

05302021 Overcoming Temptation requires GETTING PROACTIVE....last week

4. Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation

how many of us have tried to overcome a temptation while hanging around those who give into the temptation we are trying to overcome?

How often are we tempted to ignore this Scripture truth..

1CO 15: 33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning....

- Scripture tells us this truth, and to believe other than this is to be misled...(deceived, lied to, taken in)
- That Bad...(the Greek words for bad are criminal, evil, wrongdoers, harmful) company
- Will corrupt (forces alteration and damages, corrode) good (high quality, excellent) character (spirit or moral fiber).
- **If this is true...then by implication the opposite is also true... good company changes builds good character So..**

5. Help comes through God and other foreigners traveling this path before us

So I must open my life to others who are successful in the area I want to be successful This is where lasting victory is accomplished...**But even that is not all the resources we need...**

6. We have God’s manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....

HEB 4: 12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.¹³ Nothing in all

creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable. NLT

- **His word is not just about disbursing information...it is alive and literally speaks to us...His word speaks to our hearts...exposes our motives and desires...bringing understanding, correction and training to our lives...**
- **It has been given to us as a gift...it is in written form that I may have it to read or listen to it over and over...always receiving something from it...**
- **it speaks to our soul dividing the spirit from the flesh..(joint and marrow)...giving us discernment of our motives, correction, comfort, wisdom.**
- **We will never understand the truth of God's Word if we treat it as a troublesome salesman at our door, for whom we open it a crack to get rid of him as quickly as possible.**

...Let's not miss one more important lesson in this passage about temptation: Our main weapon against temptation is knowing God's Word!

Why was Jesus victorious in discerning and rejecting Satan's temptation? Because he knew God's Word!

That's why Jesus did not say "I think"--he said "It is written."

Living in the environment of God's Word will give you the spiritual acuity to recognize temptation for what it is a inferior substitute And it will build spiritual knowledge that the Spirit can recall to counteract Satan's temptations.

pay attention to this ...but that is not all

7.We also have God's Spirit who will teach us all things

JN 14: 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. 27 "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and

heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. NLT

- **The Holy Spirit will teach us all things.. One of those things is how to overcome temptation...**
- **he teaches us how to bring in alignment our mind (beliefs) our heart (Actions)...which is the ability to carry out action... the harmony and alignment between belief and action brings inner peace... which conquers Fear...and produces good character**

So I have given you seven ways to help you to overcome temptation:

Temptations are a common part of life for everyone

- 1. Temptation is always an attack on identity**
- 2. Satan operates from the perspective... Everyone has their price... to leave God**
- 3. Temptations distort the word of God... by lying to us and telling us we can test God...or God should operate the way we want him too..**
- 4. Someone before you has successfully dealt with a similar temptation**
- 5. Help comes through God and other foreigners traveling this path before us**
- 6. We have God's manual on how to live while on earth His Book, which is a gift from Him to each of us....**
- 7. We also have God's Spirit who will teach us all things**

All of them require one to be proactive...I have to actively use them...but before you will actively use them you have to believe they will enable you to overcome. **which takes us to number eight**

8. My thinking has to be transformed...

- **Information must be applied to be effective, and in order for it to be applied, I have to believe it will work! information without application gains me nothing...My thinking has to change for my actions to change!**

Listen to this example...about the power of our thoughts..

On Sunday, February 18, 2001, NASCAR lost one of its greatest drivers. Dale Earnhardt Sr., also known as "The Intimidator," was in third place on the last

lap of the Daytona 500 when his car was tapped from behind and sent head-on into the wall at 180 mph.

In a matter of moments it was evident something was terribly wrong. Dale Earnhardt died in the crash. On the following Monday an autopsy report revealed he had died of blunt force trauma to the head.

it is believed that if Earnhardt had been wearing the HANS (Head and Neck Safety Device) he would have survived the crash. Although this device was available, Earnhardt, like many other drivers that day, neglected to use it. His neglect of this safety device probably cost him his life.

- **Dale is no different than any one of us... He had a choice to believe the testing and information that wearing proven protection for his head and neck would greatly increase survival from what would previously been a fatal accident...the information was there...**
- **But Dale did not think that was needed in his case after all Dale had been driving for many, many, years...he did not consider a new HANS safety device...advantageous to his health.... he already had survived many, many, many, races...why change...this is the way he always drove...it was good enough according to his thinking.**
- **Well he had an understanding of car racing that did not include new protective wear...or at least this new protective wear...**
- **In Dale Earnhardt's thinking ...he did not believe it necessary nor really advantageous to wear better head gear to protect his skull and brain in case of an accident than he already wore. **So he acted in accordance with that belief...****
- **Sadly, his belief on accidents and head protection was faulty...**

He had information in his mind but no heart to apply it.....his own reasoning convinced him to believe something as truth ...that was not!! He chose to believe his own version of reality ... over what was really true reality...and paid a great price for that believing that lie!!!!

- **No slam on Dale...we can all relate to that kind of thinking!! for we all have done it!! Something is obviously not working or not even not true...but we hold on to it anyway...thinking this is the way I always did it...and it should work**
- **Why do we do this? because We tend to think our perceptions are objective and true regarding the validity of information even information from God... therefore whether we apply God's information and rely on his power and ways ... is still contingent upon our evaluation of the of those ways falsely beleiving we are objective and wise in our evaluations... we may not say that ...but that is why we reject new way, which conflict with our previous ways...**
- **listen we are all tainted and prejudiced and have limited knowledge...therefore quite were fallible, and ignorant.... quick to prejudice as not workable or productive without ever working it to the point of producing something different .**
- **The mind is where we decide on what we believe... Whatever thoughts I think are true..those are the ones I will believe ...no matter the evidence to the contrary..**
 - **Paul calls this thinking like a child...**

1CO 13: 11 When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. NLT

Paul says that childish thinking once formed ...stays with us ...until it is PUT AWAY...has the idea of intentionally taking that thinking, that type of reasoning and the resulting ways a child acts... and forcibly discarding it...

