

Overcoming Sin

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Part I

The problem

Chapter 1

What is sin?

Over the generations since Jesus died for the sins of man, many have wrestled with the concept and reality of sin. What is it? Can an action on the part of one person constitute sin, while the same action by another not be sin? Some in modern cultures, even some who claim to be Christians, suggest that sin is not a real issue for today. Or they may pronounce that sin is a social issue, that the individual is not capable of sin, but societal problems cause “sin”. These tend to claim that repentance from sin only makes sense at a societal level. However, it doesn’t take a deep reading of the Bible to understand that these declarations about sin are *wrong*. Actually, not just wrong, but evil. Anyone who purports to define sin this way is not obedient to the Bible, and, by definition, not a Christian.

So, what is sin according to the Bible?

The most common word in the New Testament translated “sin” is hamartia.

Strong's ἁμαρτία (hamartia, pronounced ham-ar-tee'-ah) 'sin' (G0266)
(Definite article Feminine Singular Genitive)
sin, wrongdoing; usually any act contrary to the will and law of God

Wikipedia The term hamartia derives from the Greek ἁμαρτία, from ἁμαρτάνειν hamartánein, which means "to miss the mark" or "to err". It is most often associated with Greek tragedy, although it is also used in Christian theology.

Hamartia as it pertains to dramatic literature was first used by Aristotle in his Poetics. In tragedy, hamartia is commonly understood to refer to the protagonist's error or tragic flaw that leads to a chain of plot actions culminating in a reversal of their good fortune to bad. What qualifies as the error or flaw can include an error resulting from ignorance, an error of judgment, a flaw in character, or a wrongdoing. The spectrum of meanings has invited debate among critics and scholars and different interpretations among dramatists.

The definition labeled “Strong's” above is the one from the Exhaustive Bible Concordance written under the direction of James Strong and released in 1890.

The one labeled “Wikipedia” contains excerpts from the Wikipedia article about hamartia.

Based on these things, we can see that hamartia, the word used for sin in the New Testament, is most often defined as “to miss the mark”, or “to err”. But implicit in the word is the sense of internal and substantive failing, or the “tragic flaw”, on the part of the one committing hamartia.

Let’s consider how the Bible defines sin. In Genesis, the Bible tells how God created man, Adam and Eve. God gave Adam one command.

Genesis 2:16-17 (UKJV)

16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, **Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat:**
17. But of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it:** for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

So, Adam had one job. Avoid eating of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Unfortunately, Adam fell short in his obedience to this one command.

Genesis 3:1-6 (UKJV)

1. Now the serpent was **more subtle** than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, All of **you shall not eat of every tree** of the garden?
2. And the woman said unto the serpent, **We may eat** of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
3. But of **the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden**, God has said, All of **you shall not eat** of it, neither shall all of you touch it, lest all of you die.
4. And the serpent said unto the woman, All of **you shall not surely die:**
5. For God does know that in the day all of you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and all of **you shall be as gods**, knowing good and evil.
6. And when **the woman** saw that **the tree** was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree **to be desired to make one wise**, she **took of the fruit** thereof, and **did eat**, and **gave also unto her husband** with her; and **he did eat**.

Adam disobeyed God. You might say, “Well, Eve disobeyed God.” And she did. The command from Adam to not eat went through the chain of authority that God had set up in the Garden (From God, through Adam to his wife and children). However, Eve was deceived; Adam was not. Adam knew it was wrong, and he was responsible as the authority in the relationship. At any rate, because of the sin of Adam, all men are born in sin.

Psalms 51:5 (UKJV)

5. Behold, I was **formed in iniquity**; and **in sin did my mother conceive me**.

Why is that? Because Adam was the delegated authority of the earth. When he sinned, man fell, but so did all of creation. His sin reflected in his descendants until Jesus was born.

Romans 5:12 (UKJV)

12. Wherefore, as **by one man sin entered into the world**, and **death by sin**; and so death **passed upon all men, for that all have sinned**:

Romans 3:23 (UKJV)

23. For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;

So, all have sinned. Man, essentially, has a sin problem, a problem with missing the mark that the Creator has established.

1 John 3:4 (UKJV)

4. Whosoever commits sin **transgresses also the law**: for **sin is the transgression** of the law.

Leviticus 18:5 (UKJV)

5. All of you shall therefore **keep my statutes**, and my **judgments**: which if a man do, he shall **live in them**: I am the LORD.

If life comes from keeping the law, as the Old Testament teaches, and you transgress the law, life just flew out the window. This is the problem man has suffered with since the fall.

Matthew 5:18-20 (UKJV)

18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from **the law**, till all be fulfilled.
19. **Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments**, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
20. For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**, all of you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus made it clear that we are to obey the commandments, and that anyone who did not do so would be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

All throughout the New Testament, this concept of the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God is discussed. The Kingdom of Heaven is the place where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 25:31-46 (UKJV)

31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he **shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats:**
33. And he shall set the **sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.**
34. Then shall the King **say** unto them **on his right hand**, Come, all of you blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
35. For I was an hungered, and all of you gave me food: I was thirsty, and all of you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and all of you took me in:
36. Naked, and all of you clothed me: I was sick, and all of you visited me: I was in prison, and all of you came unto me.
37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, and fed you? or thirsty, and gave you drink?
38. When saw we you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you?
39. Or when saw we you sick, or in prison, and came unto you?
40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as all of you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, all of you have done it unto me.
41. Then shall he say also unto them on the **left hand**, **Depart from me, all of you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:**
42. For I was an hungered, and all of you gave me no food: I was thirsty, and all of you gave me no drink:
43. I was a stranger, and all of you took me not in: naked, and all of you clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and all of you visited me not.
44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we you an hungered, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto you?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as all of you did it not to one of the least of these, all of you did it not to me.
46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We are not going to talk about the deep and rich theological implications of what Jesus says here in this parable. Suffice it to say, He expects us to overcome a selfish, self-centered lifestyle to the point where we love people and serve them the way this parable describes. This is the Christian lifestyle, the lifestyle of transformation and liberty.

In this book, when a Scripture says that someone who practices something has no place in the Kingdom of God or in God's inheritance, you now know what it means based on the above Scripture. They are **not** destined to inherit the blessings that God has reserved for His people from the foundation of the world; they **will** receive everlasting punishment. Don't be deceived by the words of men; the Bible is clear on this subject.

Isaiah 64:6 (UKJV)

6. But **we are all as an unclean thing**, and all our **righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and **our iniquities**, like the wind, **have taken us away**.

Here, the Scripture talks about sin making us unclean and like filthy rags. It says that our iniquities have taken us away. The imagery here is comparing sin to the hideous disease of leprosy.

Leviticus 13:45-46 (UKJV)

45. And **the leper** in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and **shall cry, Unclean, unclean**.
46. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be **defiled**; he is **unclean**: he shall **dwel alone; without the camp shall his habitation be**.

We are all unclean. We are all unrighteous. Our sin separates us from God and it separates us from others in our hearts. It forces us to live outside the camp, outside of rich relationship with God and others.

Galatians 5:19-23 (UKJV)

19. Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, worldly jealousies, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which **I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**
22. But **the fruit of the Spirit** (o. pneuma) is love, (o. agape) joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23. Meekness, wilful restrain: against such there is no law.

Sin is the work of the flesh (also known as the carnal nature, the sin nature, or the “old man” as used by Paul). The flesh is the nature which is born in all men and women because of the sin of Adam. The flesh fills us with longing for things we should not have, and drives us to perform actions which will separate us from God. There is one way to deal with the flesh: hang it on the cross with Jesus. We will talk about that later.

Chapter 2

Where does sin come from?

So, we see that sin is disobedience and transgression of God's law and desire. It is missing the mark because of the fatal flaw in the sinner. As sinful man, with an evil nature passed down to us from Adam, we are driven to sin by the carnal nature.

Genesis 3:6 (UKJV)

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

1 John 2:16 (UKJV)

16. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Notice the one-to-one relationship between Gen 3:6 and 1 John 2:16:

Genesis 3:6	1 John 2:16
good for food	lust of the flesh
pleasant to the eyes	lust of the eyes
desired to make one wise	pride of life

This is a good picture of what motivates us to sin. The same motivation which worked in Eve works in us today.

