

The Christian and Sin

by Steve Grochow

Many people who claim to be Christians do not think it is possible for them to live without sinning every day. The reasons for this belief usually center around the idea that no human being is perfect. Some blame Adam while others blame the devil. Still, others blame their sin on a sin nature, the old man, human nature or the flesh. Some try to quote Paul from Romans chapter seven saying something like, "The good things that I want to do I do not accomplish and the evil things I do not want to do I end up doing."

Many church leaders teach that it is impossible for any Christian to ever live without sin. The church that I was brought up in actually taught that every person, including Christians sin every day in thought word or deed. They taught that sin was natural or normal for every believer and that the only way to escape sin was to physically die. The people who were under this teaching accepted sin as part of their everyday life. They never expected to really be free from sin through the power of Christ.

It seems to be a common belief that a Christian will continue to sin until they day he dies. These people believe that death somehow will set him free from the power of sin. If this was true then, death would be more powerful than God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Death does not have any power to change anyone's moral character. Death can never change a person who dies in his own disobedience and rebellion. This person will spend eternity in hell.

It is true that every person will make mistakes. We do not have all knowledge and will make many mistakes. True mistakes are not sin. No person will go to hell for just making a mistake. Christ's death and suffering on the cross did not cover true mistakes. There is no rebellion or disobedience in making a mistake. When a person makes a true mistake, he is not guilty of any crime. No one needs to repent for a making a true mistake.

Sin is the choice of self-gratification or self-indulgence. It is the will committed to self gratification. When a person sins it is an act of rebellion and disobedience. The bible teaches that sin is a crime worthy of eternal punishment. The problem is, many people think their evil crimes are just mistakes. For an example, a married man has an affair with another woman and then calls it a mistake. This is not just a simple mistake but a sin and a crime.

Luke 13:5 "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish." He must repent of his crimes before God will forgive him. Yes you will make mistakes but make sure if you sin that you never consider it just a simple mistake deceiving your own self.

Before going any further I want to make it very clear that no person will overcome sin or will be conformed into God's image with a selfish heart or from legal motives. Many people try to obey God's commands using carnal methods. They rely on their own

strength, energy and will power in their attempt to fulfill God's requirements. What happens is this, they hear a law and they know that they should obey this law. Then they vow to keep this law and of course they fail. Then they re-vow that this will not happen again only to find they fail again. This may happen over and over until they get so discouraged that they give up thinking that it is impossible to obey God. The real problem here is that all this is done without receiving Christ's grace or power. No amount of will power, positive thinking, possibility thinking or any other method that comes from a selfish heart or legal motives will ever fulfill God's law. If any person could truly obey God this way then it never would have been necessary for Christ to come to earth and to suffer and die.

This above example is the very condition that Paul referred to in Romans seven. Paul was not in this condition when he wrote this chapter even though he wrote it in the first person. Romans seven is an example of a person living under the law. This person is being motivated by the fear of punishment and the hope of future reward. He is trying to fulfill the law using his own will power, strength and energy. No one will ever overcome sin this way.

Romans eight is an example of a person experiencing the true grace of the gospel through Jesus Christ. This person is truly free from the power and domain of sin. He truly loves God and is motivated by love and keeps all of God's requirements. This was Paul real condition of time of this writing. These two chapters describe two completely opposing states of being. You are either living under the law or truly experiencing the grace of the gospel. No other choice is possible. No person can live in both states at the same time because they are 100% opposite of each other. Please take the time to examine these chapters to find out what your current state of being is. Are you now under the law or truly enjoying the freedom of the gospel? If you are living under the law, then you need to repent and take hold of Christ until you truly experience His power over sin in your life.

True repentance is a change of the hearts' supreme preference. It is the change from supremely living for self pleasure to totally living for God. It is possible for a sinner to break a habit or to change some outward action but all he ends up doing is exchanging one form of selfishness for one that may appear less disgusting. For example a sinner can stop smoking or drinking without true repentance. This person has no true obedience. He is still living to bring himself self pleasure.

The true gospel of Christ has more than enough power to slay every sin. Through Christ a person can in reality fulfill the law every day and be in 100% obedience. I am aware that there is a teaching that states that after a person accepts Christ as his savior that God sees him holy and obedient no matter what his actual real state is. He is somehow made legally holy and righteous. Nowhere in the bible does it say that God sees any rebellious and disobedient person as holy and righteous. Christ did not give God special blood stained glasses that let Him see any disobedient person righteous and holy. God only justifies repentant sinners. God is not stupid, if a person is disobedient and rebellious then He sees it and knows it.

Now we will look at what the bible really says about sin, human nature, the old man and the flesh.

1. The true Christian keeps God's commandments.

I John 5:2-3 "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God we keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandment and his commandments are not grievous.

I John 2:3-5 "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

2. The true Christian practices righteousness.

I John 2:29 "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

I John 3:6-10 "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him. Little children, let no one deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning, for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doeth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

3. The true Christian actually fulfills the law.

Romans 8:4 "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

4. True faith does not remove the law but establishes it.

Romans 3:31 "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law."

