

# OVERCOMING SIN IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

*Romans 6:1-2*

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## PREAMBLE

The first book of the Bible, Genesis reveals to us the beginning of sin on earth. A study of Genesis chapter 3 reveals.

- Satan's diabolical and deceptive tactics. {*Gen. 3:1, 13, 2 Cor. 11:2-3, 1 Pet. 5:8*}.

This shows the nature and progressiveness of his attack. (i) First, notice his timely approach. He seems to have appeared to Eve when she was by herself and unsupported by her husband. Also his approach to Christ was perfectly timed, Matthew 4:1-2. **He will strike when you are most vulnerable!**

(ii) Secondly, notice his crafty question (great strategy); "*Yea, hath God said.....*" Satan did not say, "There is no God". Rather, his question was designed to generate doubt in the heart of Eve concerning whether or not God meant what He said. He begins by throwing doubt on the divine word of God. This is one of the great tools of Satan. He knew then, and he knows now, that God's word has to be taken out for him to have his way.

(iii) Next, he paints a picture of being an implication of unfair treatment by God. It seems as if Satan said to Eve, "surely God has not given such an unfair restriction. (iv) Then, he deliberately and boldly lies. "Ye shall not surely die" (*Gen. 3:4*) See John 8:44 and Acts 5:3. Notice that this lie obtained as a result of changing and adding only one word – 'not' {Compare *Gen. 2:17 & Gen.3:4*}. In like manner, his ministers are still changing and adding "not" to other plain of declaration of the Lord (*James 2:24, 1 Peter3:21*). (e) Then Satan reflects on the very basic nature and character of God to justifies his lies ... "*for God doth know.....*" *Genesis 3:5*

- **Satan's three-way approach**

Satan has always used three avenues through which to tempt man: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. (*1 John2:15-17*). In the case of Eve there was a) the lust of the flesh – she saw that the tree was good for food. (b) The lust of the eyes – it was pleasant to the eyes and (c) the pride of life – it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. (*Gen.3:6*). Satan employs same strategy in

tempting Christ. **Matt. 4:1-11**). No wonder **1 Corinthians 10:13** says ... "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man" see also **Hebrew 4:15**.

- The origin of Sin within the individual

Sin does not originate in the individual through inheritance from our parents. Sin is of such a nature that it cannot be inherited as it constitutes an act of a violation of the word of God, **1 John 3:4**. Sin is something committed, **John 8:34**. We neither inherit the act or the guilt of our ancestors' sins. We suffer the consequences of their sins (**Exodus 20:4-5**). **Ezekiel 18:20** teaches us that the child does not bear the iniquity of the father. See also **Matthew 18:1-4**

The origin of sin as taught in **James 1:13-15**

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:13-15 NKJV)*

There is first lust, and then enticement, followed by temptation, resulting in sin and the end result is death. The teaching in **James 1:13-15** is so graphically illustrated in the case of Achan (**Joshua 7:20-21**). Achan saw, Achan coveted (wish, long, or crave for something especially the property of another person), Achan took, and Achan died. The same thing happened in the case of Eve. Eve saw, Eve coveted, Eve took, and Eve died. **He who sins should recognize that he is the architect of his own sin and the beneficiary of his sinful enterprise.**

### What is Sin?

An in-depth understanding of what is sin and its severity will help a Christian in overcome Sin. Understanding what sin is will be a great antidote for a better Christian life as it tends to dissuade you from sinning. Remember a child of God cannot continue in Sin...**1 John 3:9**. What then is Sin?

- Any action that does not follow one's faith is a sin. Whatever is done without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful. Sin is a violation of the conscience that has been educated by the word of God. **Romans 14:23** (Amplified Bible)
- Knowing to do good, and not doing it, is sin (**James 4:17**). The Amplified bible translation render it this way; "...Any person who knows what is right to do but does not do it, to him it is sin. The knowledge of what is right carries with it a responsibility to do right! To do otherwise, is to add to one's guilt and worsen his punishment (**Luke 12:47-48**)
- A violation or breaking of God's law is Sin. 1 John 3:4. Sin is the breaking, violating or going away from the law of God. To illustrate, God's law says

that we are not to lie (**Eph. 4:25**), to speak corruptly (**Eph. 4:29**), and not to forsake the assembly (**Heb. 10:25**). Now, whenever we lie, speak corruptly, or forsake the assembly, we have broken or violated the law and have thus sinned

