

Seeking God

Lesson 7: Obstacles To Seeking God



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

Seeking God

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Learn about six obstacles Satan uses to hinder people from seeking God and how you can overcome them all

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Lesson 7:

Obstacles To Seeking God

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Seeking God is central to living a life that is pleasing to God. But, as we began to discover in the previous lesson, not everyone will seek God according to the way He desires to be sought. In fact, the Scriptures teach that there is an enemy of mankind who is actively working to deter people from seeking after God. This enemy is most commonly referred to as the devil, or Satan.

1 Peter 5:8-9 was written to those who were trying to seek God in their lives (i.e. those who were Christians), warning them about this enemy. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” This one opposes the right actions of mankind every opportunity he has. He desires our spiritual destruction so much that he is pictured as a lion that stalks its prey, waiting for an opportunity to kill. There is no other course of action to be taken against this enemy except to resist him at every turn. But, in order to resist this crafty enemy, we must always remain on guard.

The fact that we have this kind of a fierce adversary implies that we will experience a number of obstacles to seeking God. In fact, 2 Corinthians 2:11 warns about Satan taking advantage of us and states that “we are not ignorant of his devices.” Therefore, through the pages of God’s inspired word, God provides us with all of the information we need concerning how this fierce enemy operates. Yes, he has many different tactics he uses to oppose people who attempt to seek God. But, we (through the study of God’s word) can know the tactics he uses and overcome them.

Therefore, as we study about seeking God, we need to focus on this great adversary of mankind and some of the tactics he uses to deter us from seeking God. We need to proactively consider these obstacles that we will face as we try to seek God and consider how it is that we can overcome each one.

Doubt

Satan wants you to doubt God. Satan knows that if he can replace your faith (full confidence in God) with doubt that your actions will follow. Rather than your actions reflecting a heart that has absolute trust in God, in His word, and in His promises, your actions will reflect questions about the existence of God, the credibility of His word, and the reality of His promises. Therefore, let’s take a few moments to consider this obstacle of doubt – and how to overcome it.

How doubt can be an obstacle

There are a number of different ways Satan can try to use doubt as an obstacle to seeking God. He wants you to doubt that God actually exists. He wants you to doubt in the word that God has spoken. And, he wants you to doubt the promises God has made.

Sometimes, Satan sows seeds of doubts in hearts because of human suffering: “If there really is a God, why would He allow His creation to suffer and die?” Sometimes, Satan sows seeds of doubt that God will actually do exactly what He has promised: “How can a loving, merciful, and gracious God send

anyone to Hell?” Sometimes, Satan sows seeds of doubt that God actually means what He says: “Surely, God will not punish ‘good’ people just because they were not baptized for the forgiveness of their sins – as commanded in Acts 2:38.” Sometimes, Satan sows seeds of doubt that God’s grace and mercy will actually cover an individual’s past sins: “The sins I have committed in the past are surely so bad that I cannot possibly be forgiven and be saved.”

There are many ways Satan sows these seeds of doubt in the hearts of men and women who live on this earth. But, this is nothing new. The Bible warns us that this is one of the tactics Satan uses. In fact, consider the first temptation ever recorded in the history of mankind. God had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He promised them that in the day they ate of that tree, they would die (see Genesis 2:16-17). Yet, Satan questioned, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). But, the woman was fully convinced that is exactly what God had said. Still, Satan did not stop. After Eve accurately stated God’s law concerning the forbidden tree, Satan told the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5). And, it was through this attempt at sowing doubt in Eve’s mind that Satan succeeded in luring Eve away from seeking God – as Eve took of the forbidden fruit.

How to overcome this obstacle

Like Eve, Satan wants to get you to doubt God. But, you are not ignorant of this tactic the devil uses to lure people away from God. Therefore, you should equip yourself to respond properly to this obstacle.

