

PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

HOW TO DEAL WITH TEMPTATION AND SIN

by Jim Buller

If we are surrendered to the Holy Spirit, and abiding in Jesus we will not sin. The Holy Spirit is not going to lead us into sin, nor can Satan force us to transgress while we are kept by God's power. Therefore, the *only* thing the devil can do is somehow influence us to *choose* to step away from God. All too often he is successful, and we frequently find ourselves “flat on our face” wondering, “How did that happen?”

But let's take a closer look at this situation. Notice the following quotation from *The Ministry of Healing*, page 509. “Short and decisive are the steps that lead men down from high and holy ground to a low level.” Before we actually commit a sin, there are definite “steps” that we take away from God. Note also that the word “steps” in this quotation is plural, so there are more than just one. For example, below is a quotation from *Spiritual Gifts Volume One*, pages 20-21. Look at the “steps” Eve took before she ate the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

“I saw that the holy angels often visited the garden, and gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment, and also taught them concerning the rebellion of Satan and his fall. The angels warned them of Satan, and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels enjoined upon them to closely follow the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. And if they were obedient, this fallen foe could have no power over them.

“Satan commenced his work with Eve, to cause her to disobey. She first erred in wandering from her husband, next, in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said —In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. She thought, Perhaps it does not mean just as the Lord said. She ventured to disobey. She put forth her hand, took of the fruit, and ate.”

Did you see how, “She *first erred* in wandering from her husband, *next*, in lingering around the forbidden tree, and *next* in listening to the voice of the tempter.” These three “steps,” at least, were taken *before* “she put forth her hand, took of the fruit, and ate.”

This raises an interesting question —Is it possible to do something “wrong” without sinning? Apparently so. For everything *would* have still been OK if Eve had recognized that she had wandered away from Adam, and remembered the angel’s warning, “not to separate from each other,” and then went back to be with Him. She even would not have sinned if she had went back after she had found herself around the tree and heard the snake speaking to her.

But one false step frequently leads to another, and the problem comes, when like Eve, we *think* we can handle the situation on our own. Our pride tells us we will be OK —without having to run back to a godly spouse or to our spiritual brothers and sisters for counsel and encouragement.

We feel we don’t *need* to run back to Jesus. But let’s be humble —and honest. Satan is wiser and stronger than we are. If, in our own strength and wisdom, we try to meet him in *any* of his disguises, we will be overcome. Our only safety is in *abiding*, or remaining *in Jesus*. “Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” James 1:4.

Satan comes up with unnumbered schemes trying to arouse our pride and make us think we can handle things on our own. Then, after he has caused us to sin, he continues to work on our pride, trying to keep us from going back to Jesus for cleansing and strength. “It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 156.

But Jesus knows our weakness and inability. He does not want us to stay away, as our only hope is to come back to Him. Notice the following quotations.

The Desire of Ages, page 821

“You have seen that all who come to Me, confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out. All who will, may be reconciled to God, and receive everlasting life. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy.”

Education, page 91

“Jesus reproveth His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and Peter and their brethren did not leave Him. Notwithstanding the reproofs, they chose to be with Jesus. And the Saviour did not, because of their errors, withdraw from them. He takes men as they are, with all their faults and weaknesses, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and taught by Him.”

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus understands our weaknesses. Let’s not *ever* let our pride keep us away from Him. Let’s confess our faults freely, and ask Him for forgiveness and grace, and for His keeping power. Did you know that by coming back to Jesus we can actually turn an apparent defeat into a victory. Notice the following quotation from *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 332. “Do not disappoint Him who so loved you that He gave His own life to cancel your sins. He says, ‘Without Me ye can

do nothing.’ John 15:5. Remember this. If you have made mistakes, you certainly gain a victory if you see these mistakes and regard them as beacons of warning. Thus you turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy and honoring your Redeemer.” When we step away from God and sin, it *can* be a “beacon of warning,” letting us know that we are *not* where we want to be. Then, if we are willing to be humble and come back to Jesus, that “defeat” can be turned into a “victory!” Satan’s goal is to keep us away from God. But if we let our sins become warnings and cause us to get back together with Jesus, his purpose is defeated. The question then is, Where do we really want to be? In Jesus, or in sin? If we really want to be in Jesus, we can not let our pride keep us away from Him.

