

SIN IS HARD TO OVERCOME

Romans 3:10, 23; James 1:12-15

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: It is wonderful thing upon believing in becoming a Christian that one has his/her sins forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ, however, this does not mean that the problem with sin is over. Satan and the old human nature cause every person to sin in some way. If a Christian is to maintain a close with God, then he/she must overcome the problem of sin. Not sinning is very difficult to do, yet the Christian is told to stop sinning. How does one overcome sin?

I. ONE NEEDS TO LEARN HOW SIN DEVELOPS

1. The first stage of sin is "temptation:"
 - James 1:14 describes Temptation:
 - Desire/lust/ a strong desire for something
 - Enticement, an opportunity and encouragement to satisfy that desire.
 - Temptation = desire + opportunity
 - tempted to steal cookies and then has an opportunity to take them
 - temptation becomes stronger if nobody will see him/her take the cookies
 - No sin has been committed during temptation:
 - Jesus, Himself, was tempted as anyone else, yet without sin - Hebrews 4:15; 2:18
2. The second stage is "sin" itself:
 - When desire has conceived, it give birth to sin - James 1:15
 - Temptation becomes sin when one acts and yields to the temptation.
 - Sin = desire + opportunity + action
3. The third stage is the consequences of unrepented/unforgiven sin: "Death..."
 - When sin is full-grown it brings death which is spiritual separation from God.
 - While one is living, sin separates one from God - Isaiah 59:2
 - If dying still in sin, "second death" occurs which is eternal separation from God - Revelation 21:8
 - Desire + opportunity + action + no forgiveness = death
4. As sin develops:
 - It will overcome a person if in the end he/she receives the "final punishment" - Revelation 21:8
 - Avoiding the final punishment is done by overcoming sin and being able to experience all the glories God has prepared for His children.
 - Sin can be overcome by stopping its development as described by : desire, opportunity, action.

II. HOW ONE CAN OVERCOME SIN

1. By changing one's desires, sin can be overcome:
 - The first place to start is where one's thoughts, desires are.
 - Part of growing as a Christian is to change his/her desires - Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:24
 - How can one change his/her desires?
 - God's Word can change one's desires.
 - Reading of God's love, patience, and mercy creates a desire to serve Him - Psalm 116:12-14

- Reading about the consequences of sin brings a Christian to detest sin - Psalm 119:104
- The more one studies the Word of God, the less likely he/she will have the desire to sin. However it does take time to change one's desires.

2. By limiting one's opportunities to sin, sin can be overcome:

- One is tempted **ONLY** when there is both desire and **OPPORTUNITY**.
- Changing one's desires works along with limiting one's opportunity to carry out those wrong desires.
- Jesus said to ask for God's help - Matthew 6:13; 26:41
- By cooperating with God:
 - By purposely avoiding situations that might stir up wrongful desires.
 - David is an example - Psalm 101:3-4
 - Job is an example - Job 31:1
 - By avoiding being around those whose behavior encourages one to sin with them.
 - David and Paul speak of this - Psalm 101:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:33

3. By exercising "self-control":

- It is "sin" when one yields to actually doing, fulfilling, one's sinful desires.
- Learning to NOT yield one can overcome sin.
- How does one actually practice self-control?
 - Self-control is one of the aspects of the "fruit of the Spirit" - Galatians 5:22:23
 - When one becomes a Christian the Holy Spirit indwells that person - Acts 2:38; 5:32
 - The Holy Spirit imparts strength to the Christian - Ephesians 3:16
 - Being strengthened by the Holy Spirit, one is able to exercise self-control - Romans 8:12-13
 - **"...I can do all things through Him who strengthens me..."** Philippians 4:13
- Faith in God's Word brings the Christian to believe that he/she has God's help - Ephesians 3:20
 - It is very proper to pray for self-control - Ephesians 3:16
 - It is important to do it, trusting that one is not alone as he/she tries to do God's will - Philippians 2:12-13
- The Christian has no real excuse for yielding to temptation - 1 Corinthians 10:13

4. By obtaining "forgiveness":

- Sin wins when it results in one being punished.
- Obtaining forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ can void that punishment and one can still overcome sin - 1 John 2:1-2
- Jesus is the "propitiation" (payment) for one's sins.
 - By Jesus' blood, one has his/her present sins forgiven as well as the past when one repents, prays and confesses his/her sins to God - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9

5. Some facts about overcoming sins:

- God helps one to control his/her desires by providing His Word to renew one's mind.
- God helps one to limit the opportunities of sinning as one prays for God's help.
- God helps one to exercise self-control over his/her actions through the Holy Spirit strengthening one's inner person.
- God helps one to obtain forgiveness through Jesus' blood as one repents and prays.
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13
- There are sins of "omission" as well as "commission":
 - failing to do what is right - James 4:17

CONCLUSION:

1. Everyone sins, even Christians still sin.
2. There are consequences for sin, some temporal, but one is permanent, eternal.
3. ***"...Blessed is the man/woman who endures temptation; for when he/she has been proved he/she will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him..."***
4. Studying God's Word is a key to overcoming sin as well as watching and praying that one does not enter into temptation and helping avoid circumstances and companions that would entice one to sin.
5. Christian, how are YOU handling sin in your life?