First, you must be fully convinced in God’s reality. You can know (without a doubt) that there is a God who is Lord of heaven and earth. Go back and review the things we considered in lesson 1. By observing the wonders of the world and universe around you, you can be absolutely convinced that there is an eternal and all-powerful God who is behind it all (see Romans 1:19-22 and Psalm 19:1).

Second, you must fully trust His word. You can know (without a doubt) that the Bible contains the words of this all-powerful, all-knowing, and eternal God! By considering the complete accuracy of the Bible in its prophecies, by considering the perfect harmony of the Bible’s message, and by considering the Bible’s historic and scientific accuracy, you can know that the Bible must be the product of the all-knowing God who is Lord of heaven and earth! Certainly, no man (or group of men) could have accomplished what the Bible has accomplished or perfectly predicted and stated all that the Bible has said. Therefore, you can be absolutely convinced that all of the commands and instructions contained in the pages of the Bible are from the God who will judge the world.

Third, you must be fully convinced that God cannot lie. God has made many promises in the pages of His word. He has made promises pertaining to disobedience as well as promises pertaining to obedience. And, as He demonstrated with Adam and Eve, He always keeps His promises and does exactly what He has said He will do. Remember that God is holy. And, as a holy God who cannot be involved in anything that is evil, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Pride

Satan wants you to trust more in yourself or in other men and women than you trust in God. He knows that the ways of man are not the same as the ways of God. So, if he can successfully convince people to follow their own thoughts or the thoughts of other men and women by appealing to their sense of pride, he can lure people away from seeking God. Therefore, let’s take a few moments to consider this obstacle of pride – and how to overcome it.

How pride can be an obstacle

Satan can appeal to our senses of pride in many different ways. But, in them all, there is a failure to recognize God’s ways as best. Instead, Satan wants you to think that you are so wise and knowledgeable that you either do not need God or that you know better than God.

Sometimes, Satan appeals to pride whenever he attempts to convince people to trust in “science” and “scientists” rather than God. Sometimes, Satan appeals to pride whenever he attempts to convince people that their own ideas about life, morality, and the afterlife are better than what God has revealed about the same. Sometimes, Satan appeals to pride whenever he attempts to convince people that they know what will produce happiness and joy better than doing what God says will produce these. Sometimes, Satan appeals to pride whenever he attempts to convince people to hold to the traditions established by man rather than do things according to God’s laws.

Satan, whose pride may have led to his own downfall (see 1 Timothy 3:6), tries to appeal to man’s pride in many different ways. But, God has warned us about this tactic of the devil. In fact, we can see the element of pride in the story of Naaman (the leper) in 2 Kings 5. When this great commander of the Syrian army was told by a messenger sent from God’s prophet Elisha that he would be cleansed of his leprosy if he dipped in the Jordan River seven times, Naaman became furious. After hearing this solution to his problem, he said, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy’” (verse 11). In fact, he even concluded that there were better rivers to dip in besides the Jordan River (verse 12). Naaman thought there was a better way to be cleansed. And, as long as he was unwilling to humble himself to obey the instructions of God, he remained a leper. But, when he obeyed God, he was cleansed!

How to overcome this obstacle

Like Naaman, Satan wants you to think you know better than God. He wants you to think you know about the origin of this world better than God. He wants you to think you know what it takes to please God better than God does. He wants you to think that you do not need God or Jesus in order to be saved from your sins. He wants you to think that you know the path to true happiness better than God. Therefore, you should equip yourself to respond properly to this obstacle.

First, you must recognize that man’s thoughts and ideas are far inferior to God’s. Jeremiah 10:23 reveals that mankind is not capable of directing his own steps during his life on this earth in a way that is pleasing to God and beneficial for himself. Instead, the implication is that man needs God to guide him. In fact, Isaiah 55:8-9 reveals that God’s thoughts and ways are different from our thoughts and ways – and that His are as superior to ours as the heavens are higher than the earth! So, anytime we are tempted to place our confidence in mankind, let’s remember that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Second, you must recognize that only God’s ways will lead to the salvation of our souls. Even though Satan often appeals to the pride of man to convince him that he knows what it takes to please God and be saved, God says that mankind can only be saved if he humbly submits to God’s instructions. Proverbs 14:12 says that there is a way that seems right to man, but that it leads to death. Instead of following what mankind believes is acceptable to God, we must learn that it is only the truth God has revealed that is capable of setting mankind free from sin (John 8:32). Therefore, it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that is the “power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16)!