- **Why? for it no longer works as an adult!!**
 1. **An adult understands he/she only knows in part....we do not see everything clearly...and in fact the more we know the more we know there is more to know!**
 2. **a child not so much...a teenager often knows everything!!**
 3. **So an adult He/she puts childish ways away... selfishness... irresponsibility...temper tantrums...running away.. blaming others for our actions...that gets put behind them...behind them...**
 4. **an Adult looks into the mirror and Learns to handle life face to face...and when you look in the mirror you look at yourself!! does not run away or reject...they are teachable!!... new truth...we see things darkly...we know in part...don't know everything...we still need to learn**
 5. **And that I will grow someday into complete understanding as the one who knows me completely teaches me..about me...and truth...**

*****The hard part about putting away the childish thinking is that our childish thinking has developed Strongholds in our Minds...**

2 Cor 10: .⁴ We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.
NLT

- **there are two ways we wage battle in the world ...**
 - **we battle as the world has conformed us..the weapons we have attained in our life's journey**
 - **or we wage Battle as the Spirit directs us...**
- **What are the weapons of the world...Hate, unforgiveness, Jealousy, envy, Pride, rage, violence, lust, power, position, controlling others, selfishness, stealing, running away, cheating, lying, manipulation, fear, ...**
- **What are the weapons of the Spirit... Divine Power, Patience, love, Peace, Joy, long suffering, self control, generosity, wisdom, forgiveness, faith , hope, encouragement...**

- Although these arguments and were originally erected for our protection they become a source of torment and distortion, and hindrance to us because they war against the knowing or knowledge of God...and his way doing life ...
- How? by filtering and screening everything God says through our past hurts, rejections and experiences...we find it impossible to believe God!
- We cannot believe he is really meaning what he is saying, or that what he is saying is actually good...or even will work?
- We doubt his goodness and faithfulness since we judge him by the standards that people have set in our lives...
- This is what opens God's kids to deception...when I don't believe God...I will believe something or someone else...
- one cannot human reason their way into godly thinking...human reasoning is a built stronghold ...that can only be taken down by God power...
- what is a stronghold? A stronghold refers to a fortified city... These strong cities had a wall erected around them.. to keep them safe..
- These walls were the city's assurance of protection. They kept unwelcomed visitors and invaders out. All entrants were screened. Those who owed taxes were not allowed in until they paid.
- Those considered a threat to the city's safety or health were refused entry. When attacked the walls provided a safeguard for the people.

Paul tells us the same type of strong hold/walls are erected in our thinking to protect us from hurts and harm.

- We construct walls when we are hurt to safeguard **our hearts and prevent any further and future wounds**
- We become selective, denying entry to all we fear will hurt us. and we bar re-entry to those who have hurt us in the past.

- We filter out any one owes us a debt of some kind, and we withhold access until these people have paid their amount outstanding in full... or as we judge appropriate
- And we open the stronghold only to those we believe are on our side. Yet often those people who are on our side, have offended us been offended by us also ...resulting in the stacking of additional stones on our existing walls...furthering the inability to reconcile...namely family and loved ones...
- And without knowing exactly when it happens, these walls of protection built over the years become a prison ...holding us strongly inside.
- At that point we are not only extremely cautious about who's allowed in...but in terror we infrequently will not venture outside our fortress into something challenging or new.
 - The walls built through woundedness are more unyielding..then a real fortified city! Incredible...but we can all attest to that.
 - and unforgiven disputes are like the gates of a castle...unable to be entered...

The result: The focus of a wounded person...is inward and brooding! we diligently guard our rights! and scrutinize every personal relationship carefully..

- A Massive amount of energy is expended in making sure no future injuries will occur....thereby excluding future relationships...to our detriment missing out on their additions to our lives...

Every time we try to let someone new in our strongholds or attempt to venture out thinking this is a good idea, they have a perfectly aimed shot or arugment why it won't work and is a bad idea....so we rebel against the idea... Rarely do they get ouwitted...

It takes Divine power to demolish them...and overcome the enemy guards

2Cor 10: 5 We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

- **So...Whatever thought obstacle that tries to hinder me from knowing what God wants... I blow up!**
- **and I capture every rebel thought ...put it in prison...making it obey God..**

We are to demolish these anti-Christ arguments in our minds...not debating them, romancing them, nurturing them, but imprisoning them not releasing teaching them obedience

- **So even though God has already purged me and cleansed me from a lot of things that were "IN" my heart already, there are still many more things to be cleansed from, and are evidenced by what I still "think."**

how do we do it? We take opposing thoughts captive... I take this thought captive in the name of Jesus.. disarm it by taking it captive...to obedience

For example a thought says don't tell... I tell...don't go to God...I go to God...don't read the word..i read the word...give in, I fight....the temptation battle should be short...I prepare for a long battle... overcoming temptations should be easy, I am ready for a hard battle... why? I win!! Then we will be Free to live the life God has for us...not entrapped in a prison of our own making!! temptations thoughts lose their power when confronted taken captive and exposed...

end

listen what Peter learned

NLT

1 peter 4:1 So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin.

NLT

1 peter 5:10 In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.

- **Then we will be Free to live the life God has for us...not entrapped in a prison of our own making!!**

end

But God is not a man so he is not fallible and he is worthy to be beleived!!

Numbers 23:19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? His ways are not our ways...