Genesis 4:4-7 (UKJV)

4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And **Cain was very angry**, and his countenance fell.

6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why are you angry? and why is your countenance fallen?
7. **If you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him.**

In this story, sin has already entered into the world through Adam and Eve. Now, Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, were interacting with God. Abel's sacrifice was acceptable but Cain's was not, and Cain grew angry. God told Cain some things about the jealousy and anger that swelled in his heart.

- If you do well, you will be accepted
- If you do not do well, sin lies (crouches) at the door (like a predator)
 - You shall be the desire of sin (it desires you, it wants your life)
 - You shall (must) rule over sin

The picture here is one of sin driving you and chasing you, like a predator, forcing you to flee in a certain direction. It wants to take you and destroy your life, and the only hope you have is to rule over it.

Proverbs 30:12 (UKJV)

12. There is a generation that are **pure in their own eyes**, and **yet is not washed from their filthiness**.

Isaiah 5:21 (UKJV)

21. Woe unto them that are **wise in their own eyes**, and prudent in their own sight!

Deuteronomy 12:8 (UKJV)

8. All of you shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, **every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes**.

Judges 17:6 (UKJV)

6. In those days there was no king in Israel, but **every man did that which was right in his own eyes**.

Judges 21:25 (UKJV)

25. In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was **right in his own eyes**.

Proverbs 12:15 (UKJV)

15. The way of a fool is **right in his own eyes**: but he that **hearkens unto counsel is wise**.

Proverbs 21:2 (UKJV)

2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the **LORD ponders the hearts**.

These Scriptures point out another of the core motivations of sin. People want to do what is right in their own eyes, without regard for what God thinks. Everyone wants to be in charge of their own lives, to call the shots and be in control of their own destiny. If this is a healthy independence that is rooted in responsibility and principle, then it can be a positive thing. However, if this is rooted in a rebellious undercurrent best exemplified by a spoiled child pushing back on everything the parents tell him or her to do, this is not okay.

This is a fundamental desire of the carnal nature, and it is almost always an evil desire. God created you and He deserves to have your life and to tell you how to live. This not just for His own sake, but for your sake and the sake of those around you. He has given you free will, and He will not force you to submit to His will, but if you call yourself a Christian and don't do what He says, you are deceiving yourself. If you don't do what He says, Jesus is not your Lord, and hence, you are no Christian.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 (UKJV)

49. Behold, this was the **iniquity** of your sister **Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness** was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the **poor and needy**.
50. And they were **haughty, and committed abomination** before me: therefore **I took them away** as I saw good.

This shows what it means to be taken away. Sodom was destroyed completely by God in a rain of brimstone and fire. It also shows the progression of sinfulness. They were arrogant, overindulging, at ease and idle. They did nothing to help the poor and needy. This led to them committing abomination. God took them away.

Often, unbelievers do not want to hear things like this from the Bible. But God has a right to expect you to produce a certain kind of fruit. He has a right to tell you how to live. And if you refuse, He has a right to deal with you as He did Sodom.

Mark 7:18-23 (UKJV)

18. And he says unto them, Are all of you so without understanding also? Do all of you not perceive, that **whatsoever thing from without enters into the man, it cannot defile him**;

19. Because it enters not into his heart, but into the belly, and goes out into the draught, purging all meats?
20. And he said, **That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man.**
21. **For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,**
22. **Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:**
23. **All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

In short, sin comes from the heart of man. Sin is not a social issue, although it affects the social realm and relationships. Sin is not a collective problem. Sin is a problem with the heart of each individual. Out of the heart of a man comes evil. The conclusion is irresistible; men, as individuals, are evil.

If your gospel says that men are basically good and sin is a collective problem, you are not believing the right gospel. I suggest, as Mark 1:15 says, that you repent and believe the (real biblical) gospel.

Chapter 3

Why is sin a problem?

Matthew 13:38-43 (UKJV)

38. The field is the world; the **good seed** are the **children of the kingdom**; but the **tares** are the **children of the wicked one**;
39. The **enemy that sowed them is the devil**; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.
40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.
41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom **all things that offend**, and **them which do iniquity**;
42. And shall **cast them into a furnace of fire**: there shall be **wailing and gnashing of teeth**.
43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.

This is one of the harder parables that Jesus told. It says, basically, that unbelievers will be sown in the church of Jesus by the devil, and that the Lord will leave them there until the end of the age. Then, He will have them gathered first and cast into the fire where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This imagery of *wailing and gnashing of teeth* is used by Jesus to talk of hell.

To offend as used here means literally *the movable stick or trigger of a trap*. These are not the trivial, immature things which cause people to be offended, like you might see with political pundits expressing outrage. These are things that cause people to stumble, that cause them to be entrapped and drawn into sin. So, the angel-reapers will gather out of the Kingdom of God those who entrap, ensnare and draw into sin, and those who do iniquity.

The message is clear here. Those who practice sin will be taken out of the Kingdom of God and cast into the furnace. Yes, there is a real hell and people who practice sin and ensnare others to sin will be cast there.

This is not a popular message in many churches. But it is part of the gospel of Jesus. Those who continue to live in sin, whether they are in the church or not, will be cast into the furnace in the last day, and will have nothing to do with the Kingdom of God.

This is why sin is a problem.

Matthew 13:47-50 (UKJV)

47. Again, the **kingdom of heaven is like unto a net**, that was cast into the sea, and **gathered of every kind**:
48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and **gathered the good into vessels**, but **cast the bad away**.
49. So shall it be at the **end of the world**: the **angels** shall come forth, and **sever the wicked from among the just**,
50. And shall **cast them into the furnace of fire**: there shall be **wailing and gnashing of teeth**.

Again, at the end everyone will be gathered as a net would gather fish. The good will be kept, but the bad will be cast into the furnace, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. The good are the just (the righteous, those who keep God's commands, the innocent, the blameless). The bad are the wicked (lit. those who cause peril, pain and trouble; the wicked, the evil). Those who practice sin (the wicked) will be cast into the furnace of fire, even though they are brought out of the world with the righteous.

This is why sin is a problem.

Isaiah 59:1-2 (UKJV)

1. Behold, the **LORD's hand** is not shortened, **that it cannot save**; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:
2. But **your iniquities have separated between you and your God**, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

God's hand is not shortened that He cannot save, and His ear is not heavy that He can't hear. The problem is not God. The problem is our sin which separates us from God.

Luke 13:28 (UKJV)

28. There shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, when all of you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and **you yourselves thrust out**.

Those who assumed they would be in the kingdom will be in torment when they see God's people there and themselves thrust out. We know from verses later in this chapter that they are thrust out because they practice sin, and the one who practices sin has no place in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 7:21 (UKJV)

21. Not every one that says unto me, **Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.**

Doing the will of the Father is necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not enough to call Jesus Lord. This passage makes it sound like doing the will of the Father is a passive thing that anyone can fall into casually. We know this is not the case from other Scripture. Consider the Our Father prayer from Mt 6:

Matthew 6:9-13 (UKJV)

9. After this manner therefore pray all of you: **Our Father** which are in heaven, **Hallowed be your name.**
10. **Your kingdom come, Your will be done** in earth, as it is in heaven.
11. **Give us this day our daily bread.**
12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For **your is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.** Amen.

Here is what I want you to see from this: First, the prayer is not, “my Father”, “give me”, “forgive me”, “lead me”, “deliver me”; but “our Father”, “give us”, “forgive us”, “lead us”, “deliver us”, and so on. Also, we are to pray this prayer daily (give us our daily bread). We are to start with praise to the Father, and finish with praise to the Father. Finally, in context of our current discussion, we are to ask that His kingdom come and His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

His Kingdom is the place where He is honored and glorified as the King. We are to pray daily for that to come to earth. His will is done immediately in heaven by untold angels who respond to His every command. We are to pray daily for that to come to earth.

