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Victory in Jesus

There is victory in Jesus. What makes death sting is sin. (1 Corinthians 15:56)

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ..."

2 Corinthians 2:14

It is comforting to know that we can have triumph and victory over sin and death because of Jesus Christ. He died to appease the wrath of God, 1 John 2:2. He died so each and every person can have the forgiveness of their sin, if they will obey Him, Mark 16:16. And when He came forth alive again from the tomb, He conquered death.

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37

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

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him." Romans 6:8-9

What a great victory we have in Jesus Christ our Lord!

STACY

Why Won't We Stop?

By Jamey Hinds

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. —1 John 3:8—

Much of what the apostle Paul wrote to the various churches was about them living the lives they were supposed to live in Christ, rather than continuing to struggle with their sinfulness. For example, to the Ephesians (4:22–24) he wrote: *Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

For most of us, the most difficult part of this process would be step one—putting off the old self. But why is it so challenging? Why is the struggle ongoing (maybe even after many years)? Why can't we—once and for all—crucify the flesh with its passions? (Galatians 5:24) Does struggling mean we're not Christians?

Maybe we feel comfortable in our sin. We want to be more than conquerors (Romans 8:37), but we simply give in too easily. The writer of Hebrews urges us to remember those who have gone before us, those who've succeeded: *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1–2).*

Maybe the difficult part is the endurance. We lack spiritual stamina, the kind the Lord himself had as he fought against sin: *Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure (Hebrews 12:3–7).*

The solution isn't easy, but maybe that's the point. We've somehow convinced ourselves to think that being a true disciple presents no challenges. But we're not being reasonable with this notion at all. Growth doesn't come from following an easy path, it comes from difficulties and even persecutions (2 Timothy 3:10–17).

Satan has possibly convinced us (without being so obvious) that the *easy route is the one which leads to heaven, when that directly contradicts what the Lord himself taught: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13–14).*

"For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3–7).

What we were—living in sin—is not supposed to define who we are now. We're supposed to be strive to enter the narrow way (Luke 13:24). The effort needs to show!

We need to focus a lot less on ourselves, and a lot more on God. We desperately need self-control (1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Galatians 5:22–25; 2 Peter 1:5–8). To let go and let God control us: *"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15).*

We should spend a lot more time and energy thinking his thoughts and faithfully following his ways (Isaiah 55:8–9; Philippians 4:6–8; Hebrews 11:6) by setting our minds on things above where Christ is (Colossians 3:1–10).

"Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame" (1 Corinthians 15:34). Our soul's eternal destinies depend on it!