

## Winning the Battle Inside You

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Do you ever feel exhausted—not from stressful situations around you, but by what’s happening inside you? The apostle Paul did! He said, *“So you see how it is: my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh, what a terrible predicament I’m in!”* (Romans 7:25 TLB). In the original Greek, that phrase “terrible predicament” refers to the exhaustion of hard work—when you are worn out after an intense battle, frustrated, and maybe even feel like a failure. It’s the picture of a defeated, struggling, exhausted Christian.

Do you ever feel spiritually defeated? If so, there’s good news. God has provided ways for you to win the battle inside of you and live a victorious life. Here are three steps you can take:

### 1. Deepen your understanding of Christ.

You already know Christ—but Jesus doesn’t want to be just a resident in your life; he wants to be president. He doesn’t want to just take up space; he wants to be in charge. Romans 7:24-25 says, *“Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord”* (NLT). There is no program or philosophy or book that will free you. Only Jesus will free you.

### 2. Detect and disarm the lie you’re believing.

Satan messes up your life by suggesting lies to you or getting you to lie to yourself. The Bible says, *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8 NIV). But every time you expose and challenge a lie, you’re going to be set free more and more. As Jesus said, *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* (John 8:32 NIV).

### 3. Declare your struggle to someone else.

Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. To be forgiven, you just need to admit your sin to God. But to be changed and start living differently, you need to admit your sin—or the lie you’ve been believing—to someone who will love you, pray for you, and hold you accountable. James 5:16 says, *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, great things happen”* (NCV).

Through each step, you have to remember one thing: You can’t win the battle inside yourself on your own; you have to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says this: *“Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves”* (NLT). God does things in and for you that you could never do on your own!

# 6 Things to Do When You Feel Like Giving Up

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Have you ever felt discouraged by the state of your finances, a relationship, your job, or other circumstances in your life? If so, Hebrews 12 is full of encouragement for you. In fact, in it, Paul shares six powerful keys to help you persevere when you feel like giving up:

## 1. Remember heaven is watching you.

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith . . .”* (Hebrews 12:1 NLT). Don’t give up! Christians who have gone before you are cheering you on.

## 2. Eliminate what doesn’t matter.

*“Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up”* (Hebrews 12:1 NLT). To run the race God has for you, you have to get rid of the bad things in your life—and even some good things that hold you back.

## 3. Run the race God has for you, not the race other people have for you.

*“Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us”* (Hebrews 12:1 NLT). God put you on earth to be you—not somebody else—and he has his own plan that’s just for you.

## 4. Focus on Jesus, not your circumstances.

*“We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2 NLT). In other words, focus on the Savior, not the situation; to endure the unendurable, you have to keep your eyes on the invisible.

## 5. Minimize the pain and maximize the profit.

*“Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame”* (Hebrews 12:2 NLT). Most things worth doing in life come with short-term pain or difficulty; you have to look past the short-term pain to the long-term rewards.

## 6. Remember what Jesus did for you.

*“Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won’t become weary and give up”* (Hebrews 12:3 NLT). Jesus suffered criticism, cruelty, and death so that we could be forgiven and spend eternity in heaven.

It’s easy to trust God when things are going great. The real test of faith is when life stinks. Will you trust God and do the right thing, even when you don’t feel like it? Will you endure to the finish line? Be encouraged by these verses like: *“So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong”* (Hebrews 12:12-13 NLT).