

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.
(Romans 5:12)

Because of our condition, that which comes naturally is wrong and must be fought. The law of God conflicts with the desires of our soul. To overcome lust, one must first admit it is a sin that must be eradicated at all costs. This is a foundational principle of Christianity which should not be taken for granted. The secular humanism of our day rejects the concept of sin, evil, and human corruption. It is no wonder our society is being destroyed through a proliferation of lust and immorality. The world says, “If it feels good, do it”; but the results of such behavior are terrifying. The mass murderer Charles Manson stated, “I was true to my feelings.”

In the last days difficult times will come for men will be lovers of self. . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. . . . (2 Timothy 3:1-4)

We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Ephesians 2:3)

The good news is that God has a plan to forgive our sins plus restore our souls to a righteous disposition. This sums up the entire message of the Bible. God the Father sent God the Son to pay the legal penalty for our sin by dying a substitutionary death for us on the cross. When one believes in Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord, God then imparts the “New Birth.” The Bible describes the “New Birth” as the act of God bringing the soul back to life. Before salvation, the soul is spiritually dead and disinterested in God; after salvation the soul is alive and restored to godly affections. There truly is something different about those who are born again.

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

Even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.
(Ephesians 2:5)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

As a Christian, why do I feel powerless against sinful desires?

The Bible describes man as having at least two parts, the soul and the body. The unsaved man has both a corrupt body and a corrupt soul. The saved man still has a corrupt body, but he now has a righteous soul. God promises to transform the Christian’s body at the resurrection; until then, the Christian battles against the desires of the body.

The Bible calls this old body the “flesh”; this includes the old twisted mind, the imaginations, the biological desires, the emotions, and much of our humanness. Defining precisely “flesh” and “soul” is beyond human understanding because these are spiritual in nature. Nevertheless, God informs us of these two basic aspects of our being.

The unsaved man, having an unsaved nature, wants to sin. The Christian, having a new nature with new desires, truly wants to do what is right and has been given by God extra power to overcome the sinful habits of the flesh.

The Apostle Paul explained the battle in his own life. The unsaved man does not desire to do the law of the God, whereas the saved man does. But the saved man must battle his sinful flesh. Notice that Paul points out that victory does not come through a method but through a person – Jesus Christ will deliver His people.

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the

law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members [body or flesh]. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
(Romans 7:22-25)

Jesus also spoke of the battle, saying that the Christian truly has a willing spirit, but the flesh is weak.

Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41)

The Christian must fight against his flesh, and here are some tips for the battle:

1. Don’t feed the flesh; feed the spirit.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
(Romans 13:14)

Whichever is fed more – the flesh or the spirit – will become stronger. The Christian must remove from his life all sensual entertainment that causes him temptation. The Scriptures point out that King David, before he fell into adultery with Bathsheba, stayed at home rather than going to battle. A Christian is setting himself up for a fall if he has not committed himself to Christian service, goals, and responsibilities. Idleness is the devil’s workshop.

2. Utilize the means of sanctifying grace.

Legalistic religious practices do not give a man power over lust, but God has ordained certain means by which we can be strengthened in the Lord. These include prayer (Matthew 26:41); Bible study (1 Peter 2:2); worship and church attendance (Acts 2:42); and Christian fellowship (Hebrews 10:25). The struggling Christian may not find

victory over lust because God wants him first to be obedient in these important practices. The Christian will be surprised by the extra strength God provides just through prayer alone.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.
(2 Peter 1:8-20)

3. Change your whole self.

You may want to get rid of a particular sinful habit that is hurting your health and self-esteem, but God wants to do much more. He wants to remake you from the inside out.