Isa 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

*JN 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you **hold** to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, **and the truth** will set you free."*

*****Every Stronghold needs guards....** those who keep us locked inside...thinking is for our best

⁵ We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

the mind obstacles! Every time we try to let someone new in our strongholds or attempt to venture out thinking this is a good idea, they have a perfectly aimed shot or arugment why it won't work and is a bad idea....so we rebel against the idea... Rarely do they get ouwitted...

- **And they possess a lot and varied AMMUNITION at their disposal... they precisely fire the arguments of Past mistakes...past unsuccessful efforts... past botched plans, past heartaches, past disappointments, past failed relationships... and they know exactly which ones to use for maximum stopping power.**
- **The sharp shooting rebellious thoughts...the snipers offering us a better way! which is always against God's will**

And when are not able to get the kill shot.....They call in the calvary...the many and varied rebellious thoughts...attacking God's will with imagined horrible outcomes and a painful future you will have by even attempting something different... skillfully painting picture after picture of an apocalyptic future...so we should just rebel against that and be safe

The result so we take in life, tiny bits at a time filling holes... rarely venturing into out into the newand we give it out trust and love sparingly...

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Storms bring out the false beliefs and test faith..

Cast the thoughts out that are not of God, by building a new stronghold based on His words.... 1) **We Believe God...** then learning to live in it! then our thinking changes...

1. Psalm 9:9 *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a **stronghold** in times of trouble.*
2. Psalm 27:1 *The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the **stronghold** of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?*

James tells us something very important

James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

- the first part we all get very well..we all stumble in many ways..
- but the second is very interesting, James tells us **the person who is right in their speech** is perfect or whole ...and as a result of that can keep their body in check...or control what they do...
- Do you know your thoughts are words? Your thoughts are self talk...
- Let me ask you a question... Who do you have on a daily basis the most conversations with?...the correct answer is yourself...**so it is most important to examine what you talk to yourself about ...and how you talk to yourself...and the tone you use on yourself...**
- **You know some of us are good company to our selves ..**
- **and some of us are horrible company to our selves...that is why some of us don't like to be alone...were not good company...**
- that is why some of us are uncomfortable in our own skin...we have a dangerous thought life...

For Proverbs 23:⁷ For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...(KJV) is true” **Our life expresses loud and clear the result of our dominant thoughts.**

all seven methodologies you have been given to overcome temptation are useless...if you don't first believe them to be of great value ...so much so, you will have the heart to apply them...

Listen....You win the mind battle you win the life battle!!

- **You have to change your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your behavior.**
- **Your thought life is the place where the everyday battle of life rages...and it can be won!!**

*****How is our thinking formed?...**

Paul says when we were young like a child...

1CO 13: 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

11 When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. 12 Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

*******This transformation of thinking teaches us to live by facing life forward as opposed to facing life backward...building anew disregarding the old**

- **or looking at all that is past keeps us from embracing that which is in the future....**
- **it is stronghold and moving to another stronghold **What does that look like and how do I know I am being transformed...****
- **My thinking progressively reflect the way God thinks! and if we think the way God thinks...we become more like God in our actions...**

We are actually visibly, transformed... ..it can be seen

- **In a world conformed to worrying the follower of Jesus should stand out as calm**
- **In a world conformed to greed the follower of Jesus stands out as generous**

- **In a world conformed to depression world the follower of Jesus should be the light of hope**
- **In a world conformed to fear the follower of Jesus should stand out as fearless**
- **In an world conformed to instability the follower of Jesus should stand out as a model of stability and steadfastness in the midst of change**
- **In a world conformed to selfishness the follower of Jesus increasingly lives selfless life**
- **In a world conformed by pain, follower of Jesus should stand out for their compassion a healing balm**
- **In a world conformed with confusion, the follower of Jesus increasingly lives by conviction with understanding...**
- **in world conformed to control others the follower of Jesus increasingly lives under self control..**
- **In a world conformed to immorality and corruption... we should stand out as people of integrity and honesty**
- **In a world conformed to hate...we should stand out for our love..**

Let us be people who are used by God to change that perception... as those perception and blind spots are changed in us ...we will be used of God to reflect him...in every place we find ourselves... end

Listen....You win the thought battle you win the life game!!

- **You have to change your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your words and changing the words you speak changes behavior.**

James tells us something very important

James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

- the first part we all get to well..we all stumble in many ways..
- but the second is very interesting, James tells us the person who is correct in their speech is perfect or whole ...and as a result of that can keep their body in check...or control what they do...
- Do you know your thoughts are words? Your thoughts are self talk...
- Let me ask you a question...who do you have on a daily basis the most conversations with?
- the correct answer is yourself...so it is most important to examine what you talk to yourself about ...and how you talk to yourself...the tone you use on yourself...
- You know some of us are good company to our selves ..
- and some of us are horrible company to our selves...that is why some of us don't like to be alone...were not good company...
- that is why some of us are uncomfortable in our own skin...we have a dangerous thought life...

For “As a man thinketh...is true” **Our life expresses loud and clear the result of our dominant thoughts.**

Listen....You win the mind game you win the life game!!

- You have to change your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your behavior.
- Your thought life is the place where the everyday battle of life rages...and it can be won!!

- **If I believe God's thoughts are true...My life will show that effect..**

JN 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- From Jesus perspective...Two things are required to live a free life...
- Free from what? Believing in and living according to lies...free from being controlled by our thoughts..
- **How? One...One must believe him....Two.. one must hold to what he teaches**
- **Then they will experience freedom from thoughts that are not based in God's truth... he nows we don't...**

One of the areas Adam and Eves' immature character was...they did not know who their enemy was...they did not know the disease he carries..

they did not control their minds...we can...^{IPE 5:8} *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy **the devil** prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

*JAS 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist **the devil**, and he will flee from you.*

- obey God...resist the devil ...the mind is the battle field...it is a battle of truth verse lie...which ever one you believe is how you will act.