Third, you must recognize that pride always goes before destruction. Just as Naaman would have died as a proud leper as long as he refused to obey God’s instruction, those who proudly reject God’s wisdom and ways will suffer the spiritual consequences of Hell fire. Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” Anytime we choose to follow our own ideas rather than humbly submit to God, we will find suffering and consequences.

False Doctrine

Satan wants you to be deceived by false teachers. While Satan does not want anyone to believe in God or act as if they believe in God, he also recognizes that some will choose to accept the reality of God and the Bible as the word of God. Still,

this has not stopped Satan from deceiving millions of religious people claiming to seek God. Therefore, let's take a few moments to consider this obstacle of false doctrine – and how to overcome it.

How false doctrine can be an obstacle

Even within (so-called) “Christianity” there are many people who are failing to seek God because they do not believe the truth God has told people they need to believe. And, consequently, they fail to do what this right doctrine tells them to do. Therefore, Satan is even working through “Christianity” to lure people away from seeking God. In fact, 2 Corinthians 11:14 states that “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”

Sometimes, Satan convinces people to follow false doctrine because it is more convenient and less costly than true Bible doctrine. Sometimes, Satan convinces people to follow false doctrine simply because their family members or friends also follow the same false doctrine. Sometimes, Satan convinces people to follow false doctrine because they place their trust in the teacher. Sometimes, Satan convinces people to follow false doctrine because it sounds right to people who do not diligently study their Bibles.

But, Satan is not alone in accomplishing this work. Just as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, those who serve Satan can accomplish the same (see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Jesus, in Matthew 7:15-20, warned about people who would profess to be speaking words from God but were actually speaking things that were not true. He said that these false prophets are like ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing, implying that there is great destruction for following their false teachings. Furthermore, 2 Peter 2:1-3 warns about false teachers who secretly teach things that are not according to God's truth. It is said that these false teachers will deceive and exploit many with their “deceptive words” and result in destruction for themselves and for those who follow their “destructive ways.” Certainly, there are many people today who (in the name of Jesus Christ) teach false doctrines about God, about God's requirements for salvation, about the church, about the afterlife, about Christian living, etc.

How to overcome this obstacle

Like the millions of people he has deceived through false doctrine and false teachers, Satan wants to deceive you – according to what was identified in 2 Peter 2. Satan is perfectly okay with you believing in God and doing some good things in God's service as long as he has you enslaved to false doctrine. He is happy with this because he knows that if he has you enslaved to false doctrine, he also has you enslaved to sin! Therefore, you need to equip yourself to properly respond to this obstacle.

First, you must recognize the value of true doctrine (teaching). Although it is common for mankind to pridefully claim that “doctrine doesn't matter,” God actually says it does. In John 8:31-32, Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” But, if we abide in false doctrine rather than the word of God's truth, we cannot be Christ's disciples and be free from sin! Recall (from another lesson) that those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ do not have God (see 2 John 1:9-11). Therefore, doctrine matters to your eternal salvation!

Second, you must put all things to the test. 1 John 4:1 says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” So, you must not believe everything people say – just because they claim that it originates with God. Instead, you must test them. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 instructs that you test “all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” The standard you must use to test all doctrines by is the word of God. Therefore, any doctrine that God's word teaches, you must cling to and never let go. But, any doctrine that God's word does not teach, you must get away from completely.

