only acknowledge your iniquity,

That you have transgressed against the Lord your God”

Jeremiah 3:12b-13a NASB

Although there are confession prayers that some churches and denominations require their member to use and although we ourselves may have a preferred way to confess, we should never let our confession become a legalistic, outward rite. Confession is a prayer that flows out of our desire to acknowledge our sins to the Lord so that we can return to Him – it should always be sincere and genuine. The Lord looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

3. Forgiveness and new start.

3.1. We are forgiven through our Lord's sacrifice.

Once we have confessed our sins to God, He forgives us through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8-9 NASB

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

1 John 2:1-2 NASB

We should remember that God's forgiveness is based only on Christ's sacrifice. We cannot atone for our sins or make up for the evil we committed. Only Christ could redeem our sins and through His death on the cross He paid the redemption price in full, accepting punishment for every sin in the history of humanity and thus satisfying God's righteousness. Adding any works to Christ's sacrifice implies we consider it deficient.

We should demonstrate our appreciation for God's forgiveness by reciprocating His mercy in our relationships with others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. Just as we need to adopt God's attitude towards our sins when we repent, so we need to adopt His attitude of forgiveness towards others if we want to receive His mercy (Matthew 18:23-34).

12 "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Matthew 6:12 NASB

4 "And forgive us our sins,

For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us."

Luke 11:4a NASB

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

Matthew 5:7 NASB

14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Matthew 6:14-15 NASB

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. **38** Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Luke 6:37-38 NASB

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Colossians 3:13 NASB

13 For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:13 NASB

3.2. We start again and move forward, forgetting what lies behind.

We start again, forgetting what lies behind.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:13-14 NASB

God gives us His forgiveness and He wants us to move on and serve Him. Should any negative emotions still linger in us after we have confessed and slow us down in our new start by drawing our attention away from the present and back into the past, we need to remind ourselves of it to quench them. Such emotions are never from God.

We must develop a short memory when it comes to our failures, so that they don't hinder our progress. Once we have drawn conclusions from them and repented, we have to leave them behind and never come back to them again.

3.3. Our life is a battle and in a battle things will never be perfect.

Defeats and setbacks are inevitable in a battle. Just as we need to learn to move on from them quickly rather than dwell on our failure in disappointment because things will no longer be how we would wish them to, so as we start again with a genuine intention to remain on the Lord's path we shouldn't expect things to be perfect from now on. Things will be perfect only when we are with the Lord. For now we remain on the battlefield – a place of struggle where we all fall and suffer wounds.

We shouldn't thus take oaths or make promises to God. If through a moment of weakness we fail to keep them, they will only cause us to fall deeper into disappointment and despondency.

34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, **35** or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil."
Matthew 5:34-36 NASB

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.
James 5:12 NASB

These points are particularly valid for those of us who desire things to be immaculate. They never will be on this side and we cannot allow our perfectionism or even genuine desire to be as faithful to the Lord as we can to turn into an inability to accept past failure and move on from it, or cause us to take unwise pledges which fail to take into account that even with the best of intentions we are still sinners, we still have the sin nature within us and we still remain in this devil's world. Our full focus should only be on the present moment – that we may use it to grow spiritually and faithfully serve our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."
Matthew 6:34 NASB

It could be that despite our efforts achieving victory over a certain sin will take time. Initially we may often stumble, but as we advance spiritually, our defeats will be becoming rarer and smaller until we find that our weakness has been fully overcome. And with God's help there is no weakness that we cannot overcome.

This is the reason why the scripture so often exhorts us to persevere. Sometimes all of us will suffer defeats. No one will go through this battle unscratched and no one will complete this race without falling. That's why it's our perseverance in recovering from the blows and picking ourselves up after we fall that will largely decide how far we advance. As in other areas of life and human achievement, it is the ones who show the greatest commitment and perseverance that accomplish most.

Defeats are inevitable in this battle and once we have learned from them, repented and confessed our sins, we shouldn't take them to heart and let them affect our walk with Christ. Over-focusing on sin can through constant disappointment, despondency and low spirit make our struggle much harder than it could be. Devil is also well aware that guilt, shame, excessive regret, inability to accept the failure and move on from it can be powerful weapons in his hands with which he can virtually immobilise a Christian who struggles with sin.

Finally, we must remember that the defensive struggle with sin is only one aspect of our battle here.

4. We return to following Christ and engage in offensive battle.

We need to grow spiritually and make daily progress in our walk with Christ. The more faithful we become at doing what is right, the more effective we will be at rejecting everything that is wrong, as through the power of the Holy Spirit we more and more obediently submit our will to God's.

Avoiding defeat isn't enough in any battle and both the military and sport parallels teach us that focusing only on the defence makes one exposed to constant attack on part of the opponent. So it is in our struggle with sin. We need to always strive for victory, to advance as far as possible for our Lord and to bear the most bountiful crop for Him. Ultimately, it's not our defeats that will be judged against us – only the fruit we produce. Getting to know the Word of God, understanding it, believing it, applying it and helping others in this process – all done in the power of the Holy Spirit – are the means of our preparation for the battle, of the actual combat and of our recovery when we fall.

Let's fight the good fight of faith.

12 Fight the good fight of faith;
1 Timothy 6:12a NASB

6 “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6 NASB

10 “Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”
Isaiah 41:10 NASB

20b “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20b NASB

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
Philippians 4:13 NASB

45 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. **46** This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, **47** and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands.”
1 Samuel 17:45-47 NASB

IV. Other useful resources.

<http://ichthys.com/>:

[Hamartiology](#)

[The Believer's Dealing with Sin](#)

[Christian walk](#)

[Peter's Epistles – Coping with Personal Tribulation](#)

<http://www.bibleacademyonline.com/omo/>:

[Basic Training Lesson 9: Preventive Measures from Sin Part 1](#)

[Basic Training Lesson 10: Preventive Measures from Sin Part 2](#)

[Basic Training Lesson 6: The Holy Spirit Part 1: The Coming of the Spirit](#)

[Basic Training Lesson 7: The Holy Spirit Part 2: Living by the Spirit](#)

[Basic Training Lesson 8: The Holy Spirit Part 3: The Spirit and the Flesh](#)

[Doctrine of Union with Christ](#)

[Galatians – Union with Christ Lesson 10](#)

[Doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ](#)

[Romans 14:10 Lesson 67](#)

[Romans 14:11 Lesson 68](#)

[Doctrine of the Flesh](#)

[Galatians 5:13a Lesson 21 and Galatians 5:14-21a Lesson 22](#)