

Puritan preacher John Gibbon's gives 9 Rules for combatting sin:

Rule 1 – “Before the trial comes, prepare an antidote for your soul against the lusts of the flesh.

Develop your soul's love for God.” When you are spending time with God, the Tempter cannot reach you. If you are thirsting for the Lord, you will not be lusting after the flesh.

Rule 2 – “Study thoroughly the unchangeable natures, the eternal laws and differences, of moral good and evil. All the reason in the world takes the part [or side] of holiness.”

In our postmodern age, we are actually post postmodern, everything is relative and nothing is really right or wrong. But there is in fact absolute truth; absolute right & absolute wrong. Just as the rules of gravity are fixed and the speed of light is a constant. When you see good and evil as they truly are, resisting the bad and pursuing the good is much easier.

Rule 3 – “Understand thyself; be no stranger to thy own breast; know the frame, and temper, and constitution of thy mind.—“The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness.” (Eccles. 2:14.) You owe this duty to yourself: take an exact account of the posture and order of your inner self.”

Know thyself. What are your weaknesses? Because the Devil knows them and will use them as avenues of attack.

Rule 4 – “Get and keep a tender conscience. Be sensible of the least sin. The most tender-hearted Christian,—they are the stoutest and most valiant Christian.”

Proverbs 28:14 (ESV) Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

Rule 5 – “Keep an exact guard upon thy heart.” Proverbs 4:23 (ESV) Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. This is a self-awareness. Recognize the signs that your thoughts & desires are headed in the wrong direction.

Rule 6 – “Be daily training and exercising all thy graces.—Have them always in battle-array. Be in a military posture, both defensive and offensive. Stand constantly to thine arms; for thou hast to do with two enemies that will never give thee any truce or respite.” They are the world and the Devil. Your daily prayer time, devotion time, should be guarded. Your Bible reading will equip you in the language of the Holy Spirit who stands guard over your soul. Worship time and the celebration of the Sacraments are means of God's grace.

Rule 7 – “Be well-skilled in detecting the deception of temptation.— I mean, in unmasking the sophistry and mystery of iniquity, in defeating the wiles and stratagems of the tempter, and in detecting and frustrating the cheats and finesses of the flesh with its deceitful lusts. (Eph. 4:22; 2 Cor. 2:11.) No small part of spiritual wisdom lies in the blessed art of discovering and refuting sin's fallacies and impostures.”

Rule 8 – “Withdraw thyself, if possible, from the occasions of sin.” Why don't we allow our teenagers to stay out after 12 o'clock at unsupervised parties? Seems pretty obvious doesn't it? One mother said, “Nothing good happens after midnight.”

In Recovery programs, a common topic is to avoid all the old people, places, and things connected with your addiction.

Rule 9 – “Bind thyself beforehand, with the severest of thy resolutions, not to trust thy own judgment, when the temptation begins to get within thee.—“A man in passion is not himself.”

When those dealing with alcohol abuse have the thought, “Maybe just one drink won't hurt.” Bells, whistles, and red flags should go off.

“Who but a madman, that sees the stable or barn next to his dwelling-house just beginning to catch fire, would stand still, and say, “Let it alone a little, I would see what will come of it?”