

Back to the Basics

How Do I Overcome Sin?

Memory Verse:
Colossians 3:1-2

God Wants You to Live Without Sinning

There are those who believe that a Christian cannot live the rest of his life without sinning. Sometimes these same people will go as far as to indicate that God's grace will overlook or bridge the gap caused by our sins. The question that you must ask yourself is this, "Can I live today without sinning?" The answer to this question will apply, not only to today, but to tomorrow and every day that follows. As this lesson will show, the answer to the question is a resounding yes. You can live today without sinning and you can live tomorrow without sinning. We know this because God expects His children to live without sinning.

Let us first consider the Bible's definition of sin. In 1 John 3:4 reads, "*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*" (NKJV) A person sins when he transgresses the law of God. In other words, a person sins when he does something the Bible commands him not to do, or when he does not do that which the Bible commands him to do.

Here is how we know that God expects His children not to sin.

- Q When a person becomes a Christian, his past sins are washed away. Acts 22:16 reads, "*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" (NKJV) Also, 1 John 3:5 reads, "*And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.*" (NKJV)
- Q A Christian, a child of God, is to walk in Christ. (Colossians 2:6) The child of God who is walking in the light will not willfully sin. Give careful consideration to 1 John 3:6-10 and 1:5-7. As long as a Christian retains the seed, God's word, in his mind and heart, he will overcome temptations. 1 John 3:9 reads, "*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.*" (NKJV)

When a Christian who is retaining the word of God in his mind faces temptation, he will know the difference between right and wrong and will see the way of escape from that temptation. All scripture has been given to us so that we can live righteously. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) The writer of Hebrews explained that it is possible for Christians to "*have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*" (Hebrews 5:14) This is accomplished through a thorough study of God's word. With the knowledge of God's word, when a Christian faces temptation, he will see the way of escape provided by God. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

- Q God expects His children to be “*neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Peter taught Christians how to bear fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8) A Christian who does not obtain the goal found in 2 Peter 1:8 is described as being “*shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*” (2 Peter 1:9) If a Christian adds those things listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, then he “will never stumble (sin).” (2 Peter 1:10)
- Q Jesus Christ set an example for us to follow. Christ was tempted, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) Peter taught that Jesus, “*who committed no sin,*” left us an example that we should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21-25)

As we have seen, God expects His children to live without sinning. While no man can say that he has not sinned (1 John 1:10), after he becomes a Christian, he can strive to live without sinning and be successful. Remember, the Bible never teaches that a Christian is destined to sin or that he has to sin. On the contrary, the apostle John wrote, “*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*” (1 John 2:1-2, NKJV)

How Can One Who is Dead to Sin Live in Sin?

Now that we have shown that God expects His children to overcome sin, consider a simple reason why we must overcome sin. The reason lies within the following question: How can one who is dead to sin live in sin? To answer this question, let us consider Romans 6:1-14. (Please take a moment to read this text.)

Consider the following two facts from Romans 6:2 and 3: First, in verse 2, we see that Christians are dead to sin. Secondly, in verse 3, we see that Christians have been baptized into Christ and into His death.

Now, let us apply the above two facts. Since we have been buried with Christ (baptized into His death), we have been raised with Him. (v. 4-5) (This baptism is water baptism. This baptism is the same water baptism that was command by Jesus (Mark 16:16), taught by Peter (Acts 2:38), and requested by the eunuch (Acts 8:36).) When one is raised with Jesus, he begins to walk in a newness of life. (v. 4)

Romans 6:1-4

- 1 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*
- 2 *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*
- 3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*
- 4 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

(NKJV)

Why must we walk in a new life? At the point of baptism, our old man of sin was crucified with Jesus. At that point, we put to death that old man of sin. (v. 6) By putting to death that old

man of sin, we put away that body of sin. (v. 6) By putting away the body of sin, we free ourselves from slavery to sin. As a result, we are free from sin. (v. 6,7)

Since we have died with Christ through baptism, we shall live with Him. (v. 8) Great comfort comes from knowing that we shall live with Jesus Christ because Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. (v. 9) Jesus died to sin once for all, but now He lives to God. Just as Jesus is dead to sin and alive to God, so should we be dead to sin and alive to God. (v. 10-11)

Having been raised with Christ, we should not let sin reign in our physical bodies. (v. 12) Think about it:

- Q We have been set free from sin.
- Q We have died to sin.
- Q We have been made alive unto God.
- Q We should live to God.
- Q Therefore, it stands to reason that we should no longer let sin reign in our bodies.