What this prayer is telling us to do is to inject ourselves into the workings of God in the earth. USE ME to bring your Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. USE ME to see your will done on earth as it is in heaven. This is not a trivial task. It will cost you everything. You will be resisted at every opportunity. Your sustenance will be threatened. You will be tempted, and hounded by evil. You will be pounded on by the enemy, and you will sense their fear and hatred. The devil does not want this, because the will of the Father being done and His kingdom coming will cause the kingdoms of the world (including the kingdom of darkness) to become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ (Rev 11:15).

You can be part of this. You can be part of bringing the Kingdom of the Father to the earth. You can be part of seeing His will done on earth as it is in heaven.

But sin will keep you from being part of His Kingdom.
This is why sin is a problem.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (UKJV)

9. Know all of you not that the **unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
11. And **such were some of you:** but all of **you are washed**, but all of **you are sanctified**, but all of **you are justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit (o. pneuma) of our God.

We know what not inheriting the Kingdom of God means – you either inherit the kingdom or you get cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his minions. Hear what Paul is saying here: if you practice fornication (you are a pornos, one who practices porneia), you will not inherit the kingdom of God. Porneia had a clear meaning in the culture of Paul’s time. It was the practice of sexually penetrating one or more person(s) or creature(s) other than your spouse, or allowing yourself to be sexually penetrated by one or more person(s) or creature(s) other than your spouse. It included incest, orgies, prostitution, gay sex, and bestiality.

Notice Paul is talking about people who are addicted to and practice inordinate sex, people who worship idols, people who fool around on their wives, men who penetrate other men and men who are the recipients of such penetration, thieves, people who long for what other people have, people addicted to wine and to wild parties, and people who tend to swindle others out of their property. Those who practice such things without repenting will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil.

This is not a popular position in our culture. It was not a popular position in Paul’s culture, either. And that makes sense, because our culture has a value system that is fundamentally pagan, and as far as pagans were concerned, all of these practices were just fine. However, they are not just fine in the eyes of God. The eternal word of God represents a value system that does not bow to the value system of the current culture.

But notice that the warning is not the end of the story. In v. 11, Paul says that “such were some of you”, but you were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit. Condemnation for evil behavior is not the end of the gospel. Hope held out to those who lived this way is the gospel of Jesus. Yes, pornos, including gay practitioners, who are washed, sanctified and justified, those who forsake their old lifestyle and live as God commands, are accepted into God’s fold.

Those who turn from their old lifestyles and live for Jesus, forsaking the old practices, will live. Those who continue to practice these lifestyles will not live. This is why sin is a problem.

Galatians 5:19-21 (UKJV)

19. Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, worldly jealousies, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Again, Paul provides a clear picture of the type of lifestyles which keep people out of God's kingdom. The thing I want you to see here is that these things are works of the flesh. Paul's message was clear; the lust for inordinate sex, the lust for evil worship practices, the jealousy and strife and hating, all emanate from the flesh, the carnal nature. Those who practice the works of the carnal nature will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:20 (UKJV)

20. For I say unto you, That except **your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**, all of you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 23:13 (UKJV)

13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for all of **you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men**: for all of you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer all of you them that are entering to go in.

Matthew 23:26 (UKJV)

26. You blind Pharisee, **cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter**, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Matthew 12:33 (UKJV)

33. Either make the **tree good**, and **his fruit good**; or else make **the tree corrupt**, and **his fruit corrupt**: for the tree is known by his fruit.

Matthew 25:45-49 (UKJV)

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as all of you did it not to one of the least of these, all of you did it not to me.**
46. And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into **life eternal**.

Matthew 23:27 (UKJV)

27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for all of you are like unto **whitewashed sepulchers**, which indeed **appear beautiful** outward, but are within **full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.**

James 4:17-21 (UKJV)

17. Therefore to **him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.**

So here Jesus says that our righteousness needs to exceed that of scribes and Pharisees. That was a shocker to His disciples. Scribes and Pharisees were the gold standard of behavior in the time of Jesus. They fasted regularly, they did “good works”, they acted religious more than anyone else. If you happen to know an old church lady who does everything the Bible says and makes sure everyone knows about it, you have a good example of what the Pharisees were like on the outside.

But the Pharisees had a problem. The outside looked good, but the inside was corrupt. They appeared righteous, but were full of uncleanness. Jesus was frustrated with their hypocrisy. He said they should make the tree good with good fruit, or make it bad with bad fruit. Don't conflate the two. You know what is right and good – do it. They didn't do it, however.

If you have a baby with a soiled diaper, you don't just put a clean diaper on top of that; you clean the baby off and then put on a clean diaper. Anything else is unnatural and twisted. And so were the religious leaders in Jerusalem. This is why Jesus said the righteousness of a Christian should exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Our righteousness should not just be external, but internal. We should be cleansed from the core from sin. Take off the diaper, clean off the baby, and put on a clean diaper; don't just cover over the soiled diaper with a fresh one.

Ephesians 5:3-7 (UKJV)

3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it **not be once named among you, as becomes saints**;
4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
5. For this all of you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

6. **Let no man deceive you with vain words:** (o. logos) for **because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.**
7. **Be not all of you therefore partakers with them.**

Finally, Paul gives us another list of evil behavior that we as Christians should turn from. He again makes it clear that anyone who practices these has no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. But he says something else as well here. Because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience, so do not be partakers with them.

As Christians, we should not be children of disobedience, but children of obedience. We should not be partakers with the world of evil practices. If our lives do not reflect the value system of the Kingdom of God, God's wrath will come upon us, and we will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

This is why sin is a problem.

Chapter 4

God commands His children to overcome sin

It doesn't take a deep dive into Scripture to see that God wants his children to overcome sin.

1 John 2:1 (UKJV)

1. My little children, these things write I unto you, **that all of you sin not**. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1 John 2:12 (UKJV)

12. I write unto you, little children, because **your sins are forgiven you** for his name's sake.

1 John 4:4 (UKJV)

4. All of you are of God, little children, and **have overcome** them: because **greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world**.

1 John 5:21 (UKJV)

21. Little children, **keep yourselves from idols**. Amen.

John is clear in these verses. God wants us to not sin. God wants us to walk in the forgiveness He provides.

Isaiah 1:17-20 (UKJV)

17. Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18. Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: **though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**
19. If all of you be willing and obedient, all of you shall eat the good of the land:
20. But if all of you refuse and rebel, all of you shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.

God wants you to come to Him and deal with your sin between He and you. He wants you to reason together with Him. If you do this, he will make you white as snow and as wool.

Hebrews 5:13-14 (UKJV)

13. For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word (o. logos) of righteousness: for he is a babe.
14. But strong food belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by **reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

It is God's purpose that everyone grow up from being a baby in Christ, craving only the milk of the word, to being a spiritual parent. An important part of that is having your senses exercised to discern both good and evil. What does this mean? It means, you learn what is right and wrong, and through your experience you overcome sin. *This is what God wants for you.* This is how you go from being a baby to growing up in Him.

Colossians 1:9-14 (UKJV)

9. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to **pray for you**, and to desire that all of you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
10. That all of you might **walk worthy of the Lord** unto all pleasing, being **fruitful in every good work**, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
11. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;
12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
13. Who has **delivered us from the power of darkness**, and has **translated us into the kingdom** of his (o. agape) dear Son:
14. In whom we have **redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

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Redemption for our lives comes through the blood of Jesus. What is redemption? It is basically a buy-back program. You were a sinner, given over to a sinful lifestyle, and Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for your sin. The wages of sin is death. As in the Old Testament, the Lamb of God purchased your right standing with God through His blood. Your sins are forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross. As a result, God wants us to walk worthy of the Lord, and fruitful in every good work. From the parable of the tree, we know this means that the fruit on the inside is as good as the fruit on the outside; make the tree good with good fruit or make it bad with bad fruit.

Psalms 139:23-24 (UKJV)

23. **Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:**
24. And see if there be any **wicked way in me**, and **lead me** in the way everlasting.

Hebrews 12:6 (UKJV)

6. For whom the Lord loves he **chastens**, and **scourges every son** whom he receives.

Proverbs 3:12 (UKJV)

12. For whom the LORD loves he **corrects**; even as a father the son in whom he delights.

The Father of Jesus is a father. He will search out your heart by His Spirit, determine if there is any wicked way in you, and lead you away from sin. This, though, only if you let Him. He chastens you and corrects you because He loves you. You must yield to His work of correction.

