

Overcoming Sin (Part 2)

Overcoming Is Necessary

Romans 6:1-4

I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. 3 In our first lesson we considered **The Nature of Sin**. Recall that we exposed sin for what it is; it's:
 - A. **Deceitful**: Sin deceived Eve 1) by making her believe there were no consequences, 2) by making promises it had no intention of keeping, and 3) by making itself attractive.
 - B. **Enslaving**: “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.” (Jn. 8:34)
 - C. **Defiling**: Sin is not harmless, it stains our reputation, our influence for good, and our soul.
 - D. **Destructive**: Sin is unrighteousness, therefore it cannot peacefully co-exist with God or His creation. It destroys man's innocence, peace with God, man's physical world and man's life.
 - E. **Progressive**: Sin is a voracious monster that can never be satisfied! It is a cancer; it is like leaven.
2. As we review the nature of sin it should be manifestly evident that *overcoming sin* is necessary.
3. 4 Christians are going to sin (1 Jn. 1:8, 10: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”), but God has provided a way for us to receive forgiveness of sins and continued fellowship with Him.
4. God will forgive us if we confess and repent of our sins (“second law of pardon”)(1 Jn. 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”; Acts 8:22: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”).
5. This is possible because Jesus is both our advocate and the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn. 2:1-2).
 - A. An advocate is, according to Vine, one who gives “aid.” It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause...” When we pray for forgiveness Jesus pleads our case before God.
 - B. A propitiation “signifies “an expiation, a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.” A propitiation appeases or satisfies. Jesus did this by shedding his innocent blood (Eph. 1:7: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”).
6. When we pray to God for the forgiveness of our sins:
 - A. Jesus presents our case before God. He advocates our case if you will.
 - B. He pleads for our forgiveness, not on the basis of our merit, but on the basis that His blood satisfies God's law regarding the guilt of sin (Rom. 6:23).
7. BUT, even though God provides the Christian with a means of forgiveness, it is God's will that we do not sin (1 Jn. 2:1-2). If we sin, we have the means of receiving forgiveness, but always remember the goal is “that you may not sin” (1 Jn. 2:1).
8. 5 God hates sin! For example, Isaiah 1:6 describes sins as untreated “putrefying sores.” Thus He calls us “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (2 Pet. 2:9) by his abundant grace. But “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!” (Rom. 6:1-2).
 - A. We cannot set our moral lives on cruise-control and fulfill the desires and lusts of the flesh.
 - B. We cannot use God's abundant grace as an excuse to be casual about sin (“I'm just human.”).
 - C. Temptation is an ever-present reality and we must make every effort daily to overcome it.
9. The object of this lesson is to drive these points home so we can better appreciate that *overcoming sin* is necessary.

II. Discussion:

I. 6 God Calls Us to Be Holy: 1 Peter 1:15-16

1 Pet. 1:15-16: “but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”

- A. Something that is holy is pure and sinless; it meets God’s standard (Leviticus: it’s clean).
- B. Before we became Christians we were unholy because our conduct conformed to our own “lusts” (**1 Pet. 1:14:** “as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance”).
- C. 7 Peter gives us three good reasons to strive for holy (sinless) lives:
 - (1) We must be holy in order to continue enjoying fellowship with God (1 Pet. 1:15-16; **1 Jn. 1:6:** “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”).
 - (2) We must conduct ourselves in a holy manner because the judgment is coming (**1 Pet. 1:17:** “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;”; **2 Pet. 3:10-11:** “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,”).
 - (3) We must be holy out of consideration for the great price paid to make us holy **1 Pet. 1:18-19:** “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”; **1 Cor. 6:20:** “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
- D. 8 We must always remember that God has called each of us to lead holy lives! **1 Thess. 4:7:** “For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.” He requires a major change in our lives: **1 Thess. 4:5:** “not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God”
 - (1) We must, therefore, constantly strive to live clean, pure, sinless lives.
 - (2) We must be ever vigilant to jealously guard the purity of our thoughts, motives, attitudes, desires, habits, words, appearance and actions.
 - (3) God didn’t rescue us from the clutches of sin for us to treat it casually and dabble in it!
 - (4) Holiness must be a priority in our lives! And, holiness is not possible unless we diligently confront and overcome sin in our life.
- E. Paul told the Corinthian brethren, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1)
 - (1) Our perfection is impossible without the blood of Jesus (**Eph. 1:7:** “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”).
 - (2) But we have a major role to play; we are responsible for cleansing “ourselves of the filthiness of the defilement of the flesh and spirit” and then moving forward and “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).
 - (3) The apostle John expresses these thoughts in this succinct way: “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3)
- F. We have the personal responsibility to put forth a daily effort to live pure, holy, righteous and sinless lives. Just do it! **Luke 9:23:** “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