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010514 mind games...winning the battle of our thought Life

We are in a series of teaching how to fight to win...last week we talked about the know your enemy and reality of Satan and spiritual forces bent on our destruction...external Then we discussed internal force to be reckoned with...our pride!!

Today I want to teach on mind games, winning the battle of your thought life!

James tells us something very important

James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

- the first part we all get to well..we all stumble in many ways..
- **but the second is very interesting, James tells us the person who is correct in their speech is perfect or whole ...and as a result of that can keep their body in check...or control what they do...**
- **Do you know your thoughts are words? Your thoughts are self talk...**
- **Let me ask you a question...who do you Who do you have on a daily basis the most conversations with?**
- **the correct answer is yourself...so it is most important to examine what you talk to yourself about ...and how you talk to yourself...the tone you use on yourself...**
- **You know some of us are good company to our selves ..**
- **and some of us are horrible company to our selves...that is why some of us don't like to be alone...were not good company...**
- **that is why some of us are uncomfortable in our own skin...we have a dangerous thought life...**

For “As a man thinketh...is true” **Our life expresses loud and clear the result of our dominant thoughts.**

Listen....You win the mind game you win the life game!!

- You have to change your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your behavior.
- Your thought life is the place where the everyday battle of life rages...and it can be won!!
- **Jesus challenged people to think.... Just in the Gospels Jesus asks people over 19 times To Think or ask them What do you think? then he presents a scenario for them to ponder.... He challenges their thinking**

It is interesting that Paul concludes that when this is done...the one who teaches us us these three things will remain...

1Cor 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- In his estimation once childish thinking is put away... Thinking founded on faith...thinking reflecting hope...thinking focused on love...will dominate our thoughts

So how are is our childish thinking developed...we have been formed by our individual world

Rom 12 : 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- understand you have been formed in your mind by the pattern of your world... our own piece of the world has formed our outlook on the world...
 1. **The family** we were raised in...nuclear-single mom or dad, foster...safe-scary, abusive-nurturing, loving-neglectful...godly-godless..functional-dysfunctional...
 2. **Neighborhood**...upper-middle-lower...
 3. **School life**...involved-disengaged... excel-fail... accepted-outcast... completed-dropout...
 4. **Social life**... isolation- friends...conforming -rebelling... directional-directionless... boyfriend's-girlfriend's how did that turn out....the old saying show me your friends...
 5. **Traumatic events**...abuse, death, divorce, accidents, **great failures**

6. Religion...some-none...good experience, hypocritical...loving accepting...or condemning...

We have all been formed....now we must be transformed...by the renewing... of our minds...

- You see...We live in the world but each of our world views are not the same...we have all been conformed by our piece of the world!!
- **so our thinking must be renewed...to renew means to restart...to recharge...to repair and restore...**
- **And as our thinking is transformed and our doing of God' way is embraced we will find his will is:**
- **Good! it is good for us! it does us well..**
- **pleasing...I will find it pleasing....pleasing means it works!!**
- **Perfect...holistic... healthy well rounded...**
- **this thinking transformation is a progressive... just as our childish thinking was formed over time.. ...and we will find it pleased with it**

*****Now the enemy counts on us thinking like children...keep us thinking like children immature so that we will be unsuccessful as adults... because we will stay as immature adults..**

COL 2 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

- **Interesting that Paul says see to it that no one takes you captive...think about who you have listened to....is what they have taught you in line with Jesus teaching? some probably yes and some no...which do you listen too?**
- **ever notice that some people whom you dislike the most captivate your thinking?? which in turn determines your actions!! including the enemy!!**
- *****we get taken captive by hollow philosophy...that which appears solid but is not... ***deceptive philosophy...that which appears true but is not...**
- **or human tradition...the way it's been done before is the correct or only way...i.e. man always walked therefore flying is wrong...**
- **basic principles of the spiritual forces operating in the world...get all you can, can all you get, sit on the lid...pride and selfishness!!**
- **Rather than on Jesus and his thinking..**

*******The enemy attacks us in our minds...for he knows what we think we will eventually do!! thoughts precede actions!!**

Eph 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

- **schemes...a methodology..a road of access...**
- **his method to attack the mind with lies.. believe that which is not true...or confuse the truth...**

John 8:44He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

*EPH 4:25 Therefore each of you must **put off falsehood** and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ **"In your anger do not sin"** : Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the **devil** a foothold.*

- **Put off...going back to what paul said earlier..put away...lies**
- **Speak the truth...When angry...handle appropriately...we have to learn how to do that...**
- **Because if we don't the enemy establishes foothold or ground in the territory of our lives...**
- **He capture ground in Our thinking!! Actions automatically follow!!**

From Jesus perspective... two things are required to live a free life...

JN 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- **One...One must believe him**
- **Two.. one must hold to what he teaches as truth.. Faith is holding on when confused...Faith is holding on until the end is revealed**
- **Then we will Free from what? Believing in and living according to lies...**
- **Free to what?...live life to the full!!**
- **Freedom will be experienced...it will become visible...**
- **Just as living by lies becomes ...visible..**
- **You live transformed it is visible...**

So how do we do this...

2CO 10: ³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

- From God perspective the war is in the invisible realm ...nor are the weapons we use visible...the words we speak to our selves...invisible to the world but active in our minds...
- The strongholds are the works, desires, perspective on life. Which have been built in order to protect us...but end up imprisoning us..hold us captive
- **the war is against strongholds in the mind...a stronghold is a belief that olds one strongly.... Examples..."I can never stop doing this" I can't control myself...i am no good, I cannot change, God does not love me...maybe he loves me because he has to, but he certainly does not like me... life has no purpose...I will never find fill in the blank...good job, husband, wife, "I cant" fill in the blank..**
I need fill in the blank to be ok...