- A failure to keep God's commands is Sin (**1 John 5:17**). Every failure to obey God's law is sin. KJV renders it all unrighteousness is sin. One 'Cruden defines sin as follows: "any thought, word, action, omission or desire, contrary to the law of God". Yes there are sins of omission! How do we observe this sin of omission? "Many think that they are heaven-bound because ...I have not lied, stolen, killed, or committed fornication or adultery". All of this is important but tend to portray what you have done. In the three judgment scenes of Matthew 25 (I encourage you to study this Chapter), all of those who were lost were lost because of what they had failed to do. Harmlessness is not holiness! (Matthew 21:19).
- Sin is rebellion; rebellion against God, sin is more than just breaking a set of rules and regulations: but, that it is rebellion against, and a defiance of the Ruler, and Regulator himself. King Saul's dealing with the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15 is a graphic illustration of this matter. See especially **1 Samuel 15:22-23**

Bible says that sin is ignoring our Creator in the world He has made. It's living the way we want, instead of the way He wants. And sin matters because it gets in the way between us and God.

3. Jesus tells us that sin – rebelling against God and choosing to go our own way rather His way – comes "from within", from our "hearts"

And He said, "*What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*" (**Mark 7:20-23 NKJV**)

## Helps In Overcoming Sin

### 1. Making Proper Use of Our Bibles will Help us Overcome Sin

The Bible will keep you from sin, and nothing but sin will keep you from the Bible. As long as the seed of God's word remains in the heart the Christian does not commit sin. (**1 John 3:9**). This verse teaches us that (i) the child of God does not commit sin; that is he does not continue to live in sin; he does not persist in living the old life of sin which was the characteristic of his former life.

(ii) The reason for not so continuing in sin ... "*for His seed remains in him*". The seed is the word of God {**Luke 8:11, 1 Peter 1:23**}. As long as our hearts are full of the

word of God, the seed, we will not commit sin or continue in sin since the dissuading element is present. **Knowledge of the word of God, and having a heart full of the word of God, is a potent barrier against sinning.** A Christian that is ignorant of his Bible is in constant danger. Our Master, Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ successfully met temptation with the word. We too can overcome by the word of God.

Example; if you are struggling with forsaking the assembly of the saints, keep **Hebrew 10:25** in remembrance, it will be a great barrier against the force making you to forsake assembly. I don't know the sin you are struggling with; you can sort for and apply the relevant scriptures to overcome the sin. It is God's will that we overcome sin **Romans 6:1-2**. I will encourage us to strive to read much, study often, meditate continually and memorize extensively the word of God.

Make it a duty to attend every Bible class conducted by the congregation. **I will encourage us to invest or build a good home religious library;** many us invest so much on clothing, food, and housing and find it difficult to buy a good Bible or religious periodicals; this is where the things that will guide you toward a faithful living. Above all we must ask frequently for God's blessings in being led into a fuller understanding and deeper appreciation of His word.

## **2. Prayer will Help us Overcome Sin**

Prayer can stop sin, and nothing but sin can stop praying. A Christian struggling or being weary to pray is great indicator of his faithfulness pointing south. Backsliding indeed starts in the knees. A dancing foot and a praying knee do not grow on the same leg. You will never stumble while on your knees. Prayer indeed is a potent defence against sinning.

**As the prayer circle increases the circle of sin recedes.** Thus, Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees. Remember Our Lord teaching us how to pray .....”Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil (**Matthew 6:13**). We receive strength to stand through prayer (**Luke 21:36**). We can withstand the devil by putting on the whole armour of God and praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit (**Ephesian 6:11-18**).

## **3, Self-Examination will Help us Overcome Sin**

We do hear of Equipment or facility health check. The chief aim is to ensure the pieces of equipment availability for optimal use without incident or failure. We do also hear a lot about physical health examination; of cause our President just returned from such check last week. And some that can afford it do periodic health checks regularly which of cause are very important. We do rarely hear of self – Examination. The Bible is glorious with reference to **“take heed to thy self” {Deut.**

**4:9, Josh. 23:11, Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 4:16;** etc.}, these underscore the importance of self-examination.

Paul exhorted us to practice self-examination. {**1 Cor.11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5**}. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified. (**2 Corinthians 13:5 NKJV**)".

