

What is the source and nature of sin in our life?

Jesus in Mark 7:20-23 uncovered for us the core of where sin starts like this: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

In other words, while we might say we were tempted by the enemy, the decision to sin is ours as we have the ability to reject temptation.

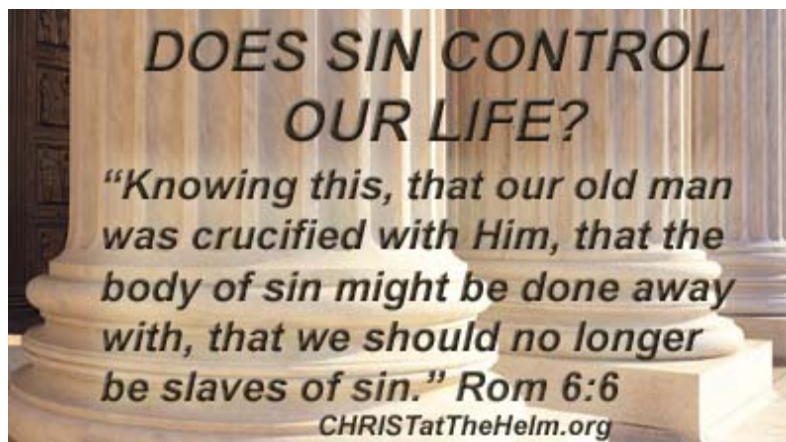
The reason as well James 1:14-15 adds, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Again, Jesus illustrated this truth that sin starts in the heart in Mat 5:28, "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

It is evident that any sin we entertain starts in the heart of a person, thus we have no excuse and can't blame anyone but ourselves.

The big question is, are we entertaining sinful thoughts, desires, hatred, jealousies, fornication, idolatry, adultery, even unrighteous ambitions that the world offers?

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It is no surprise, nor can we deny that whatever controls us in life, we become its slave. The bible tells us that through salvation in Christ, we have been freed from the power of sin. Therefore, if we willfully choose to remain under the power of sin, we in effect reject the Lordship of Christ to follow our sinful desires.

In John 8:34 Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”

Paul explained it further in Rom 6:16, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?”

Do we realize how serious sin is to God?

Did Christ suffer and die on the cross so we could simply claim salvation and embrace our sin?

Don’t we know that sin not only hampers our growth in Christ, but as well draws us deeper in rebellion to God?

If we say we believe in Christ for salvation, have we surrendered our sinful nature to learn from His Word and follow Him, or are we simply seeking benefits without commitment to Christ?

Let’s heed 2Cor 13:5 saying, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?”

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**HAVE WE BEEN DECEIVED?
HAS OUR LOVE FOR
THE LORD GROWN COLD?**

***“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord
and the cup of demons; you cannot
partake of the Lord’s table and of the
table of demons.” 1Cor 10:21***

Where do temptations to sin come from?

Obviously, it is the draw to the flesh, the desire for lustful pleasures, the cult of self in seeking to fulfill whatever pleases us. In essence, the enemy tries to lure believers into thinking that it doesn’t matter as we have been forgiven by God. This deception has brought shallow believers into thinking that sin is acceptable in their life as Christians.

However, what does the Word of God tell us?

Mat 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.” In truth, either we will follow Christ at His Word or we follow and belong to the world.

The reason James 1:22-24 says, “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.”

How do believers get to this state of mind?

Mat 24:12: “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.”

In other words, as our world becomes more wicked by the day, lukewarm believers espouse the world’s standards.

Will we let the world deceive us, or will we follow Christ?

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What solutions do we have to resist temptations to sin?

Col 3:1-2: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

Col 3:5-6: "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience."

Rom 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Gal 5:16: I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

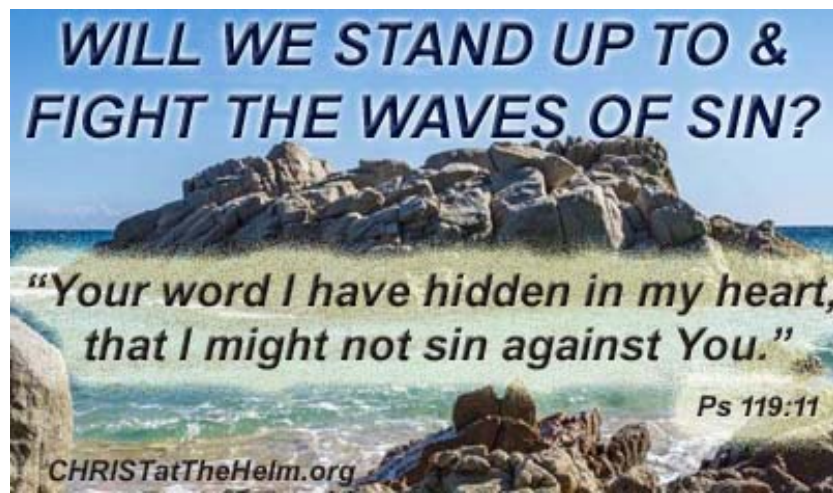
Then what?

James 1:12: "Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

How is that possible?

Let's ask God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Ps 51:10) Will we?

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To free ourselves of the endless temptations requires much more than taking a defensive attitude. It expressly requires that we equip ourselves with the armor of God to fight off the enemy, as the Word of God teaches us in Eph 6:10-18.

How is that accomplished?

Mark 14:38: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

2Tim 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Heb 12:1: "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Col 3:23-24: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

Eph 6:10-11: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Why?

1Cor 6:20: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Will we cover to the enemy, or will we stand with God in Christ and pursue the path of faith with a pure heart?

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**“IF GOD IS FOR US,
WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?”**

Rom 8:31

**“But thanks be to God!
He gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

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1Cor 15:57

Do we realize the unrestrained power we have through Christ to resist temptation? Here's what the Word of God tells us:

2Cor 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

2Tim 1:7: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Rom 8:2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Rom 8:15: “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

1John 5:4: “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

Eph 2:1: “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

It is evident that in Christ, we have the power of God to resist temptations, if we will simply feed our minds and hearts with God's Word.

Why?

Heb 4:12: “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Will we agree with Rom 8:31, “If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

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Do we understand the seriousness of holding on to sin, and foolishly claim that after all, we are saved?

Here's what Jesus said in Mat 6:24: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other."

Obviously, we can't claim salvation while walking one foot with the Lord and the other in the world. It has to be one or the other, right?

Paul in 1Cor 6:9-10 clearly demonstrated this principle, saying: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

1Cor 15:33 warns, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits."

The apostle in 2John 9 stated, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God."

Finally Rev 21:8 states clearly, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Will we choose freedom from sin in Christ, or follow the world?

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