Better yet, God would want us to discern the “steps” that take us away from Him, and let these *also* be “beacons of warning.” By recognizing the things that tend to cause us to “wander” away from Him, and avoiding them, or at least letting them warn us to return to His side, we can keep from sinning.

In closing, I want to share a prayer from *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 159 which, together with the thoughts above, are what make Christianity work for me.

“No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.”

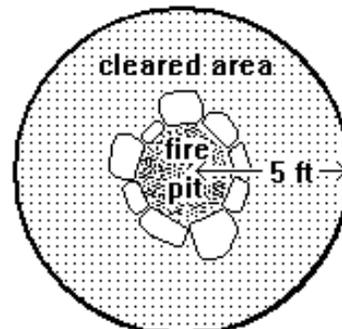
May God keep you, save you, and raise you up.

FIRE BUILDING

Fire is probably the most complex of all wilderness skill. It is also one of the most important skills. The key to good fire-building and fire-maintaining is simply experience, so take every opportunity to practice fire building. Also keep in mind that small fires will teach you more than larger ones. Learn how to keep the fire going at a steady heat, as this is frequently what is needed for both cooking and heating a shelter. Experiment with various woods, and different fire-starting methods. And be sure to learn how to get a fire going in wet conditions.

Fire Safety:

Clear a circle down to mineral soil 5 feet out from center of the fire-pit in all directions. Have water and a digging tool close by whenever the fire is burning. When finished, make the fire pit “soupy” with water to be *sure* the fire is *out*. Coals can keep going for days under fires that are just covered with dirt.



Starting the Fire

In order to burn, a fire needs: Oxygen, Fuel and Heat. Oxygen is in the air, so it is usually not an issue unless the sticks are placed too close together smothering the fire —this is especially critical when the fire is small. Fuel also isn't much of an issue as long as it is available and dry. So Heat seems to be the biggest problem most people have with starting and maintaining a fire.

As wood heats up, it releases wood gasses which are seen as smoke. When the smoke reaches its combustion temperature, it will begin to burn as "flames." As the flames burn they put off more heat, which can be used to heat more wood, and make more flames, and so on. Where most people have trouble is generating enough Heat to get a fire started, or maintaining enough Heat to keep a fire going.

One key to this is the size of the wood. The larger mass of larger pieces of wood takes a lot of Heat to reach combustion temperature and start to burn. Smaller sticks, with less mass, take less Heat. Things like dried grass, pine needles, wood shavings, or very fine thin twigs take even less Heat. So, generally you want to start small, and use the Heat generated by the burning small stuff to build up enough Heat to get larger pieces to burn. This is a *gradually* process, and usually requires a lot of care and patience.

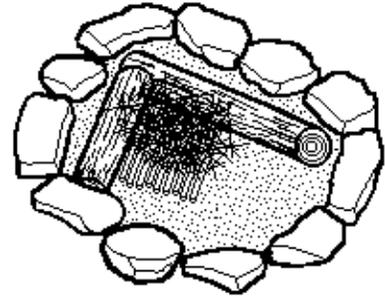
Another key is *dry* wood. Wet wood will need even more Heat to evaporate the moisture before it can reach combustion temperature and burn. After a rain, everything laying on the ground can be soaking wet. Look for pencil diameter and smaller dead twigs that are still attached to the lower branches of trees. Ideally these should "snap" when they are broken off. Pine needles, that are hanging in the trees and bushes, may also be relatively dry. Or, cut into the middle of standing dead trees or larger branches to get dry wood. Sometimes this is the only dry wood available. Make thin shavings from this wood, as sometimes it can even be somewhat moist. As you make these shavings and/or collect these twigs and needles, take care to keep them off of the wet ground or they may soak up moisture. Collect two or three good handfuls of this "kindling."

