



HOW FREE IS FREE?

Study 12

Overcoming Sin

Many people think that the power of sin is something we can never really be liberated from. Some say you may as well just give up trying; you may as well keep on sinning. After all, God is so gracious he will keep on forgiving anyway. See what God says about that in Romans 6: 1-2. Others say we ought to try, but we can't **expect** to win.

What does the Bible say? (Romans 6: 11)

"Consider yourselves ...


Defeated by sin


Dead to sin

Others think that we can resist committing **acts** of sin but that the 'old self' is still there trying to drag us down. It's as if the Christian has two natures - a new spiritual nature **plus** the old crooked one - both struggling to control us from within! This is a perplexing thought because, on the one hand, it seems so unnatural, (see James 3: 11-12) and yet it would be unrealistic to pretend that as Christians, we do not experience temptation, even the most powerful temptations.

So how free is '**FREE**'? Are we **really** free from sin or only free in theory but not in practice? You need to understand that when you got 'saved,' two things happened:

1/ Your spirit was REBORN into new life, in God's (this time uncorrupted) image, with his nature, and with power over sin! Read John 3:6-7, 1 Peter 1:23 and 1 John 3:9. The last reference is translated into the King James version of the Bible as follows: "*Whosoever is born of God **doth not commit sin**; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*" This is quite startling, because the same letter says that anyone claiming he doesn't sin is fooling himself! Read it again in several modern translations and, if possible, get it from the Amplified Bible. Jot down what you think it means and why it doesn't contradict verses such as 1 John 1:8. How does being 'born of God' make a difference when it comes to overcoming sin?

2/ The 'old self' was RENDERED POWERLESS. ("Destroyed" - KJV / "Done away with" - NAS) Now you are no longer twisted from within! Read Ezekiel 36:26,27 and write Romans 6:6 in the box below. Check it out in as many Bible versions as you can find. Therefore, if we sin as Christians, it's not because the power of the 'old nature' got the better of us. It's because we, **in spite** of the 'old self' being dead, **chose** to do it!

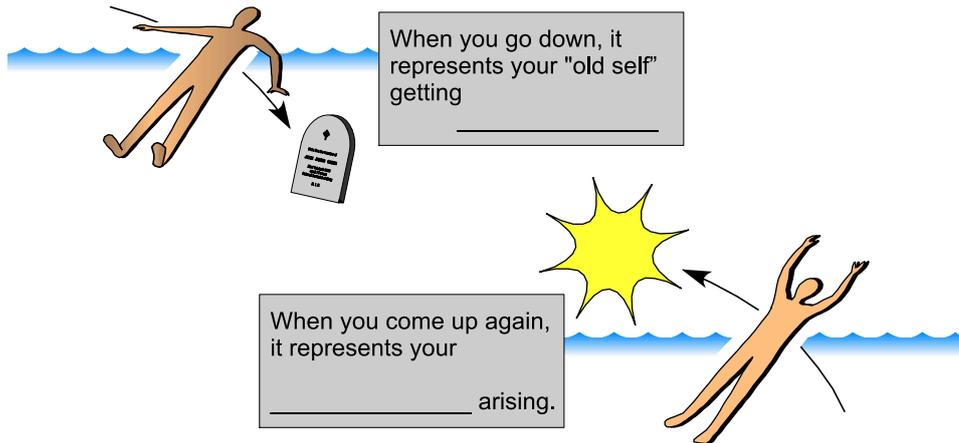
True, powerful temptations still arise from our natural physical and human instincts. True, Satan will try to stir up these desires to lust beyond their proper bounds. Sure, we will sometimes sin; but we don't **have** to, because when we are tempted, it is no longer from a deep seated 'self principle' which grips and binds us from within!

That's freedom! Write Jesus' words on it from John 8: 36 in **bold** letters below.

HOW BAPTISM REINFORCES OUR GREAT SALVATION

It is to do with this freedom that God has asked us to go through the act of baptism. You see, Satan wants you to believe that you can never be truly set free. To prove it, he will attack you mercilessly, to make you **feel** that your 'old self' is still there, and that you are no different than you ever were. This way you may lack confidence concerning your ability to resist sin, and give up, because you wrongly think yourself as handicapped by the power of the 'old self' within.

This is why baptism is so important. When you do it, you not only hear and see; you actually **re-enact** what has already happened to you in the spiritual realm. This is the most forceful way that God can teach a truth to anyone! And every time someone else is baptised, it is a **visual reminder** to you again. So what is God so concerned that we should understand? Study the symbolic meaning of baptism in Romans 6: 1-11 again, especially verses 3 and 4.



WHAT ABOUT THE TIMES I SIN AND FAIL?

It is true that, as Christians, we often sin and fail. St. John speaks of the overcoming life, but adds, *"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."* (1 John 2:1)

Will he put up with our failure even when we let him down again and again? Write what it says in 1 John 1:9.

However, in our failure let us remember that temptation is something that can be overcome. *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Look what the Bible says. Finish off what is written in Colossians 3: 9-10.

"You have _____ with its practices and have _____, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Praise God! Our salvation is a total salvation! We are saved from sin. We have a **new inner nature** after God's image. Even when we fail, we are not permanently defeated, because in Christ, we have been **SET FREE!**

Answers here:
www.5loaves2fishes.net/pdfs/answers.pdf