

So, Why Do I Keep on Sinning?

Rom 7:13-25 (reading 14-19)

I have a confession to make, I am a sinner. Every time I start to think I am getting this whole Christian living thing down, I screw up, I fail, I flat out sin. Last week we read in chapter 6 we are supposed to be dead to sin. If I am to be dead to sin, why do I keep on sinning? I don't want to, I don't mean to, but I do. Time and time again and often it's the same sins!

This passage in Romans 7 gives me some hope. It gives me some peace. To be honest, I am glad that Paul admitted he struggled too. That even apostles weren't perfect. There are some things we can all learn about Paul's transparency in this letter. AND the conclusion he came to as well.

PRAYER

I. Hello, I'm Jim and I'm a Sinner

A. Admit what you are

1. Paul begins by admitting he is a sinner in vs 13-14: Romans 7:13–14 (ESV) — 13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

2. If you are at all familiar with 12 step programs, one of the first things they stress is that you have to admit you have a problem.

3. You have to say what that problem is; own it.

4. Once you are honest with yourself and others, it frees you up to begin to deal with your issues.

5. It's no different with sin.

6. Over the years, I have studied with people who lived a sinful lifestyle and one of the first things they talk about is not able to have it all together like the people they see in church. I quickly tell them that those people don't have it all together, they're just good at hiding their messed-up lives.

7. Most of you know that men die younger than women. Do you know why?

8. Studies show over and over again that men fear showing weakness, even physical weakness so they don't seek treatment until much later. Because of that mentality, men often die of things that could have been treated at an earlier point.

9. Christians have been trained to be like men.

10. We don't want to admit we have a spiritual problem, so we hide it with busyness, we cover it up with our church clothes, we put a mask on and hope no one sees behind it.

11. All the while we are dying on the inside. Sin is killing our souls like cancer does the body.

12. If we admit we have sin, we might be looked at askance by others.

13. If we say we are struggling with sin, we have to admit we don't have it all together after all.

14. We think we're not as good as the Jones family seems to be. And the Jones family is probably thinking the same thing about you and your family.

15. You can't get well until you address the fact you are spiritually sick

B. Deal with what you are

1. Paul then deal with his sinful desires in vs 15-19: Romans 7:15–19 (ESV) — 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

2. Paul makes no bones about how he feels about himself.

3. He sins and he hates that he does

4. Brothers and sisters, I don't think enough of us are at that point in our faith.

5. Oh, we admit we sin. That's not the problem at all!

6. The problem we have is that we don't hate the fact that we do sin.

7. We play the grace game with God.

8. Or worse yet, don't really believe our sin is all that bad.

9. In 1889 big renovations occurred at Fort Mackinac in Michigan. The first flush toilets were installed! There was great excitement among the soldiers. The old ways were gone, welcome to technology! Workshops instructing all personnel on how to use these modern innovations were given. However, soldiers treated these new inventions just like their former latrines. They threw all kinds of things in the toilet bowls, creating a mess for those assigned to clean these new devices. Often the toilets could not be used because they were clogged up by all kinds of obstructions! Post Commander Captain Greenleaf A. Goodale had to establish a new law to avoid these new complications. His orders were simple: Use only "soft paper" and at all cost do not throw matches, toothpicks and cigar stumps in the toilet bowl! The consequences would be disastrous: Violators would be court martialed. After this new law went into effect, some soldiers continued to be violators. They saw this as an opportunity to defy the orders.

10. Too many of us think that way on a spiritual level.

11. We have to stop being defiant to God and deal with who we are.

12. We are sinners who are just scrapping by, by the skin of our grace.

13. We need to hate the fact that we sin.

14. We need to want to do all we can to change, to grow, to overcome our sin.

C. Understand the battle

1. Paul sees the battle for what it is in vs 20: Romans 7:20 (ESV) — 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

2. Sin controls his human nature.
3. In the battle of North Africa during WWII Gen. Patton is famously quoted as shouting “I read your book, Rommel, I read your book!” As he saw the German battle plan begin to unfold he knew how to counter it and badly defeated Rommel so soundly, that the Germans were forced to retreat out of Africa.
4. When we know Satan’s battle plan in our own lives, we know what he wants to do.
5. We know that he wants to corrupt us.
6. We know that he will throw every temptation at us he can to accomplish his goal.
7. We have read his book.

D. Is the battle lost?

1. But reading the book isn’t enough, and Paul addresses that in the next couple of verses.
2. Romans 7:21–24 (ESV) — 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
3. I can feel the pain in his heart as he writes these words.
4. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
5. I can’t do it on my own.
6. I tried and failed. I tried again, and I failed again.
7. I can’t win, I am doomed.
8. The law convicts me of my sin and has assigned me to hell.
9. PAUSE FOR A BIT
10. That’s the result of me fighting the spiritual battle against sin.

II. Hi, I’m Jesus and I’m the Savior

A. Good news

1. Luckily for Paul and us, he doesn’t stop there.
2. God’s story of redemption doesn’t stop there.
3. Romans 7:25 (ESV) — 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.
4. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
5. We aren’t doing this on our own!

6. God called in the big guns for us!
7. God put grace in motion, so redemption followed conviction!
8. Yes, we will always battle sin in our lives.
9. We'll win some battles and lose others, but through Jesus Christ we will win the war!

B. Jesus brings the victory

1. Jude 24–25 (ESV) — 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
2. That's the essence of what Paul is writing about in the beginning of Chapter 8, he then fills in some of the details of how Jesus helps us overcome sin.
3. Romans 8:1–5 (ESV) — 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
4. God has given us victory when there was no hope of victory.
5. Going back to WWII. US Paratrooper of the 101st airborne dropped in to the city of Bastogne and captured it. However, they were way too far ahead of the allied armies and were soon surrounded and cut off by the German armies. Week after week they were attacked, pounded by tank and artillery fire, but refused to give up. Finally, after a month of hopelessness and impending doom for the defenders, US forces broke through the German ring, defeated them and rescued the remaining paratroopers.
6. We need to imagine us as the beleaguered paratroopers and Jesus as the rescuing forces.
7. Our battle will be bitter with sin, and left on our own we have no hope of overcoming it,
8. But we aren't left on our own. Jesus has come to rescue us.
9. "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

C. Conclusion

1. Johnny Cash recorded an album called American Recordings. On the album cover is a picture of 2 dogs. One dog is black with a white stripe. The other dog is white with a black stripe. Johnny was asked what the two dogs mean. This is what he said, "Their names are Sin and Redemption. Sin is the black one with the white stripe; Redemption is the white one with the black stripe. That's kind of the theme of that album, and for me, too. When I was really bad, I was not all bad. When I was trying to be good, I could never be all good. There would be that black streak going through."

2. No one is all bad. No one is all good.

3. We are all sinners who need to be redeemed.

4. We all need Jesus.