⁵ *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

- **The power is not natural...it is supernatural... For it demolishes the invisible...the visible cannot demolish the invisible**
- The word arguments here could be translated reasonings. These are our reasonings, they seem logical and believable and plausible they, **are little more than imaginations...**funny how our imaginations almost always run to the extreme worst possible outcome!!
- So we must cast down such false reasoning for truth.
- Listen there was nothing more foolish or many of us at one time in our lives than the Gospel!! And look at us now....
- And we will find walking in his ways...will still be wrestled with in our reasoning
- Not only are we to cast down (get rid of) such reasoning's,
- **but we must also rid ourselves of every thought exalts it self in my mind... lifting itself above what I know God wants...and attempting to get me to follow it...I take captive...to bring it below what I know is right and true...**
- **This supernatural power can demolish the fear of pretensions.. pretending things...false pride...showboat...not real...false ...lies**
 - **that which exalts it self in my mind... lifting itself above what I know God wants... or says and attempting to get me to follow it**

How do we apply the power? take it captive in Jesus name!!

- **I take it captive in my mind...and bring it below what I know is right and true...**

So how should we live....We live with a big whatever!!!!

PHP 4: 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

*2CO 3: 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces **contemplate** the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

- **Nothing changes in my outward appearance...I look the same**
- **but what I contemplate inwardly changes...to the Lord's Glory...I advertise him in my mind!!**
- **My thinking progressively reflects the way God thinks! And my actions reflect the way Jesus lived!!**

What does it look like outwardly..... We are actually visibly, transformed... ...it can be seen

- In a worried world the follower of Jesus stands out as calm
- In a greedy world the follower of Jesus stands out as generous
- In a depressed world the follower of Jesus has joy
- In a world consumed with the negative...the follower of Jesus see hope!
- In a society emotionally riding the roller coaster of circumstances the follower of Jesus lives by faith that there is a plan of God at work!...
- In a fearful world the follower of Jesus stand out as courageous
- In an unstable world the follower of Jesus stand out as reliable
- In a selfish world the follower of Jesus increasingly lives selfless
- In a world filled with pain, follower of Jesus should stand out for their compassion a healing balm
- In a world filled with confusion, the follower of Jesus increasingly lives by conviction and understanding...
- in an out of control world the follower of Jesus increasingly lives under self control..
- In a world filled with immorality and corruption... the followers of Jesus should stand out as people of integrity and honesty
- in a world bent on revenge for wrongs...the follower of Jesus freely forgives..
- In a world filled with hate...we should be known for our love..

We are actually visibly, transformed... ...it can be seen

- Let us be people who are used by God to change that perception... as those perception and blind spots are changed in us ...we will be used of God to reflect him...in every place we find ourselves...

Our thoughts are our self talk...listen to them... perfect them and the rest of your life follow suit!! Fight to Win!!

- **That is how we defeat the enemy!!! And win the battle of the mind!!!**

So do we have power over the evil one...you bet we do!!

- **The end result... God wins and we win too...**

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- **There are the temptations which want to govern us.... life dominating sins!!**

- There is not a temptation to worry, that comes upon us that has not enticed us before.
- There is not a temptation to Fear...which we have not experienced before...And we have all experienced broken trust...feeling naked...exposed...embarrassed, rejected
- Catastrophe imaginations” the doom and gloom forecasts... why me I cannot believe this...it is the end... do something quick now...
- The Eyore syndrome...it will never work!!...it will never happen... which are probably more common temptations ...and when acted upon cause devastating consequences usually having to do with relationships...

***** And then there is the Temptations when experiencing trials or trouble like...**

- Tempted to believe God does not love you... or not care...or can't help..or does not understand... I will handle this my way!!
- Tempted to self condemn yourself..when you make mistakes...
- Tempted to believe the thought that the problem I am facing requires a great deal of anxiety....or Being tempted to Call names as the best solution to this conflict...
- tempted to try and control people rather than love them...

- tempted to Isolation and insulation as the best way to handle hurt...
- tempted to think that Your business is nobody else's business
- tempted to sulk and whine...when you don't get your way...
- tempted to scheme to get around a "no" answer..because you need it
- tempted to manipulate...thinking that a valid way to get around someone objection or refusal..... because you need it
- tempted to believe you are hopeless and helpless... because there is no way to meet this need
- tempted to believe I am justified in doing wrong because....He, she, them, they did such and such...and always remember to throw in the word ...first... because you need it...
- tempted to believe... No one has faced the situation you're in before...or why is this happening to me? as if I should be exempt!
- tempted to believe...you have extenuating circumstances that no one else can understand nor even appreciate...
- Tempted to believe...No one can identify with what you are going through
- You are all alone...God doesn't even care
- tempted to believe....It is so hard...whatever "it" is...I need some kind of relief...choose your favorite
- tempted to believe.....Why try anything new or different...it's not going to work anyway...I have tried everything when in fact you have not...
- tempted to believe...Giving up or giving in...is an adequate option...at least for right now
- How you handle temptation reveals your character...character development produces destiny....Catch the little foxes of temptation before they destroy your...vineyard...your future.

@@@@@****Where does the war take place?...in the strongholds of our mind...
Strongholds that have been formed during out life's journey...

2 Cor 10: ⁴ *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*

what is a stronghold? A stronghold refers to a fortified city... These strong cities had wall erected around them..

- These walls were the city's assurance of protection. They kept unwelcomed inhabitants and invaders out. All entrants were screened. Those who owed taxes were not allowed in until they paid.
- Those considered a threat to the city's safety or health were kept out. When attacked the walls provided a safeguard for the people.

Paul tells us the same type of strong hold/walls are erected in our thinking to protect us from hurts and harm.

