

The Struggle with Sin

March 19, 2017

What is sin?

James 4:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Genesis 4:7 (NIRV)

⁷ Do what is right and then you will be accepted. If you don't do what is right, sin is waiting at your door to grab you. It desires to control you. But you must rule over it."

"Sin will take you farther than you want to go and will keep you longer than you wanted to stay."

To give more detail:

Galatians 5:19-21 (NIRV)

¹⁹ The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. ²⁰ It includes worshiping statues of gods and worshiping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. ²¹ It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom.

Who does it effect?

Romans 3:23 (NIRV)

²³ Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.

So, technically, there is no such thing as a "sinner", because that would be called a "human".

But there is a better way. A way that satisfies far better than sin can.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- That word full in the KJV is the word abundant.

περισσός

perissos

per-is-sos'

From G4012 (in the sense of **beyond**); **superabundant** (in quantity) or *superior* (in quality); by implication **excessive**; adverb (with G1537) *violently*; neuter (as noun) *preeminence*: - exceeding abundantly above, more abundantly, advantage, exceedingly, very highly, **beyond measure**, more, superfluous, vehement [-ly].

The idea is life that is spilling over with joy.

So how do we get there?

Changing focus

1. What Jesus did is *greater* than what Adam did.

- By one man (Adam) sin came into the world and by one man (Jesus) sin was removed.

Romans 5:12-21 (NIRV)

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

¹² Sin entered the world because one man sinned. And death came because of sin. Everyone sinned, so death came to all people.

¹³ Before the law was given, sin was in the world. This is certainly true. But people are not judged for sin when there is no law. ¹⁴ Death ruled from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. Death ruled even over those who did not sin as Adam did. He broke God's command. But Adam also became a pattern of the Messiah. The Messiah was the one who was going to come.

¹⁵ God's gift can't be compared with Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man. But it was even more sure that God's grace would also come through one man. That man is Jesus Christ. God's gift of grace was more than enough for the whole world. ¹⁶ The result of God's gift is different from the result of Adam's sin. That one sin brought God's judgment. But after many sins, God's gift made people right with him. ¹⁷ One man sinned, and death ruled over all people because of his sin. What will happen is even more sure than this. Those who receive the rich supply of God's grace will rule with Christ. They will rule in his kingdom. They have

received God's gift and have been made right with him. This will happen because of what the one man, Jesus Christ, has done.

¹⁸ So one man's sin brought guilt to all people. In the same way, one right act made people right with God. That one right act gave life to all people. ¹⁹ Many people were made sinners because one man did not obey. But one man did obey. That is why many people will be made right with God.

²⁰ The law was given so that sin would increase. But where sin increased, God's grace increased even more. ²¹ Sin ruled and brought death. But grace rules in the lives of those who are right with God. The grace of God brings eternal life. That's because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done.

So if what Christ did is greater than what Adam did, do we go on sinning? No! We may not get it perfect all the time, but our sin no longer defines who we are. When we are in Christ, we have a new nature. Our appetite for Him increases and our appetite for wrongdoing decreases because we learn that He satisfies us better than sin can.

An example from The Temple

■ The Temple in Israel is divided into three sections, the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. If we compare our lives to the Temple...

The
Outer Court

■ ...the Outer Court would represent our flesh, the weak part of us that gets us into trouble all the time.

■ Within the flesh are all the things that satisfy me on a fleshly level (**Food, Sex, Alcohol/ Drugs, Material Possessions, Money, Work/ Achieving Control, Etc.**). They are not inherently evil, but can be very harmful to us if over used or depended on too much and we become self-focused or Outer-Court focused.

Focusing on self and trying to get it right makes the problem worse!

For example:

If we are striving to lose weight or stop drinking, we're thinking about food or alcohol so much at times that we get feeling anxious about it. The more focused we are on food/drink, the more anxious we become. The more anxious we feel, the more we want to eat or drink more.

The
Holy Place
&
The
Most Holy
Place

Romans 7:23 – *“But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”*

- The Holy Place represents the Soul, which consists of our mind, will and emotions.
- The Soul is like a camera. Whatever it is focused on is what is imprinted on it.
- The **Most** Holy Place is the place where God dwells. In our life, it is the Spirit part of us that comes to life in us when we invite Christ into our lives and God comes to dwell within us by His Spirit.

Romans 8:11 – *“And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you.”*

So then the battle ends there right? It all love, joy and peace from now on right? Wrong!!

2 Corinthians 3:17 – *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”*

The problem is that there are two doors in each of us that are hinged so that only one can be open at a time. When one door opens, the other one shuts.

Galatians 5:17 – *“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”*

The direction of our focus determines which door will open. When we turn the focus of our Soul around in the other direction, the other door opens and the first door slams shut behind us.

Romans 8:5 – *“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”*

Now what inevitably always happens to all of us is that our Soul gets out of peace. The flesh, with all the best of intentions, opens up the door to the Soul to check in on it's condition. Seeing that the Soul is out of peace, the flesh offers to help...

...It says, "I see you're out of peace Soul. Why don't you have that extra piece of chocolate cake and you'll feel better", or "Why don't you have another drink and you'll feel better".

Well ... Short term gain = long term pain, but short term pain = long term gain, so, for a time we do feel better, but after a little more time, our Soul feels even more out of peace than it did before. Now some people who don't know God, will just keep on trying to fill themselves with more and more, never really feeling satisfied. In fact they just get a deeper and deeper sense of shame and emptiness as time goes by. Then the Devil really plays on you.

What doesn't work

Trying to live by the Spirit in our own effort. No amount of striving will help.

We think we will change if we only kick ourselves hard enough. That doesn't work, in case you hadn't noticed. What we end up doing is trying desperately to force that door to the flesh shut. We may succeed for a while, but as soon as we let go of that door, it pops right back open again, (Example: It's like trying to hold 3 beach balls under the water. You get two under and when you try to get the third one under, the first one pops up again). We think that if we just try harder next time, we will succeed in overcoming their sin. The harder we try, the more frustrated we become. Why? Because our focus is toward the flesh. All we accomplish is becoming more obsessed with ourselves and the desires of our flesh.

What does work

Simply embrace what His Spirit is doing in you.

Rom 8:4 And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us.

Rom 8:5 Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them--living and breathing God!

Rom 8:6 Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life.

Rom 8:7 Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing.

So you can see that it has little to do with effort and more to do with where our focus is. When our focus is in the right place. But the satisfaction that comes when we focus on the God door far outweighs anything we can get from the flesh door.

When you focus on the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is the result. What are the fruits? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Challenge: Maybe you have never stepped through that first door before, or maybe you have and you are standing in that Holy Place, knowing that you have a relationship with God through Christ, but you feel as though you are not really living for Him or enjoying the fruits of the abundant life He has for you. Are we going to walk according to the flesh, or are we going to walk by faith?!