The Greek word translated as “reign” is *basileuo*. *Basileuo* means “1) to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign . . . 2) metaph. to exercise the highest influence, to control.” (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon) We should NOT present our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. (v. 13) Instead, we should present our bodies to God as being alive from the dead. By so doing, we present our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God. (v. 13) Since we are dead to sin, sin should not have dominion over us. (v. 14) Again, this freedom was made possible by the grace of God.

Romans 6:6-14

- 6 *knowing this, that 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.*
- 7 *For he who has died has been freed from sin.*
- 8 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,*
- 9 *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.*
- 10 *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*
- 11 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- 12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*
- 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.*
- 14 *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

(NKJV)

Shall We Sin Because We are Under Grace?

Having shown that this freedom from sin comes by the grace of God, Paul explains that the grace of God does not give an excuse for a Christian to engage in sin. (Please read Romans 6:16-23.) Consider the following reasons why Christians cannot use grace as an excuse to sin.

- Q Whomever we choose to obey (follow) becomes our master. (v. 16) If we follow sin, then sin is our master. This sin leads to death. If we follow after obedience to the Lord, then the Lord is our master. Obedience to the Lord leads to righteousness.
- Q The church of Christ in Rome was a fine example of those who had chosen the Lord as their master. (v. 17) The Christians in Rome were not always Christians. Before being baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, they were slaves of sin. Thankfully, there were those in Rome who made the decision, while in sin, to obey the doctrine of salvation which was taught by Jesus and His apostles. Once those people, were set free from sin, they became slaves of righteousness for holiness. (v. 18)
- Q Before baptism: One is a slave of uncleanness or unrighteousness. After baptism: One is a slave of righteousness for holiness. (v. 19)

As Christians, we are to make the choice not to sin. A Christian is a slave of righteousness and will, therefore, no longer follow after sinful practices. By choosing not to sin, our fruit or reward will be everlasting life in Heaven. (v. 21-23)

Christians Should Be Living A "New Life."

In Romans 6:4, Paul wrote, ". . . *even so we should walk in newness of life.*" As we have already seen, walking in a newness of life means giving up sinful practices and habits and following after righteousness. Let us now examine a little more clearly this newness of life. (Read Colossians 3:1-17)

The first step in our newness of life is to seek those things which are above. That is to say, we should seek after goals, concerns, and solutions which are Heavenly based. The Bible reveals to us those things which are truly important. (vs 1-2) If we seek after Heavenly things, then when Jesus Christ appears, we will appear with Him. (vs 3-4)

Romans 6:16-23

- 16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*
- 17 *But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*
- 18 *And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*
- 19 *I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.*
- 20 *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*
- 21 *What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*
- 22 *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*
- 23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

(NKJV)

Walking in a newness of life demands that we put to death certain practices. For instance, we were to put to death fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires, and covetousness, to name a few. Every act that violates the word of God must be put away or put to death. (vs 5-7) Once you became a Christian, you were to work to keep sin out of your life. For example, you are to work to keep anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth, and lying out of your life. (vs 8) All of these sins are associated with the "old man" of sin.

With this newness of life, we "put on the new man," who is renewed in knowledge. It makes sense that we "put on the new man." According to verse 8, we were to "put off" the life of sin. Once one has unclothed himself from the life of sin, he must then clothe himself in the life of righteousness. This life of righteousness is maintained or renewed through a daily study of God's holy word. (vs 10-11)

With this newness of life comes a new set of practices within your life. (vs 12-17) Consider the following additions which must be made to your life.

- Q You are to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. (v. 12)
- Q You are to bear with one another and forgive one another. (v. 13)
- Q You are to put on love. This is the bond of perfection. (v. 14)
- Q You are to let the peace of God rule in your hearts. (v. 15)
- Q You are to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. (v. 16) This "in dwelling" of the word of Christ is a cooperative effort. Christians are to encourage and teach one another. Paul wrote, ". . . teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (v. 16)

How Do I Overcome Sin?

- Realize that God wants you to live without sinning.
- Remember that you are supposed to be dead to sin because you were baptized into Jesus and into His death.
- You put to death that old man of sin so that you could walk in a newness of life.
- Since we have been raised with Christ, we must not allow sin to reign in our bodies.
- Seek those things which are above.
- You put off the "old man" of sin by stopping the sin.
- You put on the "new man" by avoiding sin and doing all that is right in your service to the Father.
- Renew that "new man" daily by studying God's Word and applying it within your life.