- We construct walls when we are hurt to safeguard our hearts and prevent any future wounds
- We become selective, denying entry to all we fear will hurt us. and we bar entry to those who have hurt us in the past.
- we filter out any one owes us something, and we withhold access until these people have paid their debts in full...as we judge appropriate
- And we open the stronghold only to those we believe are on our side. Yet often those people who are on our side, have been offended by us also ...resulting in the stacking of additional stones on our existing walls...furthering the ability to reconcile
- And without knowing exactly when it happens, these walls of protection built over the years become a prison ...holding us strongly inside.
- At that point we are not only extremely cautious about who come in...but in terror we cannot venture outside our fortress.

Listen to this proverb:

Proverbs 18:19 *A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.*

- **The walls built through woundedness are more unyielding..then a real fortified city! Incredible...but we can all attest to that.**
- **and unforgiven disputes are like the gates of a castle...unable to be entered... though you can see in!**

The result:

- The focus of a wounded person..is inward and introspective! we guard our rights! and scrutinize every personal relationship carefully..
- a Huge amount of energy is expended in making sure no future injuries will occur.
- so we take in life, tiny bits at a time filling holes...but the atfer gets stagnant..
...and we give it out sparingly... five marriages could not fix her ... she must have been a real treat to live with...

John 4:¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

- and because one does not risk being hurt again, we/she cannot give unconditional love...love that has no expectation...By it's nature unconditional love gives others the right to hurt us.
- therefore we stay locked in our own self made fortified shelter of thinking... and miss out on the freedom God wants for us and the life he desires us to live...we slowly die...
- and our lives become more amore consumed with self seeking fulfillment, always looking for that thing that will make us happy to be brought into our self contained fortress..
- In this city the love for others grows cold because we are consumed with ourselves...because we are always trying to get enough love for ourselves..
- So the person living in the strongholds of their minds, takes in life a little bit at a time after it is well scrutinized... that is the root of materialism, and addictions of all kinds...trying to fulfill ourselves to bring life to ourselves...
- but giving out very little life to others...we become stagnant!!
- Now these strongholds ...create set patterns of reasoning through which all incoming information is processed..

These Paul calls arguments and pretensions...or poser...pretending or fake outcomes..

2 Cor 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- **Although these arguments and possible outcomes were originally erected for our protection**
- **they become a source of torment and distortion, and hindrance to us because they war against the knowing or knowledge of God...which war against us doing life God's way!**
- **How? by filtering and screening everything God says through our past hurts, rejections and experiences...we find it impossible to believe God!**
- **We cannot believe he is really meaning what he is saying, or that what he is saying is actually good...or even will work?**
- **We doubt his goodness and faithfulness since we judge him by the standards that people have set in our lives...**
- **this is what opens God's kids to deception...when I don't believe God...I will believe something or someone else...**

But God is not a man!!

Numbers 23:19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? His ways are not our ways...

Isa 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

- **So...Whatever thoughts exalt themselves in my mind... lifting itself above what I know God wants...and attempting to get me to follow it**
- **I destroy it or I take it captive...to bring it below what I know is right and true...**

2 Cor 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1. **We are to demolish these anti-Christ arguments in our heads....not debate them, romance them, feed them, nurture them, obey them...**
2. **We are to take every pretension...or pretending thought...a fantasy movie we make in our heads...that is against what God says...**
3. **by taking those thoughts CAPTIVE! At this point, decide if the thought is a God thought or even a good thought or not.**

4. This whole thought issue has to do with relationship with God, ourselves or people. If there were no people, most of our strongholds would be gone because the people are gone.
 5. However, there is still ourselves, so we can think evil of ourselves the rest of the time.
 6. We are not to even think evil of ourselves!! This is a process! A process means there is time involved.
 7. So even though God has already purged me and cleansed me from a lot of things that were "IN" my heart already, there are still many more things to be cleansed from, and are evidenced by what I still "think." Storms bring out the false beliefs and test faith..
- So we demolish by divine power strongholds, arguments and pretended outcomes raised up against ...by holding fast to his word through obedience to it...
 - God's Word is truer than anything I may think. It is truer than anything I feel. It is truer than how things appear.
 - **So even though God has already purged me and cleansed me from a lot of things that were "IN" my heart already, there are still many more things to be cleansed from, and are evidenced by what I still "think." Storms bring out the false beliefs and test faith..**

Cast the thoughts out that are not of God, by building a new stronghold based on His words.... then learning to live in it! then our lives change...

3. **Psalm 9:9** *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a **stronghold** in times of trouble.*
4. **Psalm 18:2** *The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my **stronghold**.*
5. **Psalm 18:45** *They all lose heart; they come trembling from their **strongholds**.*
6. **Psalm 27:1** *The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the **stronghold** of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?*
7. **Psalm 37:39** *The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their **stronghold** in time of trouble.*

How to take thoughts captive...I take this thought captive in the name of Jesus..

- **Then we will be Free to live the life God has for us...not entrapped in a prison of our own making!!**

➤ *JN 8:31* To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you **hold** to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, **and the truth** will set you free."

➤ now he puts it into practice what he preaches...and he demonstrates how a man ...should practice his faith...before the next storm hits...

- *******This transformation of thinking teaches us to live full, abundant lives...by facing life forward as opposed to facing life backward...**
- **or looking at all that is past keeps us from embracing that which is in the future....**
- **it is moving from one refuge or stronghold to another...**

JN 10:7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. **He will come in and go out, and find pasture.**

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the **full**.

Then you will be able to test properly assess God's will...and will find it to be good, Pleasing and perfect or holistic. ..it will be a pasture...that you will enter into and go back into life.....your life will enlarge!!

And what will you discover ... that you are a vital part of God's body...And he has made you to operate in this world.....

What does that look like and how do I know I am being transformed...

- **My thinking progressively reflect the way God thinks! and if we think the way God thinks...we become more like God in our actions...**

You see...

