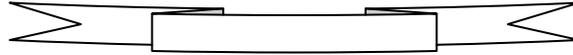


So Great Salvation Study Guide

Teaching Series Part 4 – Temptation and Sin

By Paris Reidhead*

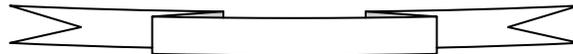
Pastor Reidhead set up this Bible Study Guide to accompany the “So Great Salvation - Study Guide I”. Below are his instructions on how to administer this study guide and questions.



Series I of “So Great Salvation” is composed of six sermons with eight correlating lessons. At the end of each chapter there are study questions. You will find the answers to these questions by carefully listening to the sermon and thoughtfully and prayerfully reading the text.

It is suggested that you first answer the questions of each chapter on a piece of notebook paper; then reread the chapter and listen again to the sermon to satisfy yourself that your answers are correct in relation to the material covered.

Then transfer your answers onto the study question sheet at the end of each chapter. Your carefully written answers will now become a valuable part of the study course of “So Great Salvation.”



TEMPTATION, SIN, BROKENNESS AND CLEANSING

I. WHAT IS TEMPTATION?

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (Jam. 1:12-14).

We need to consider what we carried with us when we came into the Christian life. You had the same body after you were born again. One day we are to receive a glorified body like unto His own body of glory. However, you didn't receive it at that time. If you had a scar, you still have that old scar. You still have the same body with which you came to Christ.

What else came with you into the Christian life? What about your appetites, your urges, your propensities?

When God made man He gave him an appetite for food, because that's how he was to be sustained; an appetite for knowledge, because that's how he would learn, line upon line, precept upon precept; an appetite for status, because he was to rule over God's creation; an appetite for pleasure, because God had provided so many marvelous things for the one He had made.

Have you ever thought about it? Look at how He painted the sunrise in the morning and the sunset at night. He didn't have to do that. He could have made everything drab gray. He gave us all those marvelous colors and the ability to recognize and enjoy them.

Have you given much thought to the watermelon? We don't need it for nourishment; it's not indispensable for vitamins. God just gave it to us; gave us the ability to enjoy the colors, the green and the red and the white, and the seeds, the taste and the odor of it.

God gave us an appetite for pleasure, and then He just threw in so many extra things for us to enjoy.

God gave us an appetite for sex because by this means He was to increase earth's family. And He looked at the being that He had made, with all these appetites and urges, and what did He say? "It is good." There is nothing wrong with the appetites. And He gave adequate ways by which they could all be supplied and satisfied within His will, to the best interest of Himself and others. And then He gave prohibitions. He established laws and rules.

When we repented of our sin and savingly received the Lord Jesus Christ, we were born of the Spirit of God, with the witness of the Holy Ghost that we had been born again, with joy and peace in believing. When we came into the Christian life, what did we bring? We brought an appetite for food, for knowledge, for pleasure, for status, for security, and for sex. All the appetites that we'd had, we carried right with us. What else did we bring with us? We brought all of the learned ways of response; those responses and patterns that we had developed in our days without Christ.

Here you are. You've been born of God. Your genuine and sincere purpose is to please God. But what did you carry with you into the Christian life? You carried appetites, and habits and ways of response. Now what are you going to encounter? You are going to encounter temptation.

What is temptation? "Temptation is the proposition, presented to the mind or the intellect, to satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden way." Now temptation isn't sin. Our Lord Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. But that leads us to sin, doesn't it?

II. WHAT IS SIN?

What's the definition for sin? "Sin is the decision of the will to gratify a good appetite in a bad way." It is not the gratifying of it; it's the DECISION to do so.

He that hates his brother (hatred is the intention to hurt and harm) is already a murdered. He who has the intention to commit adultery, is already guilty of it. Sin is the decision of the will to do something. The opportunity may not yet have been presented, but the decision constitutes the essence of sin. Sin is the decision to gratify a good appetite in a bad way.

III. HOW TEMPTATION OPERATES

Now what takes place? Here you are, a new Christian, born again, and you are tempted. Maybe it has to do with some trait of your personality, because you carry it as a part of your baggage from the old life to the new. You didn't like criticism. When anyone criticized you, you gave them "what for". You're now a Christian, and someone comes along and says something critical to you, and you turn and flare up. Now, that's part of the thing for which you repented. You told God that you were going to please Him, and now you have displeased Him. You have responded as you did habitually; you have done the thing that you promise God that you would never do.