Third, you must buy the truth and refuse to sell it. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy the truth, and do not sell it.” Buy the truth no matter what it costs – because it will set you free from your sins and lead you to eternal salvation in Heaven. Be diligent in your search for the truth and buy every ounce of truth you come into contact with along the way. Work diligently to rightly interpret the words God has

spoken as truth so that you can avoid any false conclusions. Then, refuse to sell the truth that you have bought. Yes, the truth is more valuable to you than anything else. It is more valuable than earthly wealth and pleasures, than being accepted by your peers, etc. No matter what the offer is or who makes the offer, refuse to sell the truth! The apostle Paul even said that the truth must not be abandoned even if an apostle of Christ or an angel from God would preach a different gospel than the one true gospel (see Galatians 1:6-9)!

Discouragement

Satan wants you to be discouraged. He doesn't want you to feel that seeking God is worthwhile in your life. So, he uses various tools and people to hinder you from being zealous and wanting to serve God. He wants your path in serving God to be as difficult as it can be possibly be, hoping that you will give up rather than endure the trials. Therefore, let's take a few moments to consider this obstacle of discouragement – and how you can overcome it!

How discouragement can be an obstacle

Satan has many tools at his disposal to cause your heart to feel troubled and to feel as if serving God just is not worth it. Similar to the obstacle of doubt, Satan wants you to give up on being dedicated to God's service. He wants you to think that serving God faithfully is a "dead end road." He wants you to be consumed by the suffering and hardships you face as a Christian so that you will turn your life to seeking things that are pleasurable to you while you live.

Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through your own health difficulties. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through the death of a loved one. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through the suffering you see others experiencing. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through your own failures. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you by influencing others to reject the truth of the gospel. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through

persecution. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through financial burdens. Sometimes, he tries to discourage you through other people speaking words of discouragement.

God's prophet Jeremiah is an example of this. As a prophet of God, Jeremiah had been given the responsibility of warning God's people about their unrighteousness and the consequences it would bring. However, the people rejected this warning and mocked Jeremiah. In fact, in Jeremiah 20:7-8, Jeremiah said that he had been made into a laughing stock all of the day for speaking this message of warning to the people. Therefore, he said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name" (Jeremiah 20:9). This discouragement got to Jeremiah to the point that he was ready to quit.

How to overcome this obstacle

Like he nearly accomplished with Jeremiah, Satan wants you to be so discouraged in seeking God that you give up. However, Jeremiah did not quit. Instead, he said that God's word was in his heart like a burning fire shut up in his bones and he was so wearied in trying to keep from speaking it that he simply could not (see Jeremiah 20:9). Therefore, like Jeremiah, you need to equip yourself to properly respond to this obstacle.

First, you must remember that God is greater than anything Satan uses to try to discourage you. Romans chapter 8 is full of encouragement for the one who seeks God. Indeed, the apostle Paul declared that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (verse 18). Even though there will be difficulties in attempting to seek God, Paul asked, "If God is for us, who can be against us" (verse 31). Then, he identified that God's people (as long as they are faithful to God) will not be overcome by tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, dangers, or death. Instead, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (verse 37). Yes, God is greater than everything and everyone else. And, no created thing can separate us from God's love as long as we are faithful to Him (verse 39).

Second, you need to remember what's at stake. Satan wants us to live "in the moment." Therefore, whenever we are discouraged, he wants us to turn to something else that makes us feel better. But, if we turn away from seeking God at these times, we will experience the spiritual consequences of our sins we discussed in lesson 2. Yes, God assures us that we will reap what we have sown (Galatians 6:7-8). If we become discouraged in seeking God so that we turn away from Him and seek the things belonging to the flesh, we will "of the flesh reap corruption." However, if we are faithful to God and continue sowing to the Spirit, we will "of the Spirit reap everlasting life." Therefore, Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Third, you must be absolutely confident that your labor for God is not in vain. Knowing that you will reap what you sow, you must press on in difficult times. Rather than sacrificing your eternal home in Heaven for some short-term pleasures and gain, you must "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Be assured that there is victory in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). Determine that your hope is in Christ and know that your devotion to seeking God will not be for nothing.

