

# What Happens When a Christian Sins?

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“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” **1 John 1:5-2:2**

## Introduction:

About 2,000 years ago, the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world. Every sin of every person who would ever live was placed upon the Saviour, and was paid for that day. Jesus died and rose again to deliver you and me from the punishment of our sins, which is the second death. When we trusted Him as our all-sufficient Saviour, He wiped our eternal record clean, forgave all our sins, and declared us innocent in the sight of God. Praise God!

But, what happens when a Christian, a child of God, commits a sin? What happens when the forgiven sinner breaks God's Law? Does God's grace allow us to sin all we want to? Can we sin our way out of the family of God? Why do I still sin after I get saved? Why do I struggle so much with sin? Will I ever reach the point where I am sinless?

The book of 1 John was written to give assurance of salvation to believers, and to explain the fellowship we have with our Father. Look at our text verse,

**1 John 1:7** “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

In this brief article, I will use Scripture to answer the question,

“What happens when a Christian sins?”

**Let me give you 4 statements that will answer this question:**

## **1 - You WILL sin after you get saved.**

Before you got saved, you only had one nature, or one set of desires: the flesh, or the old man. The old man cannot be made righteous, nor can he enter Heaven. He can only sin.

**Romans 7:18** “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...”

When you got saved, the Holy Spirit came to dwell within your body. He gave you a new nature, a new set of desires. This new nature cannot sin, but can only do right.

So, as a Christian, you now have two natures. The old nature, called the flesh, will always sin. The new nature, the Spirit, will always do right. What is the result? A constant spiritual battle within your heart! Your old nature and your new nature are always fighting for control, and you decide which one to obey.

**Galatians 5:17** “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Therefore, the fact that you are struggling with sin is a sign that you are saved.

Let me illustrate. The story is told of an Indian native who had recently been saved. This new Christian told the missionary that there was a war going on inside of him. The black dog (the flesh) was always fighting with the white dog (the Spirit). When the missionary asked the Indian which dog won, the native replied, "Whichever one I feed the most." So it is with us. There will be a fight within of right versus wrong as long as you live.

Obviously, then, we are going to sin as long as we live with this old nature, our flesh. We must recognise that fact, constantly confess our sins to God, and strive for spiritual victory. The young Christian would be wise to memorise the following passage, especially verse 9:

**1 John 1:8-10** "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

## **2 - You CANNOT sin away your salvation.**

If we sin as Christians, is there a certain type of sin or any amount of sin that will make us lose our salvation? The answer to that question is very simple: **NO**. Now that you are saved, you have eternal life. You are not waiting for it: It is yours today! You have already passed from death unto life, and are now a citizen in heaven, with an inheritance waiting there for you in your name.

**John 5:24** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

**John 10:28** "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

Why can't we lose our salvation?

- We cannot lose our salvation because it is dependent on the love of Christ. Romans 8:35-39.
- We cannot lose our salvation because we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13.
- We cannot lose our salvation because we didn't earn it in the first place. Ephesians 2:8, 9.
- We cannot lose our salvation because we are kept by God's power, not our own. 1 Peter 1:5.
- We cannot lose our salvation because we become a child of God when we get saved. John 1:12.
- We cannot lose our salvation because we are now citizens of heaven. Ephesians 2:4-6.
- We cannot lose our salvation because God owns us. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

\*\* The key word that you must understand is GRACE:

**Romans 5:20, 21** "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Marvellous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt;  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace;  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within.  
Grace, grace, God's grace;  
Grace that is greater than all our sin."

Imagine that I were to give you a beautiful new watch for Christmas. Of course, I would refuse to take any payment for it. It is a free gift. You have neither earned it nor paid for it, but it is now in your possession. Now, if you were to be rude to me, and argue with me, what would happen? If you were to punch me in the nose and call me names, can I take away the gift? **NO! It is your possession by law.** So it is with eternal life. The Lord gave it to you freely; you neither earned it nor paid for it. It is your possession, and nothing will ever change that.

Let me use another illustration. When I stepped on a plane on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001, I was irrevocably on my way to Los Angeles. I may have been rude and obnoxious. I may have fought with the flight attendants. I may have got drunk and puked on the captain! But, I was going to Los Angeles. I might

not have enjoyed the flight, but I was going to Los Angeles because I settled that when I stepped on the plane. Friend, you are on the road to Heaven if you are saved. Now, what you do on that road, and how much you enjoy the trip, is up to you, but you are irrevocably on your way to Heaven.

