

OVERCOMING LUSTS

“Where do wars and fights [come] from among you? Do [they] not [come] from your [desires for] pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend [it] on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:1-4 NKJV)

“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 2:16-17 NKJV)

The secular marketplace is a stage where greed and hatred are often played out. Men without Christ have only a few things for which to live. Position and power usually top their lists.

Believers must not be caught up in this madness. It can be difficult to avoid sometimes because our flesh is not redeemed. However, understanding where these motives originate helps. The 1 John passage tells us that our sins originate from the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Scripture tells us with what to battle these things. First, the flesh is opposed by the Spirit.

“[There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did] by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those [who live] according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded [is] death, but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:1-9 NKJV)

The key in this Romans passage is to set your mind on the things of the Spirit. The believer can simply make a choice to discipline his life. If you will give yourself to read the Scriptures and pray, you will set your mind on the things of the Spirit. Now notice if you do not do this, you put yourself in peril. To be carnally minded is death. Therefore, don't just shrug this admonition off. This is serious.

Second, you can deal with the eyes by putting on blinders so to speak. They put blinders on horses so they won't get distracted by things on either side of them. This gives them a singular focus. “Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.” (Proverbs 4:25-26 NKJV)

Again, this is a discipline. You must decide beforehand not to let your eyes to wander. Put the blinders on before you leave the house. Do that through prayer and rehearsal. Ask, what will you do if you notice

you're failing? I would suggest that you immediately begin to pray. You will be surprised by how quickly the Lord will help you to overcome all sins if you keep a short confession list.

Thirdly, the pride of life may also be dwelt with by self-discipline. What is the opposite of pride? Is it not humility? James gives some good advice for this, too.

"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to [your] elders. Yes, all of [you] be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:5-7 NKJV)

Submit to one another. How is this done? It is done by casting all your care upon Him. Humility requires that all your feelings be given to God. The Scriptures are clear if you resist authority, you are resisting God (Rom 13:2).

There are some tools to help you deal with lusts. Of course, the most important issue is your desire. Remember James said that the wars come from your desires for pleasure [above]. If you are not hungering and thirsting for righteousness, then maybe you need to do a deeper examination. He has told us "Blessed [are] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Be filled with His Spirit today. Amen.