1 John 1:8-10 (UKJV)

8. **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.
9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
10. **If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word (o. logos) is not in us.**

Hebrews 4:12 (UKJV)

12. For the **word (o. logos) of God** is active, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, (o. pneuma) and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

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We can't deal with our sin by denying it. We can't just say that we are clean when we are not. Again, make the tree good or make it bad. Jesus, the final fruit inspector, knows if the tree is good or bad. He will make the final determination that you are clean, and this He will do when you are truly clean. He does this through His word by His Spirit.

John 8:11 (UKJV)

11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn you: **go, and sin no more.**

Jesus did not condemn this woman. But He did tell her to go and sin no more. He is telling us the same thing.

Romans 6:1-23 (UKJV)

1. What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin**, that grace may abound?
2. **God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**
3. Know all of you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?**
4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should **walk in newness of life.**
5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
6. Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.**
7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.
8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him.
10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God.
11. Likewise **reckon all of you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin**, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
12. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that all of you should obey it in the lusts thereof.**
13. **Neither yield all of you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:** but yield yourselves unto God,

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as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14. For **sin shall not have dominion over you**: for all of you are not under the law, but under grace.
15. What then? **shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.**
16. Know all of you not, that to whom all of you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants all of you are to whom all of you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?
17. But God be thanked, that **all of you were the servants of sin**, but **all of you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**
18. Being then **made free from sin, all of you became the servants of righteousness.**
19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as all of you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
20. For when **all of you were the servants of sin**, all of you were free from righteousness.
21. What fruit had all of you then in those things whereof all of you are now ashamed? **for the end of those things is death.**
22. But now being **made free from sin, and become servants to God**, all of you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
23. For the **wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

It doesn't get much clearer than this. God does not want us to live in sin anymore. We are dead to sin; we should not let it reign in our mortal bodies. We should not obey the lusts of our mortal bodies. God wants us free from sin and servants of righteousness, servants of God. If you are living a lifestyle of sin, you are not a servant of God. The wages of sin is death; God's gift to us is eternal life through Jesus.

Romans 7:1-25 (UKJV)

1. Know all of you not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?
2. For the woman which has an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3. So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.
4. Wherefore, my brethren, all of you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that all of you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.
5. For **when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.**
6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; **that we should serve in newness of spirit, (o. pneuma) and not in the oldness of the letter.**
7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet.
8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.
9. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.
10. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.
11. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.
12. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.
13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.
14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal, sold under sin.**
15. **For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.**
16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.
17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but **sin that dwells in me.**
18. For I know that **in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing:** in order to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

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19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.
21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
24. O wretched man that I am! **who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**
25. I thank God **through Jesus Christ our Lord**. So then **with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin**.

The problem I have with sin is not God's commandment. The problem I have with sin is my flesh, with sin that dwells in me. No good thing dwells in my flesh. In order to overcome sin, we have to put to death the flesh. I can't do that in my own strength, but only in God's strength through Jesus.

Romans 8:1-17 (UKJV)

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who **walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**. (o. pneuma)
2. **For the law of the Spirit (o. pneuma) of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death**.
3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who **walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**. (o. pneuma)
5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit (o. pneuma) the things of the Spirit. (o. pneuma)
6. In order to be **carnally minded is death**; but to be **spiritually (o. pneuma) minded is life and peace**.
7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
8. So then **they that are in the flesh cannot please God**.
9. But all of you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, (o. pneuma) if so be that the **Spirit (o. pneuma) of God dwell in you**.

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Now if any man have not the Spirit (o. pneuma) of Christ, he is none of his.

10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit (o. pneuma) is life because of righteousness.
11. But if **the Spirit (o. pneuma) of him that raised up Jesus from the dead** dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also **restore life in your mortal bodies by his Spirit** (o. pneuma) that dwells in you.
12. Therefore, brethren, **we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.**
13. For if all of you **live after the flesh, all of you shall die:** but if all of you **through the Spirit (o. pneuma) do mortify the deeds of the body, all of you shall live.**
14. For as many as are **led by the Spirit** (o. pneuma) of God, they are the **sons of God.**
15. For all of you have not received the spirit (o. pneuma) of bondage again to fear; but all of you have received the Spirit (o. pneuma) of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
16. The Spirit (o. pneuma) itself **bears witness with our spirit, (o. pneuma) that we are the children of God:**
17. And **if children, then heirs;** heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Paul here tells us what we need to do to overcome sin in our lives. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ makes us free from the law of sin and death. We need to walk by the Spirit, have the mind of the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, have life restored to our mortal body by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, listen to the Spirit as He bears witness with our spirit. The Spirit has to have full access to our lives, to guide us, to teach us, to search out our hearts and correct us.

In short, it is the enabling of the Holy Spirit that allows us to walk free from sin. We don't have it in ourselves to be free from sin; the power comes from the Holy Spirit. What power, though. The same power that raised Jesus from the sin.

2 Timothy 2:19 (UKJV)

19. Nevertheless the **foundation of God** stands sure, having this seal, **The Lord knows them that are his.** And, **Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.**

There are two truths (seals) regarding the foundation of God listed here. A seal is a device which would show the authority of the one who sealed it. For example,

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a king would seal all communication to someone under him — a general, for example. This would make sure that everyone knew it came from the king. God's foundation is sealed with the following:

- The Lord knows those who are His. This is relevant to true repentance. When Jesus told the parable of the virgins, where the bridegroom locked out the unwise virgins, He says to them, "I never knew you." Not, "You never knew me." This is important. It is not enough for us to know the Bible, or to "know" Jesus. He has to know us. In Rev 3:20, He stands at the door and knocks. When someone opens the door, He comes into them and sups with them, and they with Him. This is what it means for Jesus to know you. He must abide in you by His Spirit; He must live in you. If He doesn't, you have no part of Him. What does this have to do with repentance? Well, it takes repentance to hear the knock and open the door. In fact, opening the door is a symbol or a type of repentance.
- Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. This is foundational to God's Kingdom. If we claim to live by the name of Jesus, we must turn from sin and live righteously.

Colossians 1:21-23 (UKJV)

21. And you, that were sometime **alienated and enemies** in your mind by **wicked works**, yet **now has he reconciled**
22. **In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and irreproachable in his sight:**
23. If all of you **continue in the faith grounded and settled**, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which all of you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

We were alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works (sins). The Lord reconciled us in his body through death, so that we could be holy and blameless. This is God's will for our lives.

Colossians 2:11-15 (UKJV)

11. In whom also all of you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ:
12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also all of you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead.
13. And you, being **dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;**

14. Blotting out the **handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nailing it to his cross**;
15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Jesus took the handwriting of ordinances which was against us and nailed it to His cross. Because of that, we are the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor 5:21). This is our standing before the Lord. Because we were made righteous in Jesus, God wants us to put off the body of the sins of the flesh and live in righteousness for Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (UKJV)

23. **And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly**; and I pray God your whole spirit (o. pneuma) and soul and body be preserved **blameless** unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
24. **Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it.**

This work of sanctification is God's work, the work of Him who calls us. However, we can resist this work by continuing to live in sin. God wants us blameless; that is not just "right standing" before Him, that means free from sin, pure and holy.

Titus 3:3-8 (UKJV)

3. For we ourselves also were sometimes **foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.**
4. But after that the **kindness and love of God our Saviour** toward man appeared,
5. **Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the **washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit**; (o. pneuma)
6. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
7. That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
8. This is a faithful saying, (o. logos) and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that **they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.**

Situationally, we were saved from our evil works. This not by our works of righteousness, but by His work (washing of regeneration, renewing of the Holy Spirit). We are justified by His grace. However, having been justified (made

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right with God legally and situationally), we should be careful to maintain good works. We should sin no more and do the things which are good and profitable to men.

