

6 Keys To Living Free From the Torment of Sin

I'm encouraged by so many of the replies I received from my recent *Charisma* magazine series of articles.

People are becoming awakened to their own depravity, and instead of hiding behind the false comfort of unbiblical grace, they are aggressively dealing with their sin. The grace of God absolutely can set us free not only from the penalty of sin but from the act of sin.

We can be fully free indeed!

I'm finding myself responding to email after email with the same response to the same question. People are yearning to be liberated from the prison of sinful patterns in their lives—patterns that absolutely do put our salvation at risk if not met head on with the grace and blood of Jesus.

This is why a life of repentance is so beautiful! It leads us right to the cross of Christ. His applied blood completely eradicates every impurity!

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

I hear from a lot of people who testify to the power of sin in their lives. They proclaim that they are sinners saved by grace, and that Christians can expect to sin often, every day, for the rest of their lives. No! This is a doctrine of demons that has been embraced by multitudes of defeated Christians.

We are *saints* saved by grace! We have been given the power to live free from the traps of sin and we can expect to walk in daily sanctification unto holiness. We can absolutely, without question, be free to decide against sin. We should not—must

not-sin regularly.

What a disgrace to grace that would be!

So, just how can we take steps toward a life free from sin?

It's simple, but not easy:

1. Resolve the issue. "As the Father loved Me, I also loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have spoken these things to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:9-11).

It's shocking how many people question and doubt the absolute truth that they don't have to earn God's love. The truth is that we don't earn it; we abide in it.

When they sin the immediate accusation is that we have failed to the degree that God is now angry, offended and aggressively building walls around His heart so we can't get near-until we prove to Him that we are again worthy of his affection.

What a horrid way to live! When we fail, God is not surprised. He doesn't approve of our failure, but He doesn't pass out from shock. He's not gossiping behind our backs about what we just did. He's not shunning us until we pay our dues to get back into the club of the redeemed.

Yes, sin is serious and sin is deadly, but we have to know that God is burning with passionate love for us and is there to restore us! If we understand this we won't have to spend a "sufficient" amount of time feeling guilty and shamed until we can crawl back up into His lap.

"My little children, I am writing these things to you, so that you do not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One" (1 John 2:1).

“And you, who were formerly alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not removed from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant” (Col. 1:21-23).

2. Pray always. “Pray in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication” (Eph. 6:18).

This one is simple but not easy. Without having a life of continual, fervent prayer that’s driven supernaturally by the Holy Spirit, our hope of living free from sin is slight.

Long ago as a young burning one for Jesus I worked at a car wash along with several yet-to-be-redeemed people. Everything about that job was negative. The pay was awful, the work was hard and every day was monotonous and boring. In addition to that I had to continually walk away from the small groups of employees when they started sharing dirty stories.

Yet, I remember that season as a breakout one for me. I learned how to be free and full of joy in a vile and miserable atmosphere. I sang worship songs under my breath and prayed nearly non-stop. I learned how to deeply enjoy Jesus and to be jubilant in the face of misery! It was easy to talk to people about Jesus as I was burning hotter and hotter for Him every day. It was easy to walk away from inappropriate discussions and to stick out as a zealot—because I was one!

One day, in that season of continual prayer and worship a particularly large and threatening man who worked there approached me. He said, “If you ever mention the name of Jesus to me again, I will kill you!” I simply smiled and said, “I can’t stop. He’s everything to me.”

The favorite part of my day was when I got off of work. Sure,

it was nice to be finished washing cars, but that's not what motivated me. The pastor of the church I attended had given me a key to the building so I went there every evening, all alone, and prayed. I turned on the worship music in the sanctuary, dimmed the lights and paced around and fell deeper and deeper in love with Jesus.

In that type of intentional prayer-driven lifestyle it's quite easy to say no to sin. Life starts "working together for good" as the famous verse in Romans proclaims. It's interesting to note just what triggers a life where everything works together for good:

"Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:26-28).

When we pray in the Spirit with deep groans of intercession our love of God explodes and our life becomes ordered and full of power.

3. Turn it off. Media is killing the church. I'm saddened and sickened when Christians make excuses to watch immoral and unholy activity on the screen, whether it's the movies or the television.

How can we allow ourselves to be entertained by sins in media that required the slaughter and murder of the one we say we love? Foul language, nudity, sexual situations, violence and coarse joking required Jesus to be brutalized and killed—and Christians are gaining enjoyment from it.

If you want to be free from sin, you have to turn it off. Shut it down. Stop watching what is abominable.

“For our rejoicing is this: The testimony of our conscience is that we conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God” (2 Cor. 1:12).

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

4. Turn it on. Try an experiment. Eliminate all music, even most Christian music, for a month. For that month listen to nothing but anointed worship music. Have it play night and day in your home, your car, your headphones. Discover a life of passionate worship that never ends!

I love this verse:

“As they went to tell His disciples, suddenly Jesus met them, saying, ‘Greetings!’ They came and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me’” (Matt. 28:9-10).

Is this not the cry of our hearts? What would it be like for Jesus to appear to us and say, “Greetings!”?

What would it be like in that moment when Jesus shows up in our life in a life-changing way? We would fall at His feet as though dead and worship!

Check out this long passage. Read it all. This is the God who we have the free and glorious privilege to worship!

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a great voice like a trumpet, saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,’ and ‘What you see, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and

Laodicea.' I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks was one like a Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and with a golden sash wrapped around the chest. The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. His appearance was like the sun shining brightly. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though I were dead. Then He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, though I was dead. Look! I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Rev. 1:10-18).

Do you want to be free from sin? Be in the Spirit on the Lord's day! Be ready for an encounter! Worship Him with abandon!

5. Believe the Word. The Bible becomes amazing when we believe it!

"Moreover He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find. Eat this scroll and go speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I give you. Then I ate it, and it was as honey for sweetness in my mouth" (Ezek. 3:1-3).

Often people are encouraged to read the Bible through in a year. That's good, but I prefer to read, let's say, a verse for a month. Pray for the lightning hot power of truth to strike me through just one verse that it captivates me for hours, days and a lifetime!

When our life source and enjoyment truly comes from the very Word of God instead of through media and entertainment, the

power of sinful desire is diluted. Diffused. Defeated.

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

The Word of God is a weapon. God’s very Word, when received, believed and acted on, becomes a sharp sword against the enemy. Sin has no chance!

6. Gather together. Be deeply connected at a life-giving, Spirit-filled church on fire. Be teachable and accountable and let your iron sharpen others as well.

When we live in a community of holy, burning ones the resulting unity is a force against evil that is something to behold.

Worshipping the Lover of our souls with others is something we should never live without!

“Though an army should encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing I have asked from the Lord, that will I seek after—for me to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to see the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He will hide me in His pavilion; in the shelter of His tabernacle He will hide me; He will set me up on a rock. Now my head will be lifted up above my enemies encircling me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord” (Psalm 27:3-6).

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