Peer Pressure

Satan is actively trying to lure you away from God and stop you from seeking Him. But, you need to recognize that he also actively works to lure you away from God through the people you put yourself around. He uses their influence in your life to open doors for you to sin and discourage you from following God. Therefore, let's take a few moments to consider this obstacle of peer pressure – and how you can overcome it!

How peer pressure can be an obstacle

That Satan can work to tempt you through other people is seen in the life of Jesus. After Jesus taught His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem,

suffer, be killed, and be raised the third day, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. He told Jesus, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You" (Matthew 16:21-22)! Then, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matthew 16:23). Notice that Jesus recognized Satan was using one of His own apostles to tempt Him. Satan, working through Peter, was tempting Jesus to deliver Himself from His suffering and death rather than fulfill the mission of God.

Sometimes, Satan tempts people today through their family members, their friends, their co-workers, their classmates, their neighbors, strangers they meet, etc. Sometimes, Satan uses these peers to lure people into following false doctrine. Sometimes, Satan uses these peers to discourage. Sometimes, Satan uses these peers to instill false ideas in the minds of others. Sometimes, Satan uses these peers to apply pressure to engage in a sinful activity.

We would all do well to learn from Solomon about this obstacle. Solomon was king over Israel and was one of the wisest people to ever live on this earth (as God granted him great wisdom). In fact, Solomon wrote much of the book of Proverbs that serves as a practical guide for wise living. Included in Solomon's own writings were even warnings about peer pressure – especially pressure to commit sexual sins by immoral women. Yet, in his own life, Solomon fell victim to peer pressure. 1 Kings 11 explains how that Solomon (contrary to God's instructions) loved many foreign women. In total, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Sadly, the text states that these wives turned his heart away from God to serve other gods.

How to overcome this obstacle

Like he did with Solomon and tried to do with Jesus, Satan is attempting to use pressure from the people you put yourself around (your peers) to turn your heart away from seeking God. However, like Jesus, you must resist even this attempt made by Satan to destroy you. Therefore, you need to equip yourself to properly respond to this obstacle.

First, you must value a relationship with God more than a relationship with others. You must determine who is more important in your life. Is it more important to seek a relationship with your family members, friends, co-workers, classmates, neighbors, etc. and have their approval – or is it more important to seek a relationship with the God who is Lord of heaven and earth and have His approval? Jesus clearly indicates that it will not always be possible to have both. In Matthew 10:34-39, Jesus demonstrated that those who choose to stand for God’s ways of truth will often become the enemies of their peers (even the closest members of their families). This will happen because our peers will not always choose to stand for the truth. In verses 37-39, Jesus helps us to make the choice to value a relationship with God more than a relationship with anyone else: “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Second, you must be willing to make difficult choices to please God. As we live around people who refuse to seek God, we should expect to make difficult decisions. We should expect to make decisions that please God rather than our peers. For, Jesus said that if we love even our family more than we love Him, we cannot be His disciples (see Luke 14:26). So, we must be prepared to take stands for God even though we may lose a boyfriend/girlfriend, even though our parents may not approve of our decisions, even though our children may be alienated from us, even though we may be mocked by our co-workers or classmates, and even though it pains our hearts to be separated from those we love. Yet, in making these difficult decisions to serve God rather than please our peers, we will be eternally rewarded for our faithfulness to Christ!

Third, you must exercise caution about who you put yourself around. Realizing that Satan does tempt through other people, we must be very careful as to the people we willingly put ourselves around and give opportunity to influence us. For instance, God had forbidden the Israelites from taking foreign wives because He knew that they would negatively influence His people (see 1 Kings 11:1-2). And,

because Solomon did not exercise this diligence, his heart was turned from God to idols. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”

Fleshly Desires

Ultimately, Satan uses the things of this world to try to lure you away from God. He appeals to your physical desires for wealth, pleasures, possessions, acceptance, ease of living, life itself, etc. to turn your heart away from God. Therefore, let’s take a few moments to consider this obstacle of fleshly desires – and how you can overcome it!

