

Preventing Spiritual Drift, Part I

[Read Preventing Spiritual Drift, Part II](#)

No one plans to drift spiritually. Sometimes, people don't even realize they are moving away from an intimate relationship with the Lord until they are entangled in sin.

So, how can we avoid getting off track? By deliberately staying on track spiritually. In this first part of the study, we'll cover two of four ways we can protect ourselves from spiritual drifting.

A. Don't let grief cool your relationship with God.

One common cause is deep heartache or loss. It's easy to turn away from God when we feel He let us down, didn't answer our prayers, or allowed us experience extreme pain.

God never promised He would answer every prayer the way we would expect, but He *does* want to give us supernatural hope in each situation. How can you stay close to the Lord in times of loss?

- **Confess your real feelings to God.** He already knows how you feel. Only by being genuine with Him can you receive all the comfort He has for you.

The Bible is full of examples of God's people pouring their hearts out to Him. Jeremiah the prophet fully expressed his discouragement in [Lamentations 3:1-18](#).

- How did Jeremiah encourage himself in [Lamentations 3:21-25](#)?

2. Search for encouraging Scriptures.

Instead of dwelling on how discouraged you are or how unsatisfying something was, choose to focus on the spiritual truth found in the Word.

How can you find uplifting verses? Begin by asking God to speak to you. Then, read until you find a verse that speaks to your heartache.

If you don't know where to start, try reading Psalms, one of the four Gospels, or one of the epistles (the books located between Acts and Revelation). These books are filled with encouraging passages.

- Ask God to speak to you through the Word, and then look for a specific passage that meets your need. If you don't know where to begin, try [Ephesians 2](#); [2 Timothy 2](#); or [1 Peter 2](#).
- You may wish to write the verse you find on a 3x5 card so you can meditate on it during the day.

3. Remind yourself that God can bring good out of every heartache.

In the midst of our trials, it's difficult to trust that God has our ultimate good in mind. But although the pain may not be good in itself, He can bring spiritual good out of it ([Romans 8:28](#)).

- How has God used a painful or difficult situation in your life to bring good to you and others?
- **Rely on God to help you steer clear of sin.**

Along with loss, another primary cause of spiritual drift is unconfessed sin. When we fall into temptation over and over, our hearts often become hardened to the things of God.

The key to resisting sin is just not to “try harder” in our own strength. Sometimes, this actually increases the lure of sin. How can we resist temptation God’s way?

1. **Focus on Scripture.** The Word contains tremendous power to help us resist sin.

- According to [Psalm 119:9-11](#), what is one major benefit of learning and memorizing Scripture?

Don’t just focus on scriptures that condemn your vice. Spend time meditating on verses that talk about how God fulfills us with good things when we trust in Him, such as [Psalm 84:11](#).

- Look up [Psalm 16:11](#). What does the Psalmist say satisfies him?

2. **Avoid tempting situations when possible.** King David fell into the trap of adultery partly because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Where *should* he have been that spring? (See [2 Samuel 11:1](#).)

You’ll never be able to avoid all temptation. But you can use some common sense to avoid many tempting situations. For instance, if you can’t eat sweets in moderation, don’t keep them around the house. Or if watching R-rated movies tempts you to lust, find other types of entertainment.

- In your life, what circumstances set the scene for temptation?
- For each temptation, name at least one specific step you could take to avoid that situation.

3. **Trust God to deliver you from temptation.** Guess what? You’re not responsible for avoiding sin all by yourself.

- How did Jesus instruct us to pray concerning temptation?

- It's difficult to sin while actively seeking the presence of the Lord. According to [James 4:7-8](#), how can we resist temptation?

Closing: Preventing spiritual drift isn't always easy, but it *is* simple. Turn towards God, even in times of loss, and rely on His strength to avoid temptation. Next week, in the second part of this study, we'll cover two more tips that can help you stay on course spiritually.

Prayer: Father, thank You that You never leave us without a spiritual anchor. You are always willing to help us avoid sin and draw near to You. Thank you for the precious gift of Your Holy Spirit, who gives us all we need to follow You faithfully. In Jesus' name, amen.