

Godly Living 5: Overcoming Sin

INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to conclude my series on godly living.
 - A. So far in this series we have discussed how godly living requires:
 - i. The proper worldview, or having a proper understanding of how things are that we might respond properly to the world.
 - ii. That we understand that we live as soldiers fighting for our eternal souls in a cosmic battle that has been raging since the beginning.
 - iii. That we understand that whether we choose sin or godliness, we will be slaves. Yet, being God's slave is one of free choice resulting in being God's children and heirs of eternal life, while serving Satan results in eternal condemnation in hell.
 - iv. Knowing how temptation works, seeing Satan continually uses the same pattern and has no more power over us than we choose to give him.
 - B. Today I want to focus on how as God's people in His grace we have the means of overcoming sin.
2. To do that I want us to consider:
 - A. What the Bible says about sin and how it affects us.
 - B. What is required to overcome sin.
3. It is my hope that because of these lessons we will be more prepared to face temptation and come out victorious.

BODY:

I. To overcome we must understand sin and how it affects us.

- A. Truth demands that it be admitted that sin is pleasurable, exciting, and promising.
 1. If it was not, it would not be the greatest problem everyone faces in the world.
 2. The Bible admits to sin's pleasure (Heb. 11:25 – "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to **enjoy the passing pleasures of sin**").
 - a. Sin is **pleasurable** and therefore **enjoyable**!
 - b. The enjoyment it offers appeals to some of the strongest needs or lusts we have (1 Jn. 2:15-16 – "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone **loves the world**, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.").
 3. Yet, the pleasure, excitement, and promise are the bait. But that bait hides the hook intended to catch you and destroy you.
- B. While sin is pleasurable and enjoyable, sin...
 1. *Is addictive.*
 - a. That initial rush, excitement, and pleasure it can provide is so strong it quickly becomes the *rabbit* we find ourselves chasing, only, however, to diminishing returns.
 - b. With the repeated pleasure of sin, our brain changes both mentally and physically, connecting itself and our thinking to that sin, creating a pattern of addiction (Titus 3:3 – "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, **enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.").
 - c. We become slaves to the lusts, feeding them and giving them greater control of us.
 2. *Escalates.*
 - a. Sin, if left unchecked, will always lead to more and more sin.
 - b. In Genesis 4 do you think Cain believed his choice to offer an unauthorized sacrifice to God would take him down the path it did?
 - i. Do you think Satan explained how it would lead to jealousy and bitterness against his brother Abel that would drive him to commit murder? Of course not!
 - ii. Satan does not reveal how sin quickly escalates!

- c. For us, however, one of the reasons sin escalates is its diminishing returns.
 - i. The pleasure of sin is always greatest the first time and diminishes after that.
 - ii. Sin's *diminishing returns* will drive one deeper into darkness, enslaving us to more sin in the attempt to regain the feeling of that initial rush, excitement, and pleasure.
 - d. Even the ungodly world knows this. For, studies on the use of pornography show...
 - i. It to be the number one gateway into homosexuality.
 - ii. It to be one of the main causes of dissatisfaction with one's mate resulting in divorce, seeing it presents an unrealistic view of the sexual relationship.
 - iii. It, almost without fail, to be the beginning of sexual crimes such as rape, child molestation, and even sexual murder as confessed by those who commit those crimes.
 - e. So do not be fooled. Sin escalates.
3. *Is transient*, momentary, a passing pleasure like the Bible says (Heb. 11:25).
 - a. That is because the pleasure, etc., sin offers are not the end of the game.
 - b. Sin's pleasure is momentary because what immediately follows it is a large dose of guilt, the eye-opening realization of the extent of one's wrongdoing, and the sudden and real fear of being found out, all of which are carefully concealed within Satan's temptation.
 - i. Recall how Amnon, David's son, became a slave to his lust for his half-sister Tamar?
 - ii. This unchecked lust led him trick Tamar into coming to his room and this is what follows (2 Sam. 13:14-15 – "However, he would not listen to her; since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. ¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up, go away!").
 - iii. The pleasure of his sin was immediately replaced with hatred of her!
 - iv. And, the consequences of this act ruined Tamar's whole life, caused strife within the family, drove Absalom to revenge, and resulted in Amnon's death!
 4. *Is destructive*.
 - a. If sin is allowed to continue in one's life, there are unavoidable, destructive consequences.
 - b. There will be the development of...
 - i. A second, seemingly hidden life lived in the dark where Satan has his way and evil flourishes.
 - ii. A constant fear of being exposed and one's public, acceptable world coming crashing down! Such constant fear is very unhealthy.
 - iii. A very strong sense of self-loathing, seeing one is continually doing what one's knows to be wrong, or even despises. You come to hate yourself for your sin.
 - iv. A greatly diminished self-esteem. Wherever you go, especially when it involves contact with God's people, there is the immediate thought of "if people really knew who I am, they would hate me, be disgusted by me, and reject me."
 - v. Depression, and even sometimes schizophrenic tendencies to try to cope!
 5. Sin brings death (Rom. 6:20-21, 23 – "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death... ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.>").
 6. These parts help make up Satan's well-oiled machine designed to addict, enslave, and destroy you.
 - a. **As long as you walk sin's path**, the pleasure decreases as the pain increases.
 - b. The only *reprieve* you will find and grow *dependent on* is the *momentary escape* your *sin's pleasure provides* from your sordid, tortured, and inwardly hated life.
 - c. Yet, giving in to the sin just starts the whole process over again, taking you further down the rabbit hole.
 - d. Sin is slavery, deception, depression, and death. Only in Christ is there freedom...period!

