

Living the Christian Life Successfully series!

A Bible, History, Faith, and Mission Course for New Adventist Believers

Lesson 6—The forgiveness of God and His Sanctifying Plan

It is very true that God has a high standard for us to reach. What is God's higher standard and calling for us? Is it really possible to attain through Christ? How does God help me to get there? What is my part? And, what if I have sinned (since I was baptized)? Maybe I "knew better." Will God now throw me away? What will happen to me? How can I be an overcomer through Jesus? How will Christ save me, and what is the work He desires to do in my life? Let's find out the answers to these important questions as we study this practical lesson from the Bible together...

1. **What does Jesus want to do in our lives by His Spirit working within us? (Titus 2:11-14)**
2. **What is the high calling of Jesus for our lives? (Matthew 5:46-48)**
3. **Is it truly possible for Jesus to keep us from falling in sin? (Jude 1:24; Philippians 4:13)**
4. **Can we possibly reach God's standard of purity and holiness without Jesus? (John 15:4,5)**
5. **What does Jesus say that we should daily pray for? (Matthew 6:11-13)** *Note: Not only must we pray for Christ's forgiveness of sin, and a heart to be forgiving towards others, but we must also pray that Christ would deliver us "from sin" (see also Matthew 1:21). "Lead us not into _____, but _____ us from evil" (v.13). We can and should have victories through prayer before the temptation ever comes along our way. Pray that God will give you the strength to escape from temptation before it ever gets placed before your face. God will deliver you and give you the strength you need. For sure! (See also 1 Corinthians 10:13).*
6. **Does Jesus promise that we'll be filled with His righteousness if we earnestly desire and seek it through Him? (Matthew 5:6)**
7. **What is our part in escaping temptation? Do we have a choice or a part to play? (James 4:7,8; 1:12)** *"Blessed is the man who _____ temptation...." (1:12). We do have the power of choice and we must also put forth our earnest effort in resisting temptation. God never takes away our will power; we are free to choose! The devil cannot take away your will power either—he is not allowed to. We must therefore place our will and efforts in harmony with God's. Pray for Christ's strength to overcome. Without Christ we are helpless, but with Jesus Christ, all things may be done. There is "a way of escape" through Jesus Christ! There have been many who've felt helpless to overcome the clutches of sinful habits in their lives, but through the power of Jesus Christ and His righteous Holy Spirit they have found deliverance. You, like them, can, must, and will find deliverance through Jesus Christ if you will seek Him with all your heart, and faithfully follow His Holy principles for deliverance (See Romans 7:15-24, the struggle; v.25, 8:1-14, the victory; three laws are presented here in Romans: 1. God's Holy Law which is to be the righteous law of our mind. 2. The law of sin*

and death which we struggle against. 3. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which sets us free from #2 “the law of sin and death” (8:2-4). Christ came to set us free from sin’s destructive power in our lives, and He surely will (John 8:31-36). “Self control” is the fruit of God’s Spirit. Galatians 5:23; We may overcome by His Spirit. We are not prisoners to the flesh, 8:12-14).

8. **Several other principles to consider when seeking to overcome sinful temptations:**

- a. **Do not make a provision for the sins of the flesh to happen. Rather, fill yourself with Christ (Romans 13:14).** Don’t put yourself in harm’s way! If you know that a temptation to sin exists somewhere in an area that you might be weak, then do not go there. Don’t go near the bottle if you’re a recovering alcoholic. Don’t go in harm’s way! Stay as far away from the edge as you can so that you won’t fall off. Don’t play around with temptations and think you’re clever enough to approach the edge without going over. This is foolish thinking that can lead you into a disaster! None is so strong as to play with the devil and not be caught. “Many strong men have been slain by her” (Proverbs 7:26). The Bible says, “...do not go near the door” of temptation (Proverbs 5:8). We should avoid even the “appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- b. **Guard the thoughts and the avenues to your soul. At the first approach of sinful thoughts, pray for the deliverance of Jesus!!** Christ, with your willful cooperation, must retrain your mind to think holy thoughts, and not impure or sinful thoughts. Sinful thoughts lead you into sin! Sin has been in your mind. You must have the purity of heart and mind that Christ desires for you. Therefore, pray earnestly for this at the very first approach of a sinful or impure thought! Do not allow sinful thoughts to be suggested or introduced into your mind through the avenues of the soul. Protect yourself and feed yourself with the righteous words of God. The righteous, purifying word of God will be a salvation to your soul. Let your mind dwell on pure and holy themes. (See John 17:17; Psalm 119:4,9-11; Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Isaiah 33:14,15; Matthew 5:8; James 1:13-15; Jeremiah 13:23—we must through Christ overcome those sinful tendencies or bad habits we’ve been so used to). At the first approach of impurity we should turn our eyes away and pray. Don’t let impure suggestions take hold of you (Job 31:1).

9. **What if I have made terrible mistakes and perhaps, “I knew better”? Will God throw me away?**

(Or is there still forgiveness to be found from God?) (1 John 2:1,2; 1 John 1:9)

- a. *How many times can God forgive me? Does God forgive like men do? (Matthew 8:21,22; 12:31, “all manner of sin” will be forgiven men).*
- b. **Even if our sin is “red like scarlet” and very obvious, yet the Lord will take it away, wash, and cleanse us of our evil doings if we’ll seek Him (Isaiah 1:16-18).** *The Lord our God “delights in mercy” and He will remove our sins entirely from us (Psalm 103:10-14; Micah 7:18,19). Jesus desires that none should perish but that all should come to repentance. He loved us when we were yet in sin. Does He love you any less now? Certainly not! (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:8). He will continue reaching out for you!*
- c. *Adam, Eve, David, and Peter all “knew better.” They should not have sinned. They committed terrible sins, but in His great tender mercy and love, God provided His bountiful forgiveness for them. These people realized their sin and sought the Lord again. God forgave them all and later used them for His service in powerful ways! (Genesis 3:11,12; Psalm 51; Luke 22:31-34; Psalm 25:7).*
- d. *He will “be merciful to” our unrighteousness (Hebrews 8:12; 2:17; 4:14-16; Ezekiel 11:19-21). Though we may have fallen seven times, we must yet get up, and walk in the way of holiness, seeking Christ’s forgiveness (Proverbs 24:16; Philippians 3:13,14).*

Will you choose to seek righteousness, continually praying for victories in Christ, and advancing in His pathway to holiness? _____ Will you choose to trust in the power of Christ’s forgiveness, and to continue seeking God’s blessed design for your life? _____