There is a difference between sin in the life of a believer, and some-one who is a spurious counterfeit professor, although the results may be equally far-reaching and devastating. The child of God did something which he hated; he was overtaken in a fault, led aside by his appetites.

Now the Scripture is very practical, very direct and realistic. It says, "If we say we have no sin, we're liars." And God wants us to be honest with Him. God recognized that this was going to happen. He realized that we were back in the same world as babes in Christ. Now we have done or said something that grieved God. We have grieved ourselves. Now we have to face reality. What happens when a child of God sins?

I've heard people, say, "Well, I'll lose my reward." You're going to lose a lot more than your reward. You'd better face that. A lot will happen to you between now and reward time. The Word is very explicit about that takes place when a child of God sins.

IV. FIVE-FOLD EFFECT OF SIN IN A BELIEVER

The first thing that happens is fellowship with God is broken, interrupted. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I Joh. 1:7). Then John says that if

we walk in darkness that fellowship is broken. If we SAY we are walking in the light, we lie and do not the truth. Fellowship with God is interrupted when a child of God sins.

If we've never had the witness of the Spirit and joy and peace in believing we're never going to know whether or not fellowship was interrupted, because we've never had fellowship in the first place. Do you see why it is so important that people should start out right? They should understand that it is the Spirit of God who tells them that they have joy and peace in believing; that's their spiritual nervous system, and if they don't have that, they are like a leper who can put his hand into the fire and never flinch, because the nerves are dead.

Now the second thing that happens when a child of God sins is this, prayers are not answered. In Psalm 66:18, David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" If I have decided to do it and haven't had an opportunity, then God won't hear me. Prayer goes unanswered. Peter cautioned husbands and wives to dwell together in peace so that their prayers wouldn't be hindered. How many families have had fussing and wondered why their children got torn up by the adversary, why their prayers for them weren't answered? He said that if we regard iniquity in our heart He won't hear us.

A third thing that happens when a child of God sins is this: God won't use him. Oh, he may go on using God and the people may never know the difference, but God won't use him, or her, because the Scripture says, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52:11).

F.B. Meyer illustrated it. In his wonderful little book, "The Christ Life or the Self Life" he told how he bought one of the first fountain pens ever sold in England. Previously he had carried a little bottle of ink, a blotter and a pen with some steel nibs. Now here was a modern pen that had the ink in it, He thought that was great. The only problem was that this first fountain pen let a little ink out of the point, but it leaked everywhere else too. When Dr. Meyer had finished writing, he had fingers that were blue up to the second knuckle.

He decided the first pen wasn't very satisfactory, so when another model came on the market, he bought it. He still kept the first pen out of nostalgia, but he put it in the back of his desk drawer. He said that when he got ready to go on a trip (by this time he had quite a few pens) he'd reach in the drawer to select the pens to take with him for his writing, and he would feel that first pen. Instead of taking it, he'd nudge it further back in the drawer.

He said, "If that little pen could talk, it might say something like this" "I wonder what has happened, once I always went with him wherever he went. Once I knew his thoughts before others; once he used me to communicate with people, now I'm still in his drawer, but he doesn't use me. I wonder why."

And F.B. Meyer said, "Oh, little pen. I can't use you because every time I use you, you get me dirty."

Listen! God never uses the life that gets Him dirty.

The fourth thing we find in Ephesians 4:27, "Neither give place to the devil" Do you know why the Scripture says, "Give no place to the devil"? The reason is because if you give place to the devil, he will take it.

Now how do you give place to the devil? The Word is so clear. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." It is like living inside a yard with a high board fence. The dogs outside can't get in as long as the fence is tight. The angel of the Lord makes a fence around the believer, his family and loved ones and the work and the ministry. But if we give place to the devil, it's as though we went to that high board and deliberately kicked until we got a board loose. It will swing on the upper nail, but it is loose at the bottom, and the devil's dogs go sniffing around. When they find that loose board, they push and push it with their muzzles, and they get inside. They tear up everything.

Why? The angel of the Lord "encampeth round about them that fear Him." But the fear of the Lord is to hate evil, and when we come to the place that we don't hate evil, then we've given place to the devil. And when we tolerate in our lives that which grieves God, we can be certain that the devil's dogs are going to sneak in and tear up everything that is precious.