1 Peter 1:3-9,13-25 (UKJV)

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4. To an **inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled**, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,
5. **Who are kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
6. Wherein all of you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, all of you are in heaviness through manifold temptations:
7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:
8. Whom having not seen, all of you love; in whom, though now all of you see him not, yet believing, all of you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.
13. Wherefore **gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end** for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
14. As **obedient children**, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:
15. But as he which has called you is holy, so **be all of you holy** in all manner of conversation;
16. Because it is written, **Be all of you holy; for I am holy**.
17. And if all of you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:
18. Forasmuch as all of you know that all of you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

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21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.
22. Seeing all of you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit (o. pneuma) unto sincere love of the brethren, see that all of you **love one another with a pure heart fervently**:
23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word (o. logos) of God, which lives and abides for ever.
24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away:
25. But the word (o. rhema) of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word (o. rhema) which by the gospel is preached unto you.

We are to be holy as Jesus is holy. We are to love one another with a pure heart.

1 John 5:1-21 (UKJV)

1. Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves him that brings forth loves him also that is begotten of him.
2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and **keep his commandments**.
3. For this is the love (o. agape) of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.
4. For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.
5. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit (o. pneuma) that bears witness, because the Spirit (o. pneuma) is truth.
7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, (o. logos) and the Holy Spirit: (o. pneuma) and these three are one.
8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, (o. pneuma) and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son.

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10. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son.
11. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.
13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that all of you may know that all of you have eternal life, and that all of you may believe on the name of the Son of God.
14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us:
15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.
16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.
17. **All unrighteousness is sin:** and there is a sin not unto death.
18. We know that **whosoever is born of God sins not;** but **he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.**
19. And we know that we are of God, and **the whole world lies in wickedness.**
20. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.
21. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

1 John 3:1-10 (UKJV)

1. Behold, what manner of love (o. agape) the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.
2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does 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.
3. **And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.**

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4. Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.
5. And all of you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.
6. **Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him.**
7. Little children, let no man deceive you: **he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.**
8. **He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning.** For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might **destroy the works of the devil.**
9. **Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin;** for his seed remains in him: and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**
10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever does not righteousness is not of God,** neither he that loves not his brother.

God wants us, as those begotten of Him (born of Him) to keep ourselves from sin. This is a clear-cut message woven through Scripture. It takes considerable effort to not recognize this, although there are modern churches which are twisting Scripture to not provide the clear message.

This argument of John's in v. 9 seems circular.

- Whoever is born of God does not sin.
- His seed remains in him.
- He cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The point is this: it is twisted and unnatural for someone who has been born of God to sin. You are born of His seed, the incorruptible and pure word of God, and your spirit man has been transformed. Because of the new birth, your spirit person (I will say spirit man from here out – gender non specific) does not want to sin. Your flesh wants to sin, but your spirit man does not. You have a Scriptural obligation to follow your spirit man and not sin.

If you do not do righteousness, you are not of God. You are a child of the devil if you live in and practice disobedience to God.

Overcoming sin is not an option; it is a command. All Christians are commanded to live righteously, in holiness and without sin.

Chapter 5

But how?

To be pure as He is pure seems like an impossibility. Fortunately for us, God has made a way for us to deal with sin, so we don't have to be driven by the carnal nature anymore.

Romans 6:19-23 (UKJV)

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for **as all of you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity** unto iniquity; even so **now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.**
20. For when all of you were the **servants of sin**, all of you were free from righteousness.
21. What fruit had all of you then in those things whereof all of you are now ashamed? for **the end of those things is death.**
22. But now **being made free from sin**, and become **servants to God**, all of you have your **fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.**
23. For the **wages of sin is death**; but the **gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Galatians 1:1-5 (UKJV)

1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)
2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:
3. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

4. Who **gave himself for our sins**, that he might **deliver us from this present evil world**, according to the **will of God and our Father**:
5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Before Jesus came into our lives, we were servants of uncleanness and iniquity, servants of sin. The end of those things is death. However, we have now been made free from sin so we could be the servants of God. This is how we bear fruit unto holiness. The gift of God, eternal life through Jesus, is how we overcome sin. Jesus gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the evil world. This is the will of the Father, that we be delivered from sin.

Anyone living in sin who is trying to be a Christian and serve God has not appropriated the freedom Jesus provides from sin.

John 8:10-11 (UKJV)

10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, **Woman, where are those your accusers?** has no man condemned you?
11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.**

Jesus has the final word on who is condemned and who lives. Jesus knew the Pharisees; even though they looked clean and holy, they were not. In the same way, He knows if you are clean and holy inside or not. He has the final say on who is condemned and who isn't.

Think about the audacity and self-righteousness of the Pharisees. They caught this woman in adultery, in the very act. Ergo, there was a man with her. Where is the man? The Pharisees knew that Jesus cared about women. Obviously, they didn't. So, they left the man out of the mix and just pulled the woman in. Imagine if David, after he sinned with Bathsheba, had her stoned for adultery. This is how the Pharisees rolled.

Was the man guilty of adultery? Yes. But that wasn't what was important. This woman was likely a prostitute, and the Pharisees figured they could get rid of her, a sinner, and have ammunition to accuse Jesus to the Romans, all in one fell swoop. *Weaponizing the law and using machinations to trap innocent men is one of the tell-tale signs of evil and systemic injustice in the culture in which you live.* Keep your eyes open for it in your culture, and work to stamp it out if you can.

John 8:31-36 (UKJV)

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If all of you **continue in my word**, (o. logos) then are all of you my disciples indeed;
32. And all of you **shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how says you, All of you shall be made free?
34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.**
35. And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever.
36. If **the Son therefore shall make you free, all of you shall be free indeed.**

Jesus is able to make us free. Notice that this is not our work. Our part is to know the truth, to continue in His word. His part is to make us free. He doesn't want us to be in bondage to sin. He wants us free indeed. We do not have the power to do this on our own. He needs to make us free.

Luke 12:22-31 (UKJV)

22. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life**, what all of you shall eat; neither for the body, what all of you shall put on.
23. The life is more than food, and the body is more than raiment.
24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are all of you better than the fowls?
25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?
26. If all of you then be **not able to do that thing which is least, why take all of you thought for the rest?**
27. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O all of you of little faith?
29. And seek not all of you what all of you shall eat, or what all of you shall drink, neither be all of you of doubtful mind.
30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that all of you have need of these things.
31. But rather **seek all of you the kingdom of God**; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Here is an important principle provided by Jesus. We are not to focus on the issues of life, like food, raiment, shelter, and such. But we are to seek His

Kingdom. Those who live in sin have no place in His Kingdom. Our focus should be on Him, to follow Him, to rely on Him completely.

Romans 6:23 (UKJV)

23. For the **wages of sin is death**; but the **gift of God** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have to trust in God to live above sin. We cannot do it on our own.

Psalms 19:13-17 (UKJV)

13. Keep back your servant also from **arrogant sins**; let them not have **dominion over me**: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, **O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer**.

David understood that the ability to overcome sin was not in himself, but in God. He knew he had to rely on God to avoid sinning.

Part II

The solution

So, we have a sin problem as humans. When we are born of the Spirit, God expects us to live outside of sin. He wants us pure in the inward parts, not just white-washed tombs, clean on the outside but full of corruption.

1 Corinthians 15:50 (UKJV)

50. Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption.**

Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom.

John 3:3-8 (UKJV)

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**
4. Nicodemus says unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, (o. pneuma) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**
6. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit (o. pneuma) is spirit. (o. pneuma)**
7. Marvel not that I said unto you, All of **you must be born again.**
8. The wind (o. pneuma) blows where it decides, and you hear the sound thereof, but can not tell whence it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (o. pneuma)

Jesus made the way for us to be born again. This is the washing of regeneration, where our spirit is born anew by the Spirit of God. When you open the door and let Jesus come into you and live there, you become born again. So, flesh and blood can't inherit the Kingdom of God, but born again children of God can.

John 3:16-17 (UKJV)

16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**
17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world **through him might be saved.**

Luke 23:42-43 (UKJV)

42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, **To day shall you be with me in paradise.**

Luke 15:1-32 (UKJV)

1. **Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners in order to hear him.**
2. And the **Pharisees and scribes murmured**, saying, This man receives sinners, and eats with them.
3. And he spoke this parable unto them, saying,
4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?
5. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
6. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.
7. I say unto you, that likewise **joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**
8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
9. And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.
10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is **joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.**
11. And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living.
13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in lack.
15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you,
19. And am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.
20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.
22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
23. And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:
24. For **this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.** And they began to be merry.
25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.
26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
27. And he said unto him, Your brother has come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.
28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and implored him.
29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
30. But as soon as this your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.
31. And he said unto him, Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours.
32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for **this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.**

This is the answer. We need to look to Jesus to provide the way. We need Jesus to empower us by His Spirit to walk free of sin and to have life. The Pharisees were self-righteous. They accused Jesus of wrongdoing for hanging out with sinners. But someone who is being cleansed on the inside as well as the outside will be humble, knowing that it is only the grace of God that purifies and sanctifies his life.