How fleshly desires can be an obstacle

Satan uses temptation to lure people away from God. This process is described in James 1:14-15. “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” So, temptation occurs whenever we become focused on our own fleshly desires – and enticed by the opportunity to fulfill those fleshly desires in ways that are contrary to God’s laws. Then, whenever we give in to those desires and actually act in ways that are contrary to God’s laws, we commit sin – which results in spiritual death (see lesson 2).

Sometimes, Satan appeals to our fleshly desires for money and physical possessions. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our fleshly desires for sexual pleasures. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our desires to do the things our peers are doing. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our desires to indulge ourselves. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our desires to enjoy life to the fullest. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our desires to engage in recreation. Sometimes, Satan appeals to our desires to have what other people have.

Though there are many physical desires Satan can appeal to, please recognize that it is only temptation whenever we are enticed to fulfill our physical desires rather than do what God wants us to do. An example of this can be seen in Matthew

19:16-22. This passage records the story of a rich young ruler who came to Jesus, asking Jesus, “what good things shall I do that I may have eternal life?” After establishing the fact that this man had been keeping the commandments of God, Jesus said that he still lacked one thing. He was told, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (verse 21). However, verse 22 records the man’s response: “But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” This man chose his own fleshly desires (i.e. for wealth) above seeking God.

How to overcome this obstacle

Like he did successfully with this rich man, Satan wants you to choose your own fleshly desires rather than God. He wants you to put yourself first. He wants you to live to fulfill your own desires. Therefore, you need to equip yourself to properly respond to this obstacle!

First, you must determine that you will not love the world or the things in the world. John wrote, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17). When you are tempted to sin by fulfilling your fleshly desires, you are faced with a choice of who you will love more. Either you will love yourself and the things of this world or you will love God (the one who gave His life so that you can be saved).

Second, you must value spiritual treasures more than physical ones. But, why should you love God and value spiritual treasures more than you love the world and physical treasures? John said that it was because the world and the things in the world are temporary. They are passing away. But, those who love God will live eternally in Heaven! Jesus taught the same in Matthew 6:19-21. He warned against storing up physical treasures on earth because they will not last. In contrast, He said that spiritual treasures are lasting. They have an eternal reward!

Third, you must put your focus on spiritual things. You must apply these truths about the temporary nature of worldly treasures and pleasures so that you can give your entire focus to serving God. Romans 8:5-8 warns that focusing your mind on physical things results in death and hostility with God. However, focusing your mind on the spiritual things of God results in having life and peace with God. Therefore, whenever you are faced with temptation, you must resist it and practice self-discipline as you focus on living a life that pleases God rather than yourself (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and James 4:7)! This is the only kind of life that has eternal rewards!

Conclusion

Satan is actively trying to stop you from seeking God. But, with the help of God, you can overcome every one of these obstacles. In fact, God has given you the spiritual armor of truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and prayer to enable you to “stand against the wiles [schemes] of the devil” (see Ephesians 6:10-18).

But, will you choose to overcome Satan? Do you truly desire to seek God rather than seek your own physical treasures and pleasures? In all things, recognize that you will reap what you sow and recognize that the things of this world are only temporary! Choose to seek God above all of these physical things – and choose to seek Him in the way He desires to be sought!

Study Questions

Who is trying to turn your heart away from seeking God? How can we know how this adversary operates?

1. Doubt

How can doubt be an obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

6. Fleshly Desires

How can fleshly desires be an obstacle?

2. Pride

How can pride be an obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

3. False Doctrine

How can false doctrine be an obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

4. Discouragement

How can discouragement be an obstacle?

How can you overcome this obstacle?

5. Peer Pressure

How can peer pressure be an obstacle?