Since we have "put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge," we are to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus. If we are letting the words of Christ dwell within us, then we will do all things in His name or according to His directions, commands, and authority. (vs 17)

Ten Questions

1. What is the Bible's definition of sin? _____
2. What happens to past sins when one becomes a Christian? _____
3. God expects His children to be "neither barren nor _____ in the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ."
4. What are the two facts seen in Romans 6:2-3? _____

5. At the point of baptism, what happened to the old man of sin? _____

6. Having been raised with Jesus, what should Christians not allow to reign in their bodies? _____

7. How can we tell who or what is our master? _____
8. Before baptism, one is a slave of what? _____
9. If we seek after heavenly things, then when Jesus appears, what will happen? _____

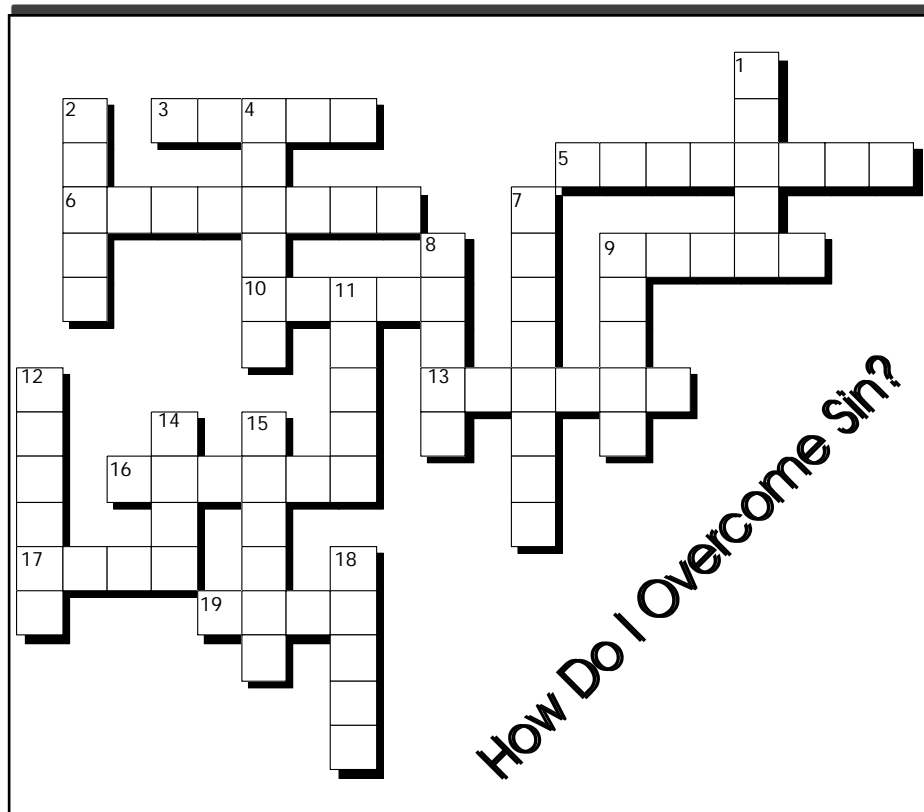
10. How is the "new man" renewed? _____

True or False

1. T or F : John wrote, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And when anyone sins, . . ."
2. T or F : 1 John 3:9 teaches that one who "has been born of God does not sin . . ."
3. T or F : Christians can "have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
4. T or F : Jesus, "who committed no sin," does not serve as an example for Christians.
5. T or F : When one is raised with Jesus, he begins to walk in a newness of life.
6. T or F : The grace of God serves as an excuse for Christians to sin.
7. T or F : Whomever we choose to obey becomes our master.
8. T or F : Christians are to seek those things which are above.
9. T or F : Christians are to bear with one another and forgive one another.
10. T or F : As a "new man," it is not necessary that Christians put on love.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

3. "For he who has died has been _____ from sin."
5. "Arise and be _____, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
6. "And if anyone sins, we have an _____ with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
9. The baptism of Romans 6 is _____ baptism.
10. Let the _____ of God rule in your hearts.
13. Christians are to put on _____ mercies.
16. Christians are to keep anger, wrath, _____, blasphemy and filthy language out of their lives.
17. Christians are to put to death fornication, uncleanness, passion, _____ desires, and covetousness.
19. Christians are to put on _____, which is the bond of perfection.

Down

1. "... but present yourselves to God as being _____ from the dead ..."
2. "... yet you obeyed from the _____ that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."
4. With every temptation, God will provide a way of _____.
7. "Death no longer has _____ over Him."
8. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His _____?"
9. "For the _____ of sin is death, ..."
11. Christians should seek those things which are _____.
12. "But now having been set free from sin, and having become _____ of God."
14. This man wrote, "How shall we who died to sin live any long in it?"
15. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all _____.
18. "Therefore do not let sin _____ in your mortal body, ..."

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