Think of your specific sin habit as the engine light on your car’s dashboard. The light is not the problem; it is only a symptom of a deeper problem within the engine. Lust is a sign that there is something wrong with the way you view God, self and others. Lust is never a single sin but includes the “lust of the flesh [idolizing pleasures], the lust of the eye [covetousness], and the pride of life [selfish egotism].” (1 John 2:15-17). This is why the Bible urges Christians to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)

Rather than focusing only on the sin of lust, work on your whole character and your relationship with God; then you will find victory in specific sins. God has left you with this life-long battle against lust – not for your discouragement, but to be a constant reminder that your whole self must be renewed.

4. Do not covet, but wait on God to meet your needs.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his

male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”
(Exodus 20:17)

In the Bible, the sin of immorality is often paired with the sin of covetousness because immorality is frequently driven by a desire to have more than what God has given. Lust can be fueled by greed and a desire to dominate or control others. Men and women may lust after the opposite sex because they thrive on the thrill of controlling others or getting the attention of others. Therefore, lust can only be overcome by being thankful and satisfied with what God has given to you. Make up your mind that the person you lust after cannot be yours because he or she belongs to someone else. Humility and thankfulness go a long way in defeating lust.

5. Remember the evil consequences of lust.

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
(Hebrews 13:4)

The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it.
(Proverbs 6:32)

The Bible continually describes the awful consequences of immorality. You will suffer loss if you give in to lust. Whatever temporary pleasure comes from lust, it is not worth the high price that must be paid. Every descent into lust distorts one's view of sex and opens the door to greater perversions; every surrender to lust tightens the chains. These Biblical warnings are not meant to discourage you, but to motivate you to live righteously; and they will help you for "by the fear of the Lord men turn away from evil." (Proverbs 16:6)

6. Don't quit or become discouraged by failure.

For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.
(Proverbs 24:16)

The lie of Satan is that it is too late and there is no hope. He does not want you to know how defeated he is and how close you are to victory. If you persist in resisting temptation, be assured that you will begin to have greater and greater victories. Every victory sets you up for the next victory.

The test of your faith is your determination to battle lust for the long haul. The Christian life is a marathon run, not a sprint. The true Christian may have setbacks, but he will never give up battling until his dying breath.

You may wonder why God did not answer your prayer for victory after the first prayer, but instead after the ten thousandth prayer. Be assured that after God tests your resolve, He will bring deliverance.

7. Remember that the reward of God is greater than the pleasure of sin.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
(Matthew 5:8)

The choice is God or lust. The motivation to triumph over lust is that, in the end, you receive a far greater joy and pleasure – fellowship with God. Whatever pleasure you think you receive from lust, God has something greater for you when you obey Him. Every self-denial is rewarded by God.

Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
(James 1:12)

This is where faith comes in; for you must believe the promises of God's Word over what your

feelings and circumstances are telling you. Believe that God can meet your emotional and physical needs far better than you can as long as you wait on Him.

8. Forgiveness is found in Jesus Christ.

Remember that your forgiveness and righteousness are not found in yourself, but in what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross of Calvary. The power to live rightly will not come from your will power, but through God's Spirit. Walk with God and wait upon His deliverance. If you fall into sin, confess your sins, and God will forgive you.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
(John 1:9)

And that I may be found in Him [Jesus Christ], not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.
(Philippians 3:9)

There are many more truths to learn about having victory over sin, but I hope that these few Scriptures help you begin a new life in Jesus Christ.

B.E. Winship

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What does the Bible say About the sin of



You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery"; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(Matthew 5:27-28)

Jesus taught that not only is the action of immorality wrong, but the very desire of lust in the heart is a sin against God and man. To dwell on pornography or sexual fantasies violates the law of God. Our secular society questions how something can be wrong when it is natural.

Adam and Eve were innocent before they fell into sin. If someone were to suggest to them the adulteries and perversions of our day, they would likely respond, "Why would anyone want to do something like that?" But once they ate of the forbidden fruit, their natures were tainted by sin. Biological and emotional desires became twisted. The passions controlled the mind rather than the mind controlling the passions. Being the children of Adam and Eve, we are born with the same fallen nature.