

## STRUGGLE & GRACE

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**John 8:36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

God loves all of us so much that He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to take the punishment for our sin - even unto death. Freedom can only be attained through the forgiveness of sin by Almighty God, through Jesus Christ. Those who don't have faith in Christ are bound by sin and are subject not only to slavery, but to spiritual death. Those who accept Christ, the one and only source of spiritual truth, will be "truly" free. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and repent of our sin, we are forgiven.

**Psalms 103:12** as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

From GotQuestions.org:

Jesus' statement from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), means that the penalty for sin is paid in full. The word translated "it is finished" is one word in the Greek: *tetelestai*. *Tetelestai* was stamped on receipts to mark them as "paid in full". And when a convicted criminal had completed his sentence and was freed from prison, a sign saying "*tetelestai*" was nailed to the door of his house as a token that he no longer owed a debt to society.

There are many sins that we are guilty of every day. We love God and His moral precepts. We want to live a life that honors Him but we go back to sin again and again. We do good for a while but the enemy of this world seems to get us off track. Jesus forgave us so we can live in freedom, but sometimes we can't seem to forgive ourselves. The struggle and ensuing guilt is very real and causes even the most sincere follower of Christ to be defeated and enslaved by sin.

**Romans 7:15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Paul is being deeply honest as he describes the duality of the human struggle of living for Christ and succumbing to sinful desires. We continue to do what we hate - we sin - even when we intend to do what is right. Although Christians have been freed from sin's power, we are often tempted and tricked by the powerful influence of the evil one. The Word tells us we are in a spiritual battle. The war rages spiritually and manifests in the physical.

**Ephesians 6:12 KJV** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**Romans 7:19-23** <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

This statement from Paul is supported by something the LORD says in the opening chapters of the bible.

In Genesis 8, after the flood waters subsided and the ground dries up, Noah makes a pleasing offering to the LORD. In verse 21 the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

**Romans 7:21-25** <sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

This is an example of why the gospel is such good news! Because of the grace of God, we have salvation in Jesus Christ. Because of the grace of Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit, who dwells with every disciple (or follower) of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord has tremendous power and it is available to us.

**Romans 8:1-5** <sup>1</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires

If you are "in Christ Jesus", a born-again child of God, there is no unforgivable sin. The believer's sin was forgiven at the cross. God will not condemn you for any of your sins - past, present, and future. However, there is one condition and this is crucial: salvation is for those who place their faith in Christ Jesus. Those who reject Jesus as Lord and Savior have rejected God's grace and forgiveness and will not be rescued from condemnation. They are separated from God, and God's wrath remains on them; they have no fellowship with the Father. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world, convicting the unsaved. If a person resists that conviction and remains unrepentant, then he is choosing hell over heaven. There is no other way. Forgiveness is found exclusively in Jesus.

**Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

**John 3:18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

**John 14:6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

**John 16:8** When [the Advocate] comes, He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.

**2 Corinthians 7:10** Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Sin has a way of enslaving us. Jesus can free you from this slavery that keeps you from becoming the person God created you to be. If sin is keeping you in bondage, Jesus can break up its power over your life.

If we do not take our sin and struggles straight to our Father, the devil will have a field day! The evil one will tie our sin to our identity, use our shame to drive us away from God, and make us believe we are worthless, pathetic and unredeemable. These are all lies from the original liar, the father of lies.

Godly sorrow brings repentance. God gives encouragement to the sinner through His Advocate. The Holy Spirit is working in you to direct you off of the wrong path of sin, struggle, sorrow, guilt, shame, and lead you to the righteous path of repentance, salvation, forgiveness, freedom, and shalom. The power of the Holy Spirit will guide you to the infinite grace of God.

**Philippians 1: 3-6, 9-11** <sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you. <sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

God loves you. He is merciful and full of grace. God is slow to anger and quick to forgive. God sent His only begotten Son to save us. God is calling, always wanting to restore fellowship with you, and He is waiting with open arms. Receive God's grace and do His will. At all times and in every way, live in His shalom, full of well-being, in His complete peace.