II. Overcoming sin requires:

- A. Beginning with Jesus.
1. Taking on Satan and the world alone is spiritual suicide. You cannot win.
 2. Overcoming begins with Christ (Heb. 2:14-18 – “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.¹⁶ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.¹⁷ Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”).
 3. We must be convinced that to be strong, we must “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 2:10), and that as Jesus said, “apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).
- B. A cooperative effort between you and God (1 Corinthians 10:13 – “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who **will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation **will provide the way of escape** also, **so that you will be able to endure it.**”)?
1. God promises to work for you to assure that no temptation will face you that is beyond your ability in Him to endure, making *escape* always possible.
 2. But you must *cooperate* by having faith in God’s power to do this and being willing to take the path of escape He provides (James 4:7 – “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”).
 3. God is not going to make you do the right thing; but the opportunity, the choice, will always be there and you will know, at the time of temptation, the right choice to make.
- C. Bringing your sin into the light (John 3:19-21 – “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”).
1. When one becomes a Christian there is to be a definite movement from darkness into light.
 - a. God by His grace and mercy calls us out of darkness into His light (1 Pet. 2:9-10 – “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”).
 - b. This requires living in the light (Eph. 5:6-8, 11 – “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them;⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light...¹¹ Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.”).
 - c. God requires that which is evil to be rejected and exposed by bringing it into the light!
 2. This means that sin cannot be defeated while remaining in the dark, without it being confessed or acknowledged to godly brethren who can help (Jas. 5:16 – “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”).
 - a. This is a required step that cannot be ignored or sidestepped.
 - b. Confession of sin opens the door for God’s power to affect your life through the prayers of godly individuals on your behalf. You must believe that God’s instructions will help.
 3. Bringing your sin into the light opens the door for accountability, a vital piece of freedom’s puzzle.

- a. I firmly believe to overcome sin's slavery in one's life requires others checking on us and seeking to hold us to what God's word demands and our promise to follow it.
 - b. Accountability is a constant reminder of the pain and shame sin brings, knowing we will have to admit sin when the accountability partner calls, texts, asks, etc.
 - c. It only works when coupled with honesty, which will only be motivated by the realization that...
 - i. You no longer want sin's slavery...period.
 - ii. The pain of the sin has grown far greater than the pleasure it momentarily provides.
 - iii. Doing what God wants brings glorious freedom from our slavery, our guilt, our pain, our misery.
- D. Fleeing from evil and pursuing righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22 – “Now **flee** from youthful lusts and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”).
1. To overcome you must be willing to flee...the devices...the friends...the situations that you know are connected to and responsible for leading you into your sin.
 - a. You must not make provisions for the flesh (Romans 13:13-14 – “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”).
 - i. Provision – to give it forethought, to think of how to provide for something
 - ii. In other words, Christians do not allow things around them or put themselves in situations that they know lead to temptation and sin! We all know what those are!
 - b. You cannot keep things the same and hope to overcome.
 2. One must also be **proactive**, pursuing God's power before temptation comes (Heb. 4:14-16 – “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ **Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**”).
- E. Seeing yourself as a slave to righteousness (Roman 6:17-18 – “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you **became obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you **became slaves of righteousness.**”).
1. This reality has become one of the most helpful things in my life.
 2. For, to serve God means I am a **slave to righteousness**, that righteousness rules me completely, that my will must always submit to it.
 3. It means my actions are guided by the question of “is it right?” and an honest answer to it!
- F. Trusting in God's grace to forgive and let it free you (Acts 13:38-39 – “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him **forgiveness** of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and through Him everyone who believes is **freed from all things**, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.”).
- G. Remaining motivated to fight!
1. A key to remaining motivated to fight is knowing the consequences of losing.
 2. You must know that if Satan wins the battle he comes closer to victory; and that victory will mean your eternal condemnation in hell (Rev. 21:8 – “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. God wants you to know of the freedom found in Jesus the Son (Jn. 8:34-36 – “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”).

2. If you want that freedom found in Christ, found in living a godly life, God has made it possible for you to have it.
3. Will you begin your journey to freedom today by bringing your life into the light, shining the cleansing light of Christ on your sin and shortcomings that you might be saved in his grace and forgiveness?
 - A. If you are a Christian and are not living in freedom, will you come repenting of your sin and confessing it?
 - B. If you are not a Christian and desire to be free from the slavery of your sin, will you come and receive the freedom Christ offers in service to Him that begins by F-R-C-Bp?