

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, 9 TH AUGUST, 2020

THEME: DEALING WITH SIN IN THE CHURCH READINGS:

PSALM 119:81-96; PROVERBS 7:7-10; 1 PETER 5:1-11; MATTHEW 18:1-16.

INTRODUCTION:

I want to live a life pleasing to God, but it can be quite daunting to meet the reactions that come from my nature to events and situations in daily life. I think, say and do things that are not according to God's will. Paul describes it very well in Romans 7:18-19: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice." It can seem that this sin inherent in my flesh is just too strong to resist. So, how can I overcome sin?

1) Recognize and admit that you are a sinner Romans 3:23 says, "For ALL have sinned and fall short of God's glory". No one is without sin, and because of sin, we all have a need for God's grace and mercy. With that said, it is important that we recognize our own sin struggles. It gives us a sense of humility as we relate with God and others. 1 John 1:8- 9 says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". The moment you are honest about your sin, dealing with it should not be a problem if you are willing under Grace.

2). Look unto Jesus.

Jesus says something incredible in Revelation 3:21: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." These words are so great, they can almost be hard to grasp! All Christians believe that through Jesus' sacrifice we can get forgiveness and be reconciled to God. But here Jesus is saying that I can also overcome sin as Jesus overcame! So to find out how I can overcome sin, I need to look at Jesus, my forerunner and great example, and see how He did it in total submission to the will of God and not his own. When Jesus came into the world, He declared, "God, You have given Me a body, and I have come to do Your will." (Hebrews 10:5-7.) Similarly, when He was facing enormous trials at the end of His life, He said, "... not My will, but Yours, be done." Luke 22:42. "My will" is another word for the "sin in the flesh" that we

have all inherited. As a man, Jesus also had this self-will, and was tempted, but His firm resolve from the very start was, "Not My will, but Yours, be done!" For me to overcome as He overcame, I need to make that same decision and faithfully stick to it, no matter what happens or how I feel. To deal with sin in your life, you must humble yourself. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:5-8. In order to overcome, Jesus had to humble Himself. He had to take up a battle against the sin, and carry out His pledge: "Not My will, but Yours, be done!" Humility is the mind of Jesus, and

must be my attitude as His disciple.

3.) Recognize that you need God's help "... who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard

because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Hebrews 5:7-8. Jesus really was a man like us. God didn't give Him any special privileges or make the way easier for Him, because then the whole work of salvation would have been corrupted and worthless. Jesus fought a desperate battle against the sin in His flesh, and needed help. His "vehement cries and tears" were heard because they were genuine, the result of only wanting to serve God. God taught Him obedience, and gave Him the strength and resolve He needed to deny Himself, every single time. To overcome like He overcame, I need to follow Jesus in everything, also in how I pray to God for help. In my situation, the lusts in my flesh and the pressures from outside can loom up like an enormous mountain; the battle can seem overwhelming, but I am not alone. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16. The time of need is when I am tempted, when I see and feel the sin in my flesh, when I am struggling to keep myself pure and not to sin. If I pray for help as Jesus did, with humility and loud cries and tears, desperate to gain the victory and be saved from death, then I will get help.

4). Using the Word as a weapon God's Word is a sword. (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12) It is the absolute truth, and a powerful weapon against Satan's and sin's deceit. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, His reply always started with "It is written..." (Matthew 4:1-11.) When I read the Bible, I fill myself with God's wisdom. It is the weapon He has given me; words to use against Satan's deceit like Jesus did, words that show me what to do, words of comfort. I must do exactly what I read and study. Then I am wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. I totally expose Satan's lies and deceit and overcome all the sinful tendencies in my flesh. Living according to these words makes you invincible.

In conclusion, we have visited four ways Christians can respond to moral dilemmas and sin. Whenever we are faced

with a dilemma of sin, we should remember to be humble, recognise and admit you are a sinner. Also, let the word of God dwell in you richly and depend on God's help and grace always.