### **3 - Sin WILL hurt you and your relationship with God.**

Some people think that grace gives us an excuse to sin. If we are forgiven and we can't ever lose our salvation, what is stopping us from doing anything we want? But, they do not understand grace, and they do not understand sin. Rather than giving us a license to sin, grace gives us the motivation and the power to overcome sin.

**Romans 6:1, 2, 14, 15** "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

Why is sin so terrible? Because sin will hurt you, and sin will hurt your relationship with God.

**James 1:14, 15** "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

I am the son of Michael Tossell. Nothing will ever change that fact. He will always love me and I will always be his child. I was born into his family in 1968, and that is that. Disobedience toward my father would not change that fact. If I were, as a teenager, to curse my father, assault him, steal his car, and run away from home, I would still be his son, and he would still love me. So, you ask, you'd get away free? No way! Firstly, my relationship with my father would be ruined until I went home and got things right with him. Also, I'd hurt myself by my rebellion. I'd feel very guilty. I'd be miserable. I might even go to jail and suffer there for my sins. So, although my rebellion wouldn't stop me from being dad's son, it would hurt me and my relationship with my father. Christian, your sin will not change your position as God's son, but it will hurt you and your relationship with your Father.

Be warned: Sin will hurt you, and can kill you.

- Sin will wreck your home.
- It will sear your conscience.
- It will hurt your marriage.
- It will damage your children.
- It will destroy your testimony.
- It will sap your power.
- It will choke your fruitfulness.
- It will steal your joy.
- It will hinder your witnessing.
- It will prevent your prayers.
- It will damage your health.
- It will shorten your life.

Before you decide to live a life of sin, remember this word: **Chastisement**.

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" **Hebrews 12:5-7**

### **4 - You CAN have a measure of victory over sin today.**

You will never have complete, absolute victory over sin in this life. BUT, you CAN have a measure of victory over sin today:

**Romans 6:14** "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

How can we have the victory over sin?

**Romans 8:1,2, 11** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

The way to victory is not by our own power, but **by the power of the Holy Spirit**. As we walk in the Spirit, we will have victory over the flesh and its sinful works:

**Galatians 5:16** “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

But, you ask, what does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Let me explain by way of illustration.

Dr. Jack Schaap is Vice-President of Hyles-Anderson College, the Bible college I went to in America. When Bro. Schaap was a teenager, His dad didn't want him to hang around with other teenage boys and get in trouble. This was especially a danger during the summer months when Jack was not going to school. But, Mr. Schaap didn't forbid young Jack from going out. In act, he told Jack that he could go out, after he was finished working with his dad. Jack's dad had his own business, and Jack would work for him all summer. He would get up at dawn, work hard all day, and get home at about 8 or 9 o'clock at night. His dad said that Jack could go out with his friends after he had eaten dinner. But what happened? Jack was so tired for working with his dad that he would fall asleep at the dinner table! How did young Jack stay out of trouble? He was so busy doing right that he kept himself from doing wrong.

To walk in the Spirit means to constantly obey the leadership of the Holy Spirit, as spelled out in the Word of God. It means to be so busy serving the Lord and doing right that you don't have the opportunity to be tempted or sin! That is the way of victory.

### **Conclusion:**

So, let us review our answer to the important question,

What happens when a Christian sins?

1. You will sin after you get saved.
2. You cannot sin away your salvation.
3. Sin will hurt you and your relationship with God.
4. You can have a measure of victory over sin today.

Let me close with a final illustration from the Word of God. Consider a man called Lot, Abraham's nephew. Lot was, according to God, a righteous and just man. God still loved Lot and delivered him from the destruction of Sodom, even though Lot was very backslidden and far from God. But, Lot's sin did much damage. His wife died. His sons-in-law were destroyed in the fire and brimstone. Lot's testimony was worthless. His daughters got him drunk and committed incest with him. Lot is in Heaven, but his name and his family were wrecked by his sin.

Christian, you are a child of God, irrevocably on your way to Heaven. Your sins are forgiven. You cannot sin your way out of the love and grace of God. But, beware! Sin will hurt you, it will hurt those you love, and it will hurt your relationship with God. Walk in obedience to the Spirit of God, and you will not obey the lusts of your flesh. It might just save your life.