

Fighting The Foe Until Victory Is Won

1. Remain vigilant so as to guard against any thought, desire, fear, or activity which weakens your resolve to do what you know is right or strengthens your desire to do what you know is wrong.
2. Nurture a healthy fear of God so that when your love for God or your love for others or your hunger for righteousness stops motivating you, your fear of God will be there to push you to persevere in working God's sanctification method and continue pursuing growth in godliness.
3. When temptation is knocking at your door, resist by quoting your chosen scripture. Then remind yourself why this sin is wrong, what the destructive consequences are of doing it, and the wisdom and benefits of doing what is godly. Then tell God you are counting on His help as you redirect your thoughts and actions away from the temptation and toward remaining faithful to doing what you know is right. Repeat as often as necessary.
4. If you give in to temptation or simply choose to do what you are trying to put off, take the appropriate action as soon as possible - confession, making things right with whomever you sinned against, reviewing why you want to change, affirming to God your determination to change, and returning to a serious, intentional, persistent pursuit of godliness.
5. As your understanding increases of how deeply the sin is rooted within you, how much you have treasured the (so-called) benefits of the sin, and how challenging and seemingly unending (at first) the battle is to put off your sin and replace it with godliness, increase your "help me" and "teach me" prayers for wisdom, for inward spiritual strength, for a heartfelt hatred of your sin, for clarity in how and when you are setting yourself up to give in when tempted, for a growing desire to love God supremely, for an increased longing to be holy as God is holy, and for a pure heart.
6. Look for an accountability partner who will ask the tough questions, tell you the truth, and call you back to godliness - especially in those times when you would rather feed your flesh, give way to self-pity, take a vacation from the hard work of pursuing godliness, or give up.
7. As much as it depends on you, do not give up. Fight the good fight. Run with endurance. Persevere to the end! An established pattern of sin gets established because you have practiced it for a long time. It will take time to kill it off and replace it with godliness. So plan on the probability that it will take three months to a year or more to gain the kind of victory whereby you are a new creature in Christ Jesus in that area of your life. The goal is to get to the place where all desire is gone for the old way and godliness has become your natural, easy choice.
8. Throughout the battle and until victory is won, be vigilant in guarding against wrong thinking and feeling, against fleshly desires that feed the sin, against self-pity or anger that make it easy to justify the sin, and against temptation. For a time after victory is won, you will need to continue being vigilant in relation to the sin just defeated so as to prevent it from returning.
9. When victory has been won or nearly won in one area of sin, start the process again on another sinful behavior, thought pattern, fleshly desire, or fear. However, remain vigilant against past defeated sins until you no longer have any desire to do them.