2. 9 Christians Are Dead to Sin: Romans 6:1-4

- A. Christians should not continue in sin because, when we we're baptized and became a Christian, we died to sin (**Rom. 6:1-4**).
- B. Theoretically at least, it is impossible for one who has died to sin to continue in sin.
- C. ** When we became a Christian that part of us that enjoyed sin, *"the old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin"* (**Rom. 6:6**: *"...our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."*).
 - (1) Thus, when we were baptized we had an "attitude adjustment," and we must consider ourselves dead to sin—no longer willing or able to participate in sin (**Rom. 6:11**: *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*).
 - (2) We must no longer allow sin to dominate, or go unchecked, in our lives (**Rom. 6:12**: *"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."*).
 - (3) We are to jealously guard our lives, our souls, against sin (**Rom. 6:13**: *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."*).
 - (4) Instead we must strive to overcome sin (**Rom. 6:14**: *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."*).
- D. 10 Our life is hidden in Christ (**Col. 3:3**: *"For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*):
 - (1) This means our life now belongs to Christ to do His will (**Gal. 5:24**: *"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*).
 - (2) That's why Paul tells us *"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."* (Col. 3:5)
- E. Instead we must strive to overcome sin (**Rom. 6:14**: *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."*).
- F. Christians are to consider themselves unable to engage in sin (**1 Jn. 3:9**: *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."*)

3. 11 Put Off the Old Man of Sin: Eph. 4:17-24

- A. In the previous point we spoke of putting to death the old man of sin. In Ephesians Paul speaks of taking him off like one would take of old, dirty clothes and replacing him with a new man of righteousness and holiness (**Eph. 4:17-24**).
- B. Putting off the old man involves a 180° change in our way of thinking and living; as Paul puts it we are to be *"renewed in the spirit of your mind"* (Eph. 4:23).
 - (1) This tells us the battle to overcome sin takes place in the heart and mind (**Eph. 6:12-13**: *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*; **2 Cor. 10:3-5**: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"*).
 - (2) Paul goes on and mentions several specific sins we must *"put away"* (**Eph. 4:25-5:17**).
- C. We can only change the way we live by first changing the way we think (Prov. 27:3: Matt. 15:16-20).
- D. Once we become a Christian we can no longer pursue the fleeting pleasures of sin; we must cease from sin. We've wasted enough of our precious lives pursuing sin! **1 Pet. 4:1-3** Wasted Years

4. **12** Deny Ourselves: Titus 2:11-12

Titus 2:11-12: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, I 2 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”*

- A. God’s grace is wondrous and amazing and without it salvation is impossible, but God’s grace also teaches us not to take sin lightly. (**Rom. 6:15:** *“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”*).
- B. Some believe that because we’re saved by grace there is nothing for us to do. Some even take it so far that no matter what we do (even sin!) once we become a Christian we can never be lost.
 - (1) But that’s not what Paul said in Titus 2:11-12; grace teaches us that we must do something! We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.
 - (2) Want a prescription for overcoming sin? There it is in Titus 2:12. There’s no silver bullet!
 - (3) If we are not learning from grace and making a daily effort to overcome sin, we are not living the way God has taught us to live.
- C. **13** Self-denial is the key to overcoming sin! Just say “no” when tempted by sin. Self-denial (self-control, temperance) is a prominent theme for Christian living in the Bible.
 - (1) Self-control is a prerequisite to being a disciple (**Matt. 16:24:** *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*).
 - (2) Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).
 - (3) We must give “all diligence” to “add...self-control” to our faith (2 Pet. 1:6) and if we fail to do so we are “shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1:9)
 - (4) Self-control is one of the qualifications of an elder (Titus 1:8).
 - (5) Without self-control we are “disqualified” from receiving the imperishable crown of life (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
- D. ****** Do you want a strategy for overcoming sin? Learn to just say “no”! **2 Peter 1:5-6:** *“...giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control,”* **Prov. 16:32b:** *“...he who rules his spirit [is better] than he who takes a city.”*