These are four results of sin in the life of the believer. Do you still think there is nothing to worry about except you might lose your reward? It sounds to me like you're in trouble. You're in trouble already if you permit unconfessed and unforsaken sin in your lives.

As though four weren't enough, there's a fifth thing that happens if we permit sin in our lives, and this ought to tilt the balance if any questions remain. If we permit sin in our lives, we fall into the chastening hands of God. We have been told in the Scripture that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. I have a few scars that I could show you that confirm that.

There is something interesting. I've heard people say, "You know, I know some Christians living in sin and they're not being chastened, or dealt with by the Lord." (See Hebrews 12:5-8)

No, you don't. All you know is that some professors of faith in Christ are getting by with it, but here's the secret. God never lays a finger on the devil's family, but He chastens every child and scourges every son. Why? Because with His own children this is all the hell they are ever going to know, and when they die, it is going to be heaven forever. But with the devil's family, this is all the heaven they are ever going to have, and when they die it will be hell forever. And if they've traded their soul for a message of pottage, God doesn't go around throwing gravel in it to make their teeth grit on it. Because that is what they want.

If you find somebody living in sin and not being chastened by the Lord, all you have found is someone that God says, "He's not mine; he's not born into my family". Chastening isn't pleasant, but I'll tell you it is a frightening thing to have God tell you that you aren't His, to disown you.

These are the five effects of sin in the life of a Christian. What are we going to do about it?

V. HOW THE BELIEVER MUST DEAL WITH SIN

I want you to turn to John 15:3, to look at a verse that is just wonderful. It is God's prescription for the problem that we are discussing. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." CLEAN THROUGH THE WORD.

To what does He refer? I think He is referring to the laver in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Inside the gate was the altar of burnt offering. Beyond was the tabernacle with the holy place and the holiest of all, but between the altar of burnt offering and the holy place was the laver. We don't know how big it was. There were no dimensions given. We only know it was big enough for all the needs of all God's children. We know a little about how it was made. It was brass. The inside was flat and lined with mirrors. It was filled with water.

Now it had a two-fold function. First, it was to show the Levites and the priests where the soot and dirt was on their faces. Secondly, it was to provide the means whereby they could wash the dirt off their faces.

The Lord Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word ..." So we expect the word to have a two-fold function, to be a mirror to the soul to reveal that which is in us that grieves God, and to show us how to deal with what we have discovered.

Let's look first as to how we use the Word as the mirror to our hearts.

"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Pro. 6:16-19).

Remember we are talking about the Word as a mirror to our hearts; it's like an x-ray machine which can look deep within. You can know full well if you have permitted in your life anything that God hates. The Spirit of God never wants to depress us; He wants only to cleanse us. The Spirit of God focuses on the things that are in your life now.

God hates pride ... racial pride, facial pride, financial pride, and educational pride. That which He loathes most is religious pride, the kind that wraps around a person and says, "Thank God, I am not like others are." He hates a proud look.

And He hates a lying tongue, misrepresentation and deception in speech. And hands that shed innocent blood ... the intention to hurt somebody. And a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations (immorality on the mental level) feet that be swift in running to mischief (gossiping and tale bearing, back biting) a false witness that speaketh lies (misrepresenting the facts) and the one that He abominates among all others is he that soweth discord among brethren. Oh, that God could cure the body of Christ of that.

VI. "CLEANSED FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS"

Here's the mirror. Look in it.

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:29-32).

Did you know that God puts murder right alongside of envy and argumentativeness? Whispers and backbiters are right next to haters of God. You'd think God would have a little better discernment than to put the "white" ones next to the "black" ones. But He didn't. He put them all together ... despiteful, proud, boasters, inventor of evil things, disobedient to parents. That's what God used to show me how lost I was.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

We are to come daily to the mirror of the Word, to permit the Spirit of God to speak to our hearts and reveal from the Word that which God has seen which we must deal with.

How long has it been since you have been to the mirror of the Word and you have opened your heart to the Spirit of God to search you by means of the Word? "Now ye are clean through the Word ..."

Once we have discovered what it is that God is dealing with, what must we do? Again go to the Word; it is so explicit.

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:32-33).

