

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SIN¹

Are you born again? Have you been saved? Are you a true Christian, as the Bible defines it? If so, the Holy Spirit has come into your life, and undoubtedly your heart's desire is to please God. Every believer is declared perfect in God's sight the moment he trusts Christ (positional sanctification). Unfortunately though, we are far from perfect in our daily walk in this world (practical sanctification). When we die and go to heaven we will finally & permanently be set free from our old nature and the possibility of sinning (permanent sanctification or glorification). But until then we are quite capable of sinning & unfortunately we often do. ***That's right, Christians sin too.*** Now no true Christian tries to sin or makes sin his friend. It should be his enemy. But the fact remains that every Christian fails and commits sins. **So, Christian, what should you do when you sin?** Let me give you four brief biblical principles to follow:

1. **GET UP!** Don't lay there and give up! - **Prov. 24:16** says, "The righteous falls seven times and rises again..." In a race, if you fall down you can choose to lay there and let all the other runners run over you, or you can get up and get back in the race. When you commit a sin, that's bad enough. But to fail to get back up is even worse! Many believers who have sinned simply lie down and feel sorry for themselves, stop going to church, stop reading their Bible, etc. When they do that, Satan starts laughing and dancing. If you've failed God I'm sure you feel terrible. But don't just sit there and wallow in self-pity! As one person has said, "**Failure is not final!**" (Phil. 3:13-14). **GET UP...** and practice the following biblical principles:

2. **CONFESS YOUR SIN & FAILURE TO GOD** - **Prov. 28:13**. To confess means to agree with God about your sin. See it for what it is: an offense against the holy God who redeemed you! As long as you try and cover or hide your sins you'll get nowhere. The first step to restored fellowship with God is to confess your sins to Him.

3. **ASK GOD TO WASH AWAY YOUR SIN UNDER THE BLOOD OF CHRIST & RESTORE YOUR FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM** - **I Jn. 1:9 & Ps. 51:12**. The apostle John says that if we confess our sins to God "He IS faithful & just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **CLAIM THAT PROMISE!**

By the way, you may be wondering why you need to confess your sins to God and ask His forgiveness daily, when all of your sins were forgiven the moment you received Jesus Christ as your Lord & Saviour. The answer is found in Psalm 51:12 where David prayed and asked God to restore unto him the joy of salvation. **Notice David did NOT say restore to me my salvation. David knew he couldn't lose that. David was part of God's family & couldn't lose that relationship. But what David had lost when he sinned so grievously, was the JOY of his salvation. He had lost God's fellowship!** David was still God's child, but his sweet fellowship with God had been broken! That's why we should confess sins as soon as we commit them. A child who disobeys his father is still his child-even when he disobeys. But the sweet fellowship between the child & his father is broken when he disobeys. What must be done to restore their relationship? The child needs to come to his father and ask forgiveness. Once he does that and the father says, "I forgive you," the father & child can once again enjoy the fellowship they normally possess. So it is between a disobedient believer & his heavenly Father.

4. **REPENT (TURN) FROM THE SIN COMMITTED AND PURPOSE NOT TO DO IT AGAIN BY GOD'S GRACE** - **2 Cor. 7:9-10**. As we begin to view sin as God views it, we will want to leave it. Notice in this biblical passage that there are two kinds of repentance: godly repentance, and a false repentance that leads to death. Many times we are sorry for the consequences of our sin (i.e. we are sorry that we got caught), but we are not sorry for the sin itself. However, if we will picture the sin we have committed as being the hammer that drove the nails into Christ's hands and feet, we will begin to view sin the way God views it. For it is the very sins that we are committing that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross! If we are truly repentant we are grieved and sorry for the sin itself. False repentance is a sorrow only for having been caught, or for suffering the consequences for doing it. Godly sorrow goes beyond that to the sin itself.

LET'S REVIEW: Are you born again? If so, you want to follow Christ and live in a way that pleases Him. But you will sometimes fail. But don't give up! When you fail, get back up. Then confess your sin to God, asking Him to cleanse you under Christ's blood and restore your fellowship with Him. Finally, ask God to help you to see that sin for what it truly is, something that nailed Christ to the cross. Ask Him to grant you true repentance and a hatred for that sin.

ONE MORE THING: If you are struggling with a sinful habit that you can't seem to break, you need to find out how to overcome that sinful thought or habit pattern. My Christian friend, you don't have to continue going around in circles, committing the same sins over and over again. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO!** The Bible gives a pathway to victory. To receive genuine help and discover the biblical principles that can help you break the chains of whatever sin you are battling with, read some notes I've compiled titled "**Overcoming Sinful Thoughts & Habits.**" The person who gave you this paper may also have those notes & be able to give a copy of them to you.

¹ By Rev. Mike Edwards, Originally written in Papua New Guinea in 1986 (revised 1995, PNG & 2019 Madison, Ohio)