John 11:20-44 (UKJV)

20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.
21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died.
22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it you.
23. Jesus says unto her, **Your brother shall rise again.**
24. Martha says unto him, **I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**
25. Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**
26. And **whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.** Believe you this?
27. She says unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.
28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master has come, and calls for you.
29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.
30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.
31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goes unto the grave to weep there.
32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died.
33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, (o. pneuma) and was troubled.

34. And said, Where have all of you laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.
35. Jesus wept.
36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!
37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?
38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself comes to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.
39. Jesus said, **Take all of you away the stone.** Martha, the sister of him that was dead, says unto him, **Lord, by this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days.**
40. Jesus says unto her, Said I not unto you, that, if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?
41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.
42. And I knew that you hear me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that you have sent me.
43. **And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.**
44. And **he that was dead came forth**, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a cloth. Jesus says unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

This is an amazing story. Jesus knew that Lazarus was going to die. He stayed where He was for another two days, just to make sure everyone knew the man was passed before He traveled to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Notice what Jesus tells Martha: *I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.*

Resurrection and eternal life do not reside in concepts and ideas. Eternal life is in Jesus. We (in our flesh) are dead and our life is hidden with Christ. We don't have spiritual life by doing the right things, or by living the right ways. We don't live because we say two "Hail Mary"s and three "Our Father"s. Our life is in Jesus. We live in Jesus.

Jesus is the solution to our sin problem. He has paved the way. Let yourself luxuriate in His love for you and His delight in you. You are not right with Him by doing things. You are right with Him because of Him. This needs to be at the core of your motivation as you work to overcome sin. You don't do it to be right with God; you do it because you are right with God.

5.0.1 Overcoming sin

So, clearly God wants us to overcome sin. He wants us to live as saints, holy like He is holy. Practically, how does one do this?

I am glad you asked.

In Scripture, God showed us how to do this. The process involves confession, repentance, and putting off the sin nature. Rinse and repeat, until your life is clean and pure in Him. You may sin (be driven by your flesh to transgress) through this process, but God will support you and you will gain the victory. In Mt 18:22, Jesus told Peter to forgive his repenting brother 490 times. That's 490 times per day. That's 490 times per day for the same sin. Functionally, we are to forgive as many times as it takes.

How many times will God forgive us as we learn to live above sin in our lives? As many times as it takes.

Never forget, your positional righteousness is in Him and what He did on the cross. You are not righteous because of what you do, but because of what He did. So living above sin doesn't make you right with Him, per se. You are right with God because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Practicing the sins as detailed on the lists that Paul provides in Galatians, 1 Corinthians and Colossians will separate you from God. Your born again spirit does not want to practice those sins. As you grow close to the Lord, those things should seem heinous to you, because they are heinous to God. Some of the confusion in the Bible about living right with God stems from the distinction between your positional righteousness and your righteousness as a result of righteous deeds. You are positionally righteous — you are the righteousness of God in Christ. However, God wants you to overcome sin and live in righteous deeds — he who is born of God doesn't sin. Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and anyone who believes in him shall live and not die; also, He wants us to do works worthy of repentance. These are not in conflict, but are both sides of the gospel coin.

Consider the following two Scriptures:

Matthew 12:36 (UKJV)

36. But I say unto you, That **every idle word (o. rhema) that men shall speak, they shall give account (o. logos) thereof in the day of judgment.**

1 Corinthians 4:3-4 (UKJV)

3. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, **I judge not mine own self.**

4. For I know nothing by myself; **yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judges me is the Lord.**

The words "I know nothing by myself" are translated in other translations as "I know nothing against me". Even Paul, the great apostle, who did mighty works and healed many and brought many to Jesus, did not worry about every little thing in his heart. He knew he would be judged by every idle word that came

out of his mouth. Why didn't he agonize over sin? Because he relied completely on the finished work of Jesus, and so was righteous before the Father. And he allowed the Holy Spirit to have full access to himself and guide him as he should go. Paul didn't need to try to work it all out himself; he let the Holy Spirit do the judging. As time went on and his flesh was put on the cross, he had less and less sin to deal with. His conscience was clean. His heart was pure. He simply wasn't aware of any outstanding issues in his life he needed to deal with. He knew the Spirit would reveal anything in him that needed changed, and he could get it taken care of before the throne of grace. This is how we live by faith.

This is how you and I are called to live as Christians.

I am not totally free of sin in my personal life. Admittedly, I have only walked as a Christian for 37 years, so I have some growing to do. I don't struggle anymore with the sins which separate me from God, but I do struggle with internal sins which try to take me down the wrong path. Thoughts and motives which are not appropriate plague my heart and mind. My mind wanders and I think about things I should not. I gaze on a magazine cover and allow my gaze to stay too long. I see an attractive person, and my mind goes there, seemingly on its own. Often, my attitude isn't what it should be toward others. These aren't usually obvious sins, so I could commit them and hide them, which I did for years as a Christian. But God wants me clean on the inside.

Though my flesh pulls me to sin in my heart, I don't allow the flesh to control my life. Only the Holy Spirit can control my life. I live the way I am describing here. Every time, in a moment of undiscipline, when my flesh leads me down a path of sin, and the Holy Spirit reveals that in my heart, I follow the process I will detail here for you. Every time. I quickly approach the throne of grace, confess my sin to the Father and ask to be cleansed from it. I repent, turning from the sin and turning to God. There before His throne of mercy, I admit that what I did or thought or felt was wrong and ask the Holy Spirit to change me. And I determine in my heart that I will live above sin until I am ushered into His presence, holy and blameless before Him.

The process I just described is directly from the Bible and is walked out in four distinct steps.

1. Confess your sins
2. Repent of your sins
 - (a) Turn from the sin
 - (b) Turn to God
 - (c) Replace the sinful behavior, as much as possible, with good works
3. Mortify the sin nature by the Spirit
4. Determine in your heart that you will live holy before the Lord for the rest of your life

Under girding all this is the recognition that you are right with God the Father based on what Jesus did on the cross. God wants you to do good works, but He doesn't want you to gain your righteousness by good works. You gain your righteousness by the redemption Jesus provides. The issue is, you can't mortify the sin nature and do works to gain your own righteousness. The sin nature is mortified by the Spirit. You can't walk in the flesh (doing works to be righteous) and mortify the flesh.

This was the problem with living by the Law. When you are living by the Law, your flesh is in control. Your carnal nature determines how you live. But, if your flesh is in control and you are living your life trying to be righteous, your sin loving person is not put on the cross but is put in control of your life. Being in control and not wanting to die on the cross, your flesh grows and deceives you into thinking you are right when you are not. Your heart becomes hard, and your love for God becomes cold. This is how the Pharisees deceived themselves. This is why Jesus said we must be more righteous than the Pharisees. Our righteousness is to emanate from the finished work of Jesus, not from our fleshly attempts to live by the Law.

You cannot put your flesh in charge and expect to overcome sin. Your flesh needs to be nailed to the cross and left there for dead. You cannot live above sin without God's grace, His empowering and enabling which comes from His Holy Spirit. You have to rely on the Spirit, follow the Spirit, make Him Lord of your life, seek Him out, pursue Him, allow Him full access to everything in your life, and live by Him. Be aware that when you try to do this, your flesh will resist you. Your flesh knows that when you follow the Spirit your carnal nature will be put to death. Your job is to follow the Spirit with all your heart so the flesh is mortified and does not control your life anymore.

Take a moment now and count the cost. Recognize that God deserves to have people who serve Him with everything. And commit yourself to living like this for the rest of your life.

Here we go...