- In a world conformed to worrying the follower of Jesus should stand out as calm
- In a world conformed to greed the follower of Jesus stands out as generous
- In a world conformed to depression world the follower of Jesus should be the light of hope
- In a world conformed to fear the follower of Jesus should stand out as fearless
- In an world conformed to instability the follower of Jesus should stand out as a model of stability and steadfastness in the midst of change
- In a world conformed to selfishness the follower of Jesus increasingly lives selfless life
- In a world conformed by pain, follower of Jesus should stand out for their compassion a healing balm
- In a world conformed with confusion, the follower of Jesus increasingly lives by conviction with understanding...
- in world conformed to control others the follower of Jesus increasingly lives under self control..

- **In a world conformed to immorality and corruption... we should stand out as people of integrity and honesty**
- **In a world conformed to hate...we should stand out for our love..**

We are actually visibly, transformed... ..it can be seen

- **Let us be people who are used by God to change that perception... as those perception and blind spots are changed in us ...we will be used of God to reflect him...in every place we find ourselves...**

Learn a little use it a lot...then learn more...

end

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Romans 12:2

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

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How do we apply this truth...stop listening to him..

*² COR 10: ³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take *captive* every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

- **We have been given authority to cast out every thought which tries to rise itself against what God says...**
- **We pull it down...stop listening to it and replace it with the truth...**

And this pulling down false beliefs ...is called in scripture renewing our minds

Romans 12: 2 *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

- **What conforms us...5 things...family home, school, neighborhood, trauma, religion...**
- **Renewed means to make new again....if we do not conform ...continue to be formed by the patterns we all have picked up...and choose to force ourselves to think God thoughts**
- **We will notice that God's Will is good pleasing and perfect..it is an if then thing...**
- **If we do then we get...not before hand...**

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We don't think highly enough of our selves!!! As the Lord would have us!!!

RO 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

- **Do you know what that means?? Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought?**
- **It means you should think HIGHLY of your self as you ought ? but not higher than that...**
- **You should think as highly of yourself as the measure of Faith God has given you!!!**
- **You know what that means??**
- **Faith in what God has said about you and given you should determine how you think of Yourself...**

What Has God said about you and given you??? **And do you believe it??**

We spend too much of our lives missing the point....

Worship has the idea of Kissing on...lavishing our kisses upon...giving our loving allegiance and devotion to...

Instead of loving God with our heart soul mind and strength...we love the creation with our heart, mind, soul and strength...our energy

We are so Distracted by creation, there and there is so much in creation to worship...we neglect the creator !

We are needy creatures and look to meet our inner most needs through other creatures and creation ...when only the creator will fill our emptiness...

We worship the gifts rather than the giver...

We worship our ...Possessions...what we have...what we want...what others have

We worship our... Relationships... who were with...who were not with

We worship our...our fears...obeying them

We worship our...our insecurities... being driven by them

We worship our ...self image...grooming the way we want to be perceived

We worship our...Our Ego's...how we feel...how we look...

We worship our...substances

We worship our...Recreation...toys

We worship our... our Jobs

We worship our...Past...chained to it

We worship our future...agonize over it

We spend to much of our lives missing the point....God Created us top have a love relationship with him....to have the creation love the Creator...and we miss the point...

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

New Living Translation

⁴ We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. ⁵ We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

Hebrews 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Because that is what Christ came to do...

*GAL 5:1 **It is for** freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

- **He has come to set us free...from all the bondages that enslave us...**
- **And so we are Freedom fighters to free others...**
- **And we are to maintain our own freedom...**
- **So we will pursue freedom...for those held in the territory of addiction...**
- **Freedom for those families falling apart...freedom for our community wandering around in the desert of life...**

How will we do this? We will pursue what we are passionate about!!

How do you know what you are passionate about...simple what makes you angry?

1. **I am livid about what addiction does to people...**
2. **I hate the destruction of the family...and seeing hurting children...**
3. **I hate how people are so disconnected from God themselves and each other...**
4. **I hate how marriages are crumbling...**
5. **I despise the devil and all his work...**

I want people to know their value...We can teach people the ways of God

We can heal relationships once tattered...We can bring health to the hurting and hope to the despairing ...

Some ways we will do this ... raising up more leaders!!

Working to reach at risk youth...through the local schools, and panels in the local adolescent rehabs...

Starting life groups to connect people...

Focused teaching...starting with prayer...and parenting and marriage classes on Sunday morning before church...

We are taking territory this year!!! Because it is our call...because we are warriors itching to engage the enemy!!

Because I believe who God says we are!! I believe we can do what he says we can!!

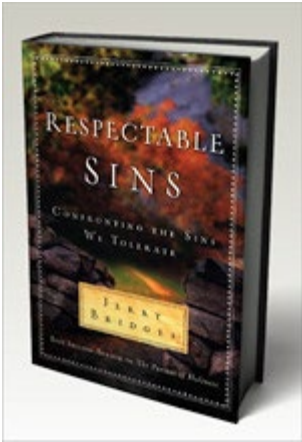
- **We must Press in...into our own areas of fear and reluctance and disobedience..**
- **We must Persevere...in walking in the truth**

➤ **We must Pursue!!...our passions into new territory...**

➤ [Respectable Sins](#)

➤ September 9, 2008 @ 6:55 AM | Posted By: [Tim Challies](#)

Tolle Lege: Take Up and Read by Keith A. Mathison



Have you ever found yourself so caught up and concerned with the rampant sinfulness of our culture that you forget about the subtle sins in your own heart? If so, Jerry Bridges has written a book for you. [Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate](#) (NavPress, 2007) takes aim at the sins many Christians consciously or unconsciously consider "acceptable" behavior. For those who take the lordship of Jesus Christ seriously and seek to be like Him, this book is required reading.