"Pitch wood," or "fat wood" as it is sometimes called, can be very helpful for starting fires when things are wet. When some pine trees die, the pitch flows down, and saturates the wood in the base of the trunk. After the rest of the tree rots and falls down, this saturated wood sometimes remains, looking somewhat like a stalagmite on the forest floor. Chopping into it reveals the sweet smelling pitch wood. Pitch wood can also be found at the base of dead branches on downed pines. These are also know as "pine knots."

The wonderful thing about pitch wood is it that the wood is already saturated with pitch, so it cannot really get "wet." Even if it feels moist, it will still burn relatively easily. And, although it makes thick black smoke, it will also burn for much longer than a similar sized piece of wood. When starting a fire in wet weather use shavings or slivers of pitch wood if at all possible.

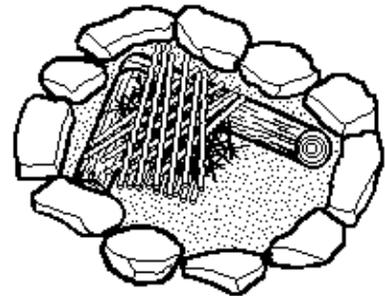
Also, don't try to start the fire directly on wet ground, as much Heat can be lost in drying the moisture out of the dirt. Make a little "raft" of finger sized twigs to line the bottom of the fire-pit to keep the fire off of the wet ground.

Before you light the fire, everything should be ready: collect several handfuls of kindling, several handfuls of finger-size stick, as well as a pile of larger, up to wrist diameter, fuel wood, and prepare the fire-pit. The ring of rocks, and bowl-shape of the typical fire pit helps to reflect the Heat of the fire back into itself, which will help to keep the fire burning. If you will be using the fire for cooking, make the ring with flat rocks if they are available. These are useful as “kitchen counters” to put cook pots, utensils, and food on out to keep them out of the dirt.



Begin by laying a wrist diameter stick along one side of the fire pit, or better yet make a “V” with a couple larger sticks. These sticks will help to reflect the heat back into the kindling, and give you something to lean twigs and shavings on to avoid crushing and smothering the fire. If the ground is damp, lay down a “raft” like layer of small sticks in the “V.” Place a handful of dried grass, pine needles, or shavings on this “raft.” On top of this, lay a couple layers of dry pencil size and smaller twigs, and have another handful or two of small sticks ready to add where needed.

Light the kindling as close to the ground as possible, as the fire burns *up*. You want these initial flames to heat and ignite more kindling as they burn through the pile. At this point, any escaping flame is lost Heat. You want all of the available Heat to be warming more kindling to the point that it too will burn. “Feed the flame.” Carefully add more kindling *on top* of any escaping flames. Because this small kindling burns quickly, it will not last very long; so you will need to keep adding more until your fire gets larger. But be careful not to add it so thickly that it smothers the fire.



Once lit, the fire is dependant on its own Heat to keep itself going. Therefore, until the fire is big enough to have “extra” Heat to cook or warm a shelter, you will want as much of this Heat to be reflected back into the new little fire as possible. As the fire grows, and the flames seem to be pushing past your efforts, you can start adding larger and larger sticks.

Usually, you would not want to use anything much larger than arm diameter sticks in a fire for cooking or warming a shelter. Otherwise you may have trouble with smoke. Too much smoke means the fire isn’t hot enough. Usually the wood is too wet or too large, making it difficult to reach combustion temperature. With a good bed of coal however, you may be able use one or two larger leg diameter pieces. But they need to be well spaced, and you need to be ready to add some smaller sticks if things get too smoky.