5.0.1.1 Confess your sin

What does it mean to confess? To confess means to acknowledge, to agree (as in, to agree with God that your sin is wrong), to declare, to admit (as in, the first step to recovery is to admit you have a problem).

1 John 1:8-9 (UKJV)

8. If we **say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.
9. If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to **forgive us our sins**, and to **cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.

James 5:16 (UKJV)

16. **Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another**, that all of you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Proverbs 28:13 (UKJV)

13. He that **covers his sins** shall not prosper: but whoso **confesses and forsakes** them shall have mercy.

As you go along in your life, when you sin, the Holy Spirit will convict you of that sin. You will feel pierced to the heart over the sin, possibly grieved. Don't deceive yourself by saying, "Hey, that's not really a big deal." It is a big deal. You are responsible to confess your sin, to the Lord certainly, and sometimes to your brothers and sisters. When you confess, God is faithful and just to forgive you **and** to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. When you confess, it is important to appropriate the forgiveness and the cleansing.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (UKJV)

21. For he has **made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the **righteousness of God** in him.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (UKJV)

11. And such were some of you: but all of you are **washed**, but all of you are **sanctified**, but all of you are **justified** in the **name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit** (o. pneuma) of our God.

5.0.1.2 Repent of your sin

What does it mean to repent? It means to turn, to shift, to change, to transform, to change the attitudes, thoughts and behaviors. Repentance works like this: you are going along in your life, and God shows you by His Spirit that something you are doing is wrong. Maybe you are not treating your spouse with the right respect. Maybe your attitude toward your boss is wrong. When you discover this, you need to turn from the bad behavior/attitude/perspective, turn to God and what He wants, and adjust your life to do the right things. This is what it means to repent.

Acts 26:19-20 (WEB)

19. "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
20. but declared first to them of Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should **repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.**

There were three components of the gospel that Paul preached.

1. Repent. Turn *from* the sin, the wrongdoing, or the lifestyle rooted in sin.
2. Turn *to* God.
3. Do works worthy of repentance.

Turn from sin After you confess your sin, turn *from* the sin and turn *to* God, from whom you get strength and enabling to live above sin. This is the forsake component of Pr 28:13. You don't have the goods in yourself to live this life. You need His grace. Grace doesn't just accept us and put a band aid on a gushing wound. Grace enables us to overcome sin. This realization of how much you need the Lord to overcome sin is a real key to overcoming sin. When you stop believing you can do it on your own and turn to him to get grace in time of need, you will start to overcome.

2 Peter 3:9 (UKJV)

9. The Lord is **not slack** concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering** toward us, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Matthew 4:17 (UKJV)

17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent:** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 18:3 (UKJV)

3. And said, Verily I say unto you, Except all of you be **converted**, and **become as little children**, all of you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Revelation 2:5 (UKJV)

5. Remember therefore from whence you are fallen, and **repent**, and **do the first works**; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.

Luke 17:3-4 (UKJV)

3. Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he **repent**, forgive him.
4. And if he trespass against you **seven times in a day**, and **seven times in a day return** to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

Repentance is the prerequisite for entering the Kingdom of God. It is one of the first things you do when you realize you are a sinner and you want to serve Jesus (Acts 2:38-39). This is one of the things which confuses people sometimes about repentance. You repent initially as part of being converted. However, repentance is more than just a one time thing. The Scripture in Rev 2:5 makes that clear that a church full of Christians needs to repent – they need to repent as a group. If someone sins against you and repents, forgive him. If he repents seven times per day, forgive him. Repentance is part of the Christian lifestyle, to be pursued every day as needed.

Turn to God

Hebrews 4:16 (WEB)

16. Let's therefore **draw near with boldness to the throne of grace**, that we may **receive mercy** and may **find grace for help in time of need**.

This scripture isn't, per se, about repentance. But it *is* about what you need in your life in order to turn to God. You turn from sin and turn to God; do this with boldness to receive mercy and find grace for help in time of need. To repent fully, you have to turn from sin and turn to God. God wants you to turn to Him in boldness.

Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance So, we talked about turning from sin and turning to God. The next component of repenting is to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance in your life.

Matthew 3:5-12 (UKJV)

5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,
6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, **confessing** their sins.
7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8. **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:**
9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy

to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, (o. pneuma) and with fire:

12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Matthew 21:28-32 (UKJV)

28. But what think all of you? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.
29. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.
30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.
31. Whether of them two did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus says unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and all of you **believed him not**: but the publicans and the harlots **believed him**: and all of you, when all of you had seen it, repented not afterward, that all of you might believe him.

Luke 3:8-14 (UKJV)

8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
9. And now also **the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.**
10. And the people asked him, saying, **What shall we do then?**
11. He answers and says unto them, **He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none; and he that has food, let him do likewise.**
12. Then came also **publicans** to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?
13. And he said unto them, **Exact no more than that which is appointed you.**
14. And the **soldiers** likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, **Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.**

Jeremiah 7:3-7 (UKJV)

3. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
4. Trust all of you not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.
5. For if all of you thoroughly **amend your ways and your doings**; if all of you thoroughly **execute judgment between a man and his neighbour**;
6. If all of you **oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow**, and **shed not innocent blood** in this place, **neither walk after other gods to your hurt**:
7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Jeremiah 26:13 (UKJV)

13. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and **obey the voice of the LORD your God**; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he has pronounced against you.

A good way as a Christian to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance is to attempt to do works that counteract the sin. For example, if you are being covetousness in your heart, repent as detailed above, and then give to someone. If your sin is anger in your heart towards a brother or sister, determine to forgive them and take steps to show that person some kindness. And so on.

Don't agonize over this. Your righteousness is not dependent on this. Your righteousness is dependent on the finished work of Jesus at the cross. However, pray and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you down paths of putting off the old man (the evil works of sin) and putting on the new man (the good works of a child of God).

5.0.1.3 Mortify the sin nature

Then you are to put off, mortify or kill the sin nature which took you down the path of sin in the first place. This is done as an act of decision before the throne of grace. There, before the Holy Spirit, commit yourself to putting off the sin and never wearing it again. It doesn't matter if you have to continue to do this over and over for the same sin. Some things will take coming back to the throne of grace over and over. But decide that by grace (His power and His enabling) through faith (your unbending decision) you will put off this old man and walk blameless before the Creator until you breath your last breath.

Some sins which you are driven to commit are rooted in decisions you made before you were born again. These are called strongholds in the Bible. They are mental and emotional structures people put in place in their lives to protect

themselves. For example, if you were belittled by an abusive parent, or abandoned by your parents, you may have issues with authority as a result. You may have trouble trusting authority, or believing that authority has your best interest in mind. So, when the Bible makes it clear that the Father, the ultimate authority in your life, has your best interest in mind, you struggle. This kind of stronghold can take you down the path of sin over and over.

The solution? Every time, go to the throne of grace, and believe God to put that thing on the cross. Every time. This may cause you fear, or anxiety, or even emotional pain, because it was put there in your being to protect you in the first place. But it is a construct of the flesh, and it needs to die. As you persist in bringing this to the Spirit to be dealt with, He will unravel all the chords wrapped around your heart and free you from it.

You resisting sin and bringing these things to God to be mortified will give the Holy Spirit freedom to set you free.

This is your battle, your place of conflict, and God is worthy for you to live like this until you overcome.

Colossians 3:2-9 (UKJV)

2. Set your affection on **things above**, not on things on the earth.
3. For all of **you are dead**, and **your life is hid with Christ in God**.
4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall all of you also appear with him in glory.
5. **Mortify** therefore **your members** which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
6. **For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience:**
7. In the which all of you also walked some time, when all of you lived in them.
8. But now all of you also **put off all these**; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.
9. Lie not one to another, seeing that **all of you have put off the old man with his deeds**;

Put off the old man with his deeds. The imagery here is of filthy garments which need to be taken off and thrown away. Put them off. You — the old man — are dead. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify your sin loving nature and all his fruit.

Ephesians 5:9 (UKJV)

9. (For the **fruit of the Spirit** (o. pneuma) is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Galatians 5:22-23 (UKJV)

22. But the **fruit of the Spirit** (o. pneuma) is **love**, (o. agape) **joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,**
23. **Meekness, wilful restrain:** against such there is no law.