5. **14** Don’t Allow Sin To Control Us: 1 Cor. 6:12

- A. We’ve learned that sin, by its very nature, is enslaving, even after we become a Christian.
- B. Therefore, we can never call for a “cease-fire” in our battle against sin; Paul said he would not be brought under the power of anything (1 Cor. 6:12; 1 Thess. 5:22 in KJV) and neither should we.
- C. Remember when the Lord respected Abel’s sacrifice but rejected Cain and his offering?
 - (1) Recall Cain’s response: *“...Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”* (Gen. 4:5)
 - (2) The Lord responded to Cain’s anger warning and instructing him regarding sin: *“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”* (Gen. 4:6-7)
 - (3) One commentator put it well as he pictures sin as “a wild beast crouching at the door, waiting to attack the one who opens it” (Davis, p. 100)
 - (4) Sin’s desire is to control us, but it is up to us to make the decision of whether or not we will open the door to sin. In the battle between self and sin; we must rule sin or sin will rule us. There is no middle ground; the Christian who refuses to confront sin in his life is leaving that door open to a wild animal that will devour them, enslave them, dominate them!

6. **15 Sin Has Consequences:** If sin had no consequences, why worry about overcoming it?

A. Temporal: **Rom. 1:28:** “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting...”

- (1) The spiritual consequences of sin can be overcome in Christ, but the temporal consequences will remain.
- (2) For example, we may commit a sin that involves breaking the laws of men. God will forgive if we confess and repent, but we will still face the punishment proscribed by the laws of men.
 - (a) Another example, an adulterer can be forgiven by God if he confesses and repents of his sin. But his sin may still destroy his marriage and family (Matt. 19:9).
 - (b) A liar can be forgiven by God, but his reputation before men may be permanently tarnished.
- (3) Make no mistake: we will reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7-8). If we fail to overcome sin we will reap the temporal consequences of those sins.

B. Eternal: Rom. 6:23

- (1) To willfully sin after we’ve received the knowledge of the truth places our soul in eternal jeopardy (Heb. 10:26-31).
- (2) This passage does not describe the otherwise faithful Christian who stumbles and succumbs to temptation. It describes the Christian who sins willfully. Are we not sinning willfully if we know we have a problem with sin in our life and refuse to take the necessary steps to address it and correct it?
- (3) We only need to look to the example of Paul who took extreme steps when faced with such sin (1 Cor. 9:24-27). If an inspired apostle had to take such great concern and expend such drastic efforts, how much more concern and effort do I need to exert when faced with sin?! If we don’t take the necessary steps we too will be “disqualified”! DQ’ed
- (4) The eternal consequences should convince anyone of the need to overcome sin (**Rev 20:14-15**: “Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”; Mk. 9:42ff: a place where “the fire...shall never be quenched”).

7. **16 We’re Not Alone:** 1 Cor. 10:13

- A. God doesn’t leave us alone to battle against sin (**1 Cor. 10:13**: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”).
- B. But we must ask for guidance in finding that “way of escape.” In His model prayer recall that Jesus prayed: “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matt. 6:13)
- C. Thus, we must actively seek “the way of escape” by actively asking God for help. Recall some specific strategies insofar as “the way of escape” is concerned:**
- (1) For Jesus the way of escape was found by using Scripture (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).
 - (2) For Joseph the way of escape was found by literally fleeing the temptation (Gen. 39:12).
 - (3) One thing is sure: there is always a way of escape; but it is up to us to ask God’s help in finding it and then asking Him for the courage and faith to take it! Practice! (Heb. 5:14: “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”).
- D. ** The greatness of God’s “power toward us who believe” is limitless! **Eph. 1:15-23; 3:20**

III. Conclusion: 17

1. The sin in our life cannot be dismissed, ignored, tolerated, excused, or rationalized. It is not “*just the way we are.*”
2. It is God’s will that we become a new creature (**2 Cor. 5:17**: “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*”). A new creature “*walk[s] in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4).
3. Our new life is characterized by purity, righteousness, and holiness; not by a continuance in sin. It is essential that we make a daily effort to overcome sin in our heart and in our life (Rom. 7:13).
4. Lord willing, in future lessons on “Overcoming Sin,” we will examine some specific sins and suggest some strategies for overcoming them.

Adapted from *Overcoming Sin*, by Heath Rogers, 2013, One Stone Press, Bowling Green, KY (pp. 15-19).

References:

Davis, John. *Paradise To Prison, Studies in Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975.