God's word is the standard by which we examine ourselves.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (**James 1:22-25 NKJV**)". **Are you a Doer or a Hearer?**

We should use God's word to examine; a) the thoughts that fill our hearts (**Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34**), b) the motives that prompt our action/behaviour, c) the words that sweeten or soil our lips – our utterances, d) the deeds that makes our lives, e) the attitudes that form our disposition, f) our lifestyles that fashion our character. The list is endless; just learn to use God's word to mirror all your ways of life with the sole aim of making adjustments that will necessitate a life free from sin.

#### **4. Reverential Fear of God will Help us overcome Sin**

And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces that ye sin not (**Exodus 20:18-20 KJV**). **A careful study of Exodus 19:3-20 may challenge you when you want to deliberately commit sin.** I'll encourage you to study Exodus chapter 19. It's the same God we worship today. "**Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil**" (**Proverbs 3:7 KJV**). Such fear is reverential in nature and is a part of man's whole duty to God. **Eccl. 12:13**

A meditation of the goodness and severity of God (**Romans 11:22**) will incite reverential fear so necessary to acceptance with God (**Acts 10:34-35**). "**For our God is a consuming fire**" (**Hebrews 12:29 KJV**). "*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men*" (**2 Corinthians 5:11 KJV**). The word of God warns us seriously. **...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God** (**Hebrews 10:31 KJV**). See also Luke 12:4-5.

God's dealings with the ancient world will dissuade us from disobedience (**2 Peter 2:5**), Uzzah (**2 Samuel 6:1-7**), Nadab and Abihu (**Lev. 10:1-7**), Lot's wife (**Gen. 19:26**), and Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5:1-11**) are examples of God' severity, which certainly ought to provoke fear in our hearts for Him. With such in our hearts we will sin less.

## 5. Consciousness that God always sees us will Help us Overcome Sin

God sees, God knows every of our action. The bible tells us that to God we will give an account. We cannot escape the omnipresence, the all-seeing eye, of God. ***“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good”.*** (*Proverbs 15:3 NKJV*) see also *1 Kings 8:27, Psalms 139:1-7, Jer. 23:22-24, Acts 17:24-28. Hence when we sin we do so “to the face of God” (Isaiah 65:3)* see also Psalms 51:4

Men sin when they lose a sense of God’s presence (*Psalms 94:5-11*). Example, a fornicator will look in all directions before entering an existing brothel. Even those sneaking into pool betting houses, Drunkard will as well look all direction before sneaking into a liquor store, those falsifying financial numbers will do all the cover-up to enable them steal. While doing this they forget that God is present. These persons have lost sense of the omnipresence of God.

A thief that wants to steal will look before him, behind him, and to each side of him; at this point in time he forgets up there God is seeing him. Even those that gossips, they observe such precautions. At that period of committing evil they had lost sense of the omnipresence God. Jonah arose to flee from the presence of God (Jonah 1:3). He lost sense of the omnipresence of God. **A child of God always having this sense of the Omnipresence of God will certainly overcome sin.**

## 6. Being Watchful of those we Hang-out with will Help us Overcome Sin

We need a close watch on those we hang-out with. Their ways of life could influence us. There is a saying in the local palace that says show me your friend and I will tell you who you are. A talebearer will have a gossip as a friend for both to flow well. The one that Keeps Company with a fornicator will one day be involve in such a sin because chance exist for the fornicator to share his exploit with his friend. One that hang-out closely with a polygamist will one day go for a second wife.

Also one that flirts with an adulteress will also defile her marriage bed one day. If you keep company with those without future ambition (NFA), probability of becoming an NFA member is still very high. If you hang out with those that are hungered for righteousness, the chance of you striving for sinless life will be high as well.

Israel was sternly warned against those not to keep company with as they enter the Promised Land.

“But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: *That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God*”. (**Deuteronomy 20:16-18 KJV**)

Our beloved brother Paul through the Holy Spirit warned believers as well

*“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”*. (**1 Corinthians 15:33 KJV**)

### **Conclusion**

I will encourage us to put in memory or remembrance that the omnipresence God is watching us. Let's strive to remain faithful in our calling and make a deliberate effort on daily basis to live a sinless life. Keep yourself pure in His service as if tomorrow will never come!

**“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good”**. (**Proverbs 15:3 NKJV**)