Philippians 1:11 (UKJV)

11. Being filled with the **fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ**, unto the glory and praise of God.

2 Peter 1:5-11 (UKJV)

5. And beside this, giving **all diligence**, add to your **faith virtue**; and to virtue **knowledge**;
6. And to knowledge **wilful restrain**; and to wilful restrain **patience**; and to patience **godliness**;
7. And to godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **love**. (o. agape)
8. For **if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that all of you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
9. But he that **lacks these things is blind**, and **cannot see far off**, and has **forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.**
10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if all of you do these things, all of you shall never fall:
11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Paul calls these virtues the fruit (singular) of the Spirit. What he means is that these are created in our lives as we yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to have His way in our lives. Not only will the Spirit bring us to forsake our sin and put off the old man, He will lead us to put on the new man. Out of our lives will grow love (agape love, as defined in 1 Cor 13), godliness, faith, patience, virtue, meekness, and so on.

One confusion a Christian might have has to do with the life of following the Spirit. This is not a passive lifestyle, where we wake up, get ready for the day, and trudge along in life giving lip service to the Holy Spirit, only to repeat the next day. You need to give **all diligence** to making Him an instrumental part of your life. You need to pursue the Holy Spirit like you would your last breath as you sink beneath the waves. He is your Life, your Protector, your Comforter. Everything Jesus said He would be in your life, the Holy Spirit makes a reality.

The Spirit does the leg work, just as He did in creation. You need to pursue Him as you pursue Jesus.

The Holy Spirit's love for you is passionate and unwavering. He will take you to heights in God's Kingdom that you never thought possible. All the riches and treasures of God's Kingdom come to your life through the Spirit. The Spirit is the electrical cord you plug into to attain everything God wants for you. These virtues will grow up in you and bring refreshing to you and those around you as you set the Holy Spirit squarely as the Lord of your life and allow Him full access to everything.

1 Peter 1:13-16 (UKJV)

13. Wherefore **gird up the loins of your mind**, be **sober**, and **hope** to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:
15. But as **he which has called you is holy, so be all of you holy in all manner of conversation;**
16. Because it is written, Be all of you holy; for I am holy.

Ephesians 4:17-32 (UKJV)

17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that all of you henceforth **walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind**,
18. Having the **understanding darkened**, being **alienated from the life of God** through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
19. Who being past feeling have **given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**
20. But **all of you have not so learned Christ;**
21. If so be that all of you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
22. That all of you **put off concerning the former conversation the old man**, which is **corrupt** according to the **deceitful lusts;**
23. And be **renewed** in the spirit (o. pneuma) of your **mind;**
24. And that all of you **put on the new man**, which after God is created in **righteousness and true holiness.**
25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26. Be all of you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
27. Neither give place to the devil.
28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.
29. Let no corrupt communication (o. logos) proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
30. And grieve not the holy Spirit (o. pneuma) of God, whereby all of you are sealed unto the day of redemption.
31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
32. And be all of you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:5-17 (UKJV)

5. **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;** fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
6. **For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience:**
7. In the which all of **you also walked some time, when all of you lived in them.**
8. But **now all of you also put off all these;** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.
9. Lie not one to another, seeing that all of you have put off the old man with his deeds;
10. And have **put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Savages, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
12. **Put on** therefore, **as the elect of God**, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;
13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do all of you.
14. And **above all these things put on (o. agape) love**, which is the bond of perfection.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also all of you are called in one body; and be all of you thankful.
16. Let the (o. logos) word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
17. And whatsoever all of you do in (o. logos) word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

This is how you mortify your carnal nature. You put off his deeds and put on the deeds God wants you to do. Again, this isn't passive. You have to gird up your minds, be sober and walk in hope. This takes effort and courage. It also takes time to learn how to do this. However, you need to be determined and not let go until you are victorious.

You as a normal Christian are called to walk as a saint. Saints are not those who have special abilities to overcome sin while everyone else wallows in it. Everyone who names the name of Jesus is called to be a saint. Everyone who names the name of Jesus is called to live in holiness. Everyone who names the name of Jesus is called to put off the old man and put on the new man, mortifying the sin nature.

5.0.1.4 Overcoming sin for the rest of your life

If you continue to live like this, you will overcome sin. The sin nature which drives you to sin will be replaced with the nature of God living in your born again spirit. You will be putting off the old man (sinful works), being renewed in the spirit of your mind, and putting on the new man (good works God wants you to do). This lifestyle is critical for disciples. It is a life-long process, something we should pursue with all our hearts as long as we live, in the same way we pursue Jesus.

So, you sinned. You confessed it to God. You repented. And you approached God to help you mortify the sin nature. That's all good. However, you have one more step. Before the throne of grace and mercy, determine in your heart that you are going to live this way for the rest of your life. Sometimes resisting sin is painful. Sometimes, you can even be persecuted for resisting sin. Determine in your heart that God the Father deserves this and you are going to live like this until you breath your last breath. He is worthy to have a people who obey Him. Your life will be rich soil for the King of Glory to plant in, so He can reap a harvest of fruit, the fruit of righteousness.

God wants this. God deserves this. Determine you are going to be among those who will give Him this.

Matthew 19:16-17 (UKJV)

16. And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do**, that I may have eternal life?

17. And he said unto him, Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, **keep the commandments.**

Matthew 19:20-22 (UKJV)

20. The young man says unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?
21. Jesus said unto him, **If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.**
22. But when the young man heard that saying, (o. logos) **he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.**

I want you to see here that Jesus is not telling everyone to do what He told this young man to do, necessarily. However, this young man had a problem. It was a deep-rooted problem, and he had deceived himself that he was okay with God. He looked okay from the outside. Neighbors probably thought he was a model citizen. Jesus, however, showed him he was not okay with God.

Jesus will do this in our lives, through the Holy Spirit. Your issue may not be your commitment to your riches. It may be lust. It may be lying, or stealing, or hating people, or being jealous. Whatever, the Holy Spirit will put His finger on it and expose it as you walk with Him. Your job at that point is to deal with it.

Determine in your heart that you will deal with it every time, in the way He prescribes, in obedience to him, for the rest of your life.

5.0.1.5 Task card

Here is a simplified task card for the process of dealing with your sin.

Action	Meaning
Confess	Acknowledge, Agree, Accept forgiveness and cleansing
Repent	Turn from, Turn to, Fruit
Mortify	Put off, Renew, Put on
Determine	For the rest of your life

Confess

- Boldly, before the throne of grace, acknowledge what you did
- Agree that it was wrong
- Trust the Lord to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness

Repent

- Boldly, before the throne of grace, turn from the sin
- Turn to God
- Seek the Holy Spirit to replace the sin with good fruit

Mortify

- Boldly, before the throne of grace, put off the old man
- Be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Put on the new man

Determine

- Boldly, before the throne of grace, allow the Holy Spirit to put His finger on issues in your life
- Count the cost
- Determine that you will live this way till you die

5.0.1.6 Freedom from sin

As you follow this simple four step process for every sin, you will put off the carnal nature and you will train your mind and emotions (or “senses”, Heb 5:14) to be sensitive to right and wrong. We have entirely too many people who claim to be Christians who do not know how to overcome their sin. They are fighting others, backbiting, hating one another, and living well below the status in which the Lord wants them to live. It is little children in God’s kingdom who don’t know how to overcome sin. Read Heb 5:13-14 again if you need convincing.

Churches are full of spiritual children who don’t know how to keep themselves in holiness and righteousness. They may be faithful in attendance and faithful in giving, but they come to be fed when they should have learned to feed themselves and others, and they are struggling when they should be working in unity with others and building God’s kingdom.

If you are one of these little children who have struggled for years, don’t lose heart. You are precious to God (1 Jn 3:1). God does not want to judge you or limit your potential in any way. However, you will never be truly used of Him to do great things if you don’t overcome sin in your life. Think about it, the God of creation has invited you to be part of His work in the earth. All you have to do is put your hand in His, trust Him, and work out your salvation with fear and trembling. If you do that, He can bring you to a place of maturity where you can help others do the same.

You are called to overcome. I pray you answer the call today.