5. The true Christian does not practice sin.

I John 3:2-8 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither

known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

6. He overcomes the world, the flesh and the devil.

I John 5:4 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

7. God has provided everything we will ever need to be like Him and escape worldly lust.

II Peter 1:3-4 "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

8. He will have much fruit.

John 15:4-6 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Christ expects the Christian to show the fruit of the Spirit that the Bible says is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23). Abiding in Christ and bearing fruit is a command of Christ. Either you abide in Christ or you do not. Either you bear true fruit or you do not. It is obvious that if you do not bear fruit then you do not abide in Christ.

Luke 6:44-46 "For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. And why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

You are not a Christian if you call Christ your Lord but do not keep his sayings.

9. He is really and actually free from the power and the domain of sin. Romans 6:6-7 "Knowing this that our old self was crucified with Christ that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; For he who died is freed from sin."

Romans 6:11-12 "Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, once for all; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Romans 6:14" For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace."

Christ came to save us out of our sins, not from being human. There is no crime or sin in being human. God not only expects every Christian to live in a state of moral perfection, he demands it.

Matt. 5:48 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

I Peter 1:16 "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." God is not selfish nor does He live for selfish reasons. We are to have the same aim and to live for the same end that He does. It is an essential requirement of salvation that we must have at the present time or not have at all. A Christian can grow in maturity but he must love God 100% at any point in time. He must always love God with all his heart, with all his strength and with all his might at any stage of growth. When we truly love God totally, we will obey all the light which He has given us.

Do not be deceived. If you do not keep God's word, you are not a Christian and if you continue in your rebellion you will spend eternity in hell. A person who calls himself a Christian who hears the word but doesn't keep it or do it deceives himself. (James 1:22)

Many people today consider themselves saved and most of these think that they will go to heaven when they die. True Christianity is the very life and essence of the triune God living inside the believer. This life is not something that God gives but is Himself, Christ and the Holy Spirit living and dwelling within the believer.

The purpose of salvation is not to get any person to heaven but to bring a person into conformity to God and His word. If a person does not receive Christ in a way that sets him truly free from the power of sin then he will never go to heaven. Heaven is not for the disobedient or rebellious. It is not for a person who practices sin or for the person who does not truly love God. I John 5:11-12 "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life; and he that hath not the son hath not life."

It is as a result of this relationship that true holiness, righteousness, and good works flow. Salvation brings a person into this living relationship. The results of this relationship are:

1. The pardon and forgiveness of sin.
2. Sanctification and holy living. True obedience and freedom from sin.
3. The escape from hell and the glory of heaven.

The gospel has made full provision for overcoming the world, the flesh, the devil and all temptation.

1. The world. I John 5:4-5 "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ."

2. The flesh. Gal. 5:16 "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

3. The devil. Eph.6:16 "The shield of faith shall quench all fiery darts of the evil one."

4. All temptation, every temptation has a way of escape. I Cor. 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye be able to bear it." Everything that God offers man is in promise form. But before a person can receive any promise of God, he must have these things.

1. He must have some idea or concept of what the promise is and what it means.

2. He must believe that the promise applies him. How can he receive a promise if he does believe that it does not include him?

3. He must have confidence in the character of God. He must believe that God really means what He says and that He is willing and able to bring the promise to pass.

4. He knows that no promise that God gives is automatic. If the promises of God were automatic then everyone would go to heaven no matter what. He must fulfill all conditions and be active in doing whatever is necessary to get the results promised. True faith is always active. Faith is never passive or idle. It is even aggressive and bold in using the necessary means to receive the promised results.

5. Then he must take hold of this promise and not let go until he has truly experienced the actual results.

No person will ever overcome sin as long as he thinks it is impossible for him to stop sinning. As long as a person considers sin normal he will never exercise faith in God's promise to set him free. It seems that most people who claim to be saved still expect to sin every single day. They consider themselves safe and secure in Jesus's arms and heaven bound when in reality they do not really love God nor keep His commandments. Do not be deceived, if this you then you need to repent and really experience Christ as your Savior over sin.

I hope you are familiar with the story of the twelve spies. God had provided the promise land to the people of Israel. He brought them out of the land of Egypt with mighty miracles and signs. God lead them to the promised land and they decided to send out twelve leaders to spy out the land. Ten of these leaders returned with a negative report saying that they could not posses the land that God had already provided because of

giants living there. Only two spies came back saying that through God they could conquer and possess the land. They also saw the giants but knew that these giants were just grasshoppers in comparison to God's great power and resources. The people then had to choose between these two reports. Instead of believing God, they were filled with unbelief and discouragement and they believed the ten that gave the evil report. (See Numbers 13).

This example shows that the majority is not always right and that leaders can give an evil report. There are many leaders today teaching that it is impossible for a Christian to live without sin. They tell you all about the giants and why you will fail. If you chose to believe them, you will die in your sins. Why not instead listen to truth about God's great power over sin and how through His strength these giants become as small grasshoppers easily stepped on?

God had promised them the land and had provided everything possible for them to enter in and to enjoy all his provision. They refused to believe God and died in disobedience. The question is, are you going to follow their example?

Heb. 3:15-19 "While it is said, today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Heb. 4:1-2 "Let us fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Heb. 4:11 "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

God has already provided everything you could ever possibly need to overcome every sin. He expects you to take what He has made available to you so that you will actually overcome sin in your life.

Isaiah 1:19-20 "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Now you must decide who to believe. Are you going to believe God or some evil report? Yes there are giants but through God's great power and grace you can conquer them all. You can be more than a conqueror through Christ and triumph over all sin.