What does it mean to judge yourself? You have just gone to the mirror and have seen yourself as you are. Now you become both the judge behind the desk and the culprit in front of the desk. You read, as it were, the law to you, and you say, "Look, according to the Word of God, this is what you did", and the "you" before the desk admits to guilt ... "Yes, I did it." You judge yourself. That's the first thing.

Then the second thing the Scripture says is "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55: 7).

When the judge says, "What are you going to do about sin in your life?" you will respond, "I'm through with it forever. I'm forsaking it."

All right, you've judged yourself and have forsaken your wicked ways. What does the Scripture say you are to do?

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I Joh. 1:9).

Now, I want to tell you what confession ISN'T. Confession isn't touching one knee lightly to the floor before falling into bed, exhausted, and saying, "Dear Lord, if I have done anything wrong today, please forgive." To confess means to say with God what He says, or to call the sin by name. Confession has to be personal.

When I was a boy we lived on a 360 acre farm in Anoka County, Minnesota. This was in 1933. Across the road from our house was 60 acres of sand. It was a year of drought. The drought was so bad that we traded farms every weekend. Our farm would blow away and somebody else's would blow in. The problem was that we always got sand; we never got any decent soil. I

figured that in one of those trades we ought to get something worthwhile, but we never did. There was a four-strand barbwire fence around one of our fields. The sand dunes were so high that the cows could walk over it and never trip.

My father was trying to grow corn. It was so hot that we tried to cultivate the fields in the cool of the day, so as to spare the horses. We got up at 2:30 in the morning. I would harness my team in the barn by touch; I didn't even need a lantern. Before daylight I would hitch old Granny and Topsy to the cultivator, fill my two quart mason jar with water at the pump, and be out in the field at dawn. As soon as I could spy the little green corn plants, I would start down that field. At six o'clock we came in, and I milked six cows, as did my father and the hired man. Then we went in to breakfast. We tried to get all that done and be back in the field by 7:00 o'clock.

It was 8:30 this day. My team was so tired that I had left them untied standing beside the barn in the shade. They weren't going anywhere. I took my water jars to the pump to refill them before returning to the field. Just then, my mother came out of the kitchen and called to me, "Oh, Sonny, I'm glad to see you. I have two little errands I would like to have you do."

Now remember. I was thirteen. I had been up every working day at 2:30 A.M. and had been cultivating along with the other two men ... and now my mother wanted some errands done. I did something that I hope you don't know anything about. I sassed my mother.

She drew back shocked, and she spoke again; and I sassed her again. And she spoke a third time, and I said something cutting the third time. You know what she did? She looked at me sadly and said, "Sonny, I thought you were a Christian."

And she turned and walked back into the house. I went to the pump, filled with bravado, and tried to fill my water jar. I pushed once on the pump handle, and then set the water jar down. I went out to the barn, walked down between the mangers, climbed up the ladder to the mow and threw myself down into a valley in the hay, and sobbed like a baby. I had just been born of God about six weeks earlier at the Old Red Rock holiness camp meeting. I had wanted to please God, and I had told Him that I would obey Him. The thing that He had used to show me that I was lost was that I had dishonored and disobeyed my parents. And now I had spoken sharply to my mother. After a while I stopped sobbing. Into my consciousness came a song which we had sung at camp meeting. I could almost hear it.

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

I confessed my sin over and over again. God spoke forgiveness to my heart. I knew that the blood of Jesus had cleansed me. I got up, climbed down from the mow, went into the house and asked my mother to forgive me. I did the errands cheerfully. I filled my water jar at the pump, went back to my standing team ... a wiser young man than ever before, because I realized that I had carried a traitor into the Christian life that would betray me.

Who was that traitor? Me ... me.

What happens when we are tempted and we sin? We have to deal with it. This is how He prescribed: "Now ye are clean through the Word ..." Come daily to the Word. Whenever there is disobedience, we have to judge it, to forsake it, and confess it, to know the cleansing of the precious blood. We are to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

12. What does the Word say people who do the things described in the second reference “deserve”?

13. What is the first thing one does when one becomes aware of sin in their life?

a. What is the reference?

b. Write the verse.

14. What is the second step toward cleansing?

15. What is the meaning of the word confession? Explain.

* Reference such as: Original Message Delivered at Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, MN on Thursday Evening, June 11, 1987 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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