The first chapters of the book set the stage by describing the true nature of sin as God sees it. Tragically, the idea of sin has disappeared in many churches, and where the concept remains, it is sometimes deflected. In other words, we readily condemn those outside of the church for flagrant sins, all the while silently condoning our own sins such as gossip, envy, and discontentment. We do not realize that sin, all sin, is a malignant spiritual cancer that, left unchecked, will destroy us and corrupt those around us.

Bridges, however, does not leave it at this. He does not stop with the bad news. He places his discussion of sin in the context of the Gospel of Christ -- the only remedy for sin. He reminds us that the reason Christ died on the cross was in order to atone for the sins of His people. In order to deal effectively with sin, whether flagrant or "respectable," Christians need to preach this Gospel to themselves every day. Bridges also reminds us that in order to deal with sin, we must depend on the Holy Spirit. This does not mean taking a quietistic "let go and let God" approach, because our action is still required, but our action apart from the work of the Holy Spirit will be ineffective.

After dealing with these necessary introductory matters, Bridges moves to a chapter-by-chapter analysis of "respectable sins." Bridges considers the root sin to be ungodliness: "living one's everyday life with little or no thought of God, or of God's will, or of God's glory, or of one's dependence on God." Christians often live in this way,

as if God is essentially irrelevant in their day-to-day lives. Bridges turns next to the common sins of anxiety and worry. Both are sin because both betray a basic lack of trust in God.

Another sin that is widespread among Christians is the sin of discontentment, which arises from unchanging circumstances that we can do nothing about. Unthankfulness is also persistent among Christians, who sometimes do not realize how serious a sin it is. Bridges suggests that one reason for the decadence of our culture may be the judgment of God for our failure to honor and thank Him. An entire chapter is devoted to the sin of pride. Bridges focuses on four specific kinds of pride: moral self-righteousness, theological self-righteousness, pride of achievement, and the pride of an independent spirit. He then examines the sin of selfishness, which can also manifest itself in different ways. We can be selfish about our interests in conversation, about money, about time, and we can demonstrate selfishness by simply being inconsiderate.

Self-control, as Bridges explains, is "a governance or prudent control of one's desires, cravings, impulses, emotions, and passions." Lack of self-control is another common sin among Christians. Bridges offers as examples our lack of self control in regard to food, tempers, personal finances, and activities such as watching television. Bridges then looks at those sins closely related to anger, sins such as irritability, resentment, and bitterness. Sadly, these sins are often directed at those whom we should love the most, including our spouses and our children.

The final chapters deal with the "respectable sins" of judgmentalism, envy, gossip, slander, lying, and worldliness. Gossip is among the most prevalent "respectable sins" while at the same time being among the most destructive. Worldliness may require definition. It may be defined as "being attached to, engrossed in, or preoccupied with the things of this temporal life." Bridges deals with three types of worldliness: a worldly attitude toward money, vicarious immorality, and idolatry of the heart.

A word of warning is required when reading this book. If while reading you catch yourself thinking, "I really wish so-and-so would read this book," then it is especially for you. We are all guilty of at least some of these sins some of the time. We all need reminding that every time we sin, we despise God (2 Sam. 12:9-10). Most of all, we all need reminding that Jesus died on the cross that all of our sins might be forgiven.

But to come back to our point: We must put on holiness. It is not enough to know how it is done, it must *be* done. It is not enough to know that it must be done, we must *do* it. Though I have all knowledge to understand all mysteries, and have not love, it profits me nothing. Dr. A. H. Strong, in his *Systematic Theology*, quotes Dr. Hastings, who told of an occasion when the great French preacher Bourdaloue was probing the conscience of Louis XIV, applying to him the words of St. Paul and intending to paraphrase them: "For the good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find two men in me . . ." The king interrupted the great preacher with the memorable exclamation, "Ah, these two men, I know them well!" To which Bourdaloue answered, "It is already something to know them, Sire; but it is not enough--one of the two must perish!"

But how do we actually put on these virtues which make for Christian perfection? How do we put them forth? How do we exhibit them so that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven? Two things are called for: meditation and exercise.

By meditation we practice the presence of Christ. If we would run with patience the race that is set before us, we must look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. And if we would look to Jesus we must search His Word (John 5:39). We are transformed by the renewing of our minds, by letting the mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus. We know how association with great and good persons has a profound effect on us. Gamaliel Bradford, the celebrated biographer, said that he "lived" with Robert E. Lee for many years and it made him a better man. He also "lived" with Mark Twain for years and it made him a worse man.

When Saint-Gaudens was given the job of making a statue of Phillips Brooks, he studied the man carefully. The famous sculptor came to realize that in order to understand Brooks, he had to understand Brooks' Christ. So he read the gospels, "lived" with Christ, and at last he gave his life to Christ.

Thomas Chalmers spoke of the expulsive power of a new affection; it also has a propulsive power. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). So let us practice the presence of God.

And then exercise! How do we put on virtues? By taking every occasion to exercise them. Strain day after day upon a particular muscle and it will begin to swell and rise above the flesh. You do not create the muscle by this effort, but you stimulate and strengthen it. There is too much Christian character lying dormant and latent because there is so much neglect of self-culture in the church.

Church officers and other leaders have a big job. When I pastored, we never held a retreat in our church without some officer learning for the first time how really big his job was, and wanting to resign from it! Those were literal "retreats." But that is not the purpose of a "retreat"; it is rather merely drawing back to see the job so that we may advance to it. You have the gift for your respective ministries. Just exercise it, and you will know that you have it.

The same applies to all Christians. Develop some spiritual muscle. You who are holy, grow in holiness; you who are perfect, "be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Philippians 3:13-14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If the Apostle Paul needed spiritual exercise, do you, dear reader, not need it?