
Words of Truth

Killing Sin In Our Lives

By: Brian A. Yeager

As Christians we are expected of God to cease from sin (John 8:1-11, I Corinthians 15:34, and II Timothy 2:19). One tool in ceasing from sin is stated well by this Psalmist: *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalms 119:11). The word of God is simply the greatest tool in overcoming, conquering, and avoiding sin. We live by every word of God (Luke 4:4).

Having said all of that, it is not as though you will study the Scriptures and all of a sudden lose any desire you may have to sin. Fleshly lusts are what lead to sin. Notice: *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren"* (James 1:13-16).

Now, it is easy to just say we should think more on the word of God and transform our minds so that we do not sin (Psalms 4:4 and Romans 12:1-3). Yet, we all know that such is easier said than done. We have to walk out of our houses into a world full of temptations to sin. The whole world lieth in wickedness (I John 5:19). There is no avoiding that. You cannot escape to the moon and be the only living being in sight. We have to live in this world amongst worldly people (I Corinthians 5:9-11). Sin surrounds us.

Jesus said this to His disciples: *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41). From those words we can draw a certain conclusion that none of us are strong enough to surround ourselves with sin and not be affected by it. So, we study and grow spiritually. Good (II Peter 3:18)! We spend more time with faithful brethren being spiritually edified. Good (I Thessalonians 5:11-14)! We examine ourselves, identify any weak spots, and fix them. Again, good (II Corinthians 13:5)! On and on we could go. Yet, we are left with a question. How do we get beyond any lusts that ultimately may drive us to sin? The Scriptures teach us to mortify sinful deeds. Let's consider that for our study here.

Mortifying Sinful Deeds

Let's begin with reading some Scriptures that teach us to mortify, that is put to death, sinful things. Consider: *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live... If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members*

which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things 'sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Romans 8:12-13 and Colossians 3:1-10).

If you will reread the Scriptures I just quoted, the answers are contained therein. By focusing on spiritual things above all else we will be empowered to stop sinful practices in our lives. Nothing is said in those contexts that say you will lose certain desires. What is said is that you can put to death the action that sinful desires lead to.

When you and I were sinners of the world, we allowed ourselves to fulfill sinful lusts of the flesh and mind (Ephesians 2:3). In Christ, we have committed to stopping ourselves from engaging in things we know are wrong (Ephesians 4:21-32). You do not have to feel like you have sinned by being tempted. Sin is the act of violating God's word (I John 3:4). What you have to do is not give in to sinful desires. Understand that, for every sinful desire, God has provided us a way not to give in to that sinful desire (I Corinthians 10:13).

Knowing that temptations surround us is an unsettling truth. Knowing that it is not an easy stroll in the park to avoid sinful desires is troubling too. Understand that, temptations can be overcome (James 1:12). Also, we need to consider that there is a difference in stopping a desire from leading to sin and having such a sinful desire that becomes lustful. Lust is a longing to do something wrong. Let's consider for a moment that we cannot only kill sinful actions, but also the lusts to do such.

Killing Fleshly Lusts

The Scriptures speak of a war that is waged inside of men and women between the spiritual and carnal mind (Galatians 5:17 and I Peter 2:11). We then learn this: "*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*" (Galatians 5:24). You are not facing a losing battle if you are struggling with fleshly lusts. It is a battle that can and must be won. It starts with not giving in to what you have longed for. It then goes to learning to long for something entirely different. Start longing for eternal life (I Peter 1:3-9). You'll then learn, as we have earlier read in the Scriptures above (Colossians 3:1-10), that by having our affections on things above we cease from sinful things here. If you have a fleshly lust you have struggled with, KILL IT!

Conclusion

We have learned that temptation surrounds us. We have learned that desires are hard to get beyond. Yet, we also learned that we can and must cease from sinful actions. We have learned we can overcome carnal lusts. Jesus lived a sinless life on this earth (II Corinthians 5:21). He is our example to live after in a sin free life (I Peter 2:21-22). We are expected to live our lives as He lived His (I John 2:3-6). Don't act like He didn't face temptation. He faced all that we face and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16). Study Christ. See how He did it. Learn that you can too. Kill any sin that has been or is in your life!

Milkshakes Using Reason

By: Brian A. Yeager

As we all grow in the faith our ability to properly reason increases (Hebrews 5:12-14). Sometimes, people lack that ability and come to an unreasonable conclusion. For example, notice this Scriptural example: *“Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee”* (John 21:20-23)?

Proper reasoning requires us not to err, as did some in the example above, by reading into a statement something that was not said. Additionally, we cannot err on the other side either. We cannot take away something that has been said. Both are equal errors (Revelation 22:18-19). In this brief study we are going to use a simple matter to consider how to properly reason through the Scriptures.

Many have turned in the Bible to find one verse to base their entire faith upon. An example, many will use this verse: *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)”* (Ephesians 2:5). After reading that Scripture many have concluded that grace is the only thing that saves us. They stop reading. They have their conclusion. Yet, in that same context we learn that grace requires faith to be saved (Ephesians 2:8). Wouldn't that lead a reasonable person to look further into the Scriptures (John 5:39)? This already shows salvation is not by grace only.

A reasonable person would desire to know much more than just one Scripture. A reasonable person would search the Scriptures and learn that the Ephesians had done much more than just have grace to be saved (Acts 19:1-7). That would lead to a reasonable person digging even deeper. One who is reasonable would realize that needing faith for salvation would require a way to obtain faith (i.e. Romans 10:17). That would, in itself, reveal that salvation is not a one step process. So, a reasonable person would want to find out as much about being saved and salvation as possible. If a reasonable person actually did seek to find what the Scriptures fully teach about salvation, they'd find there is more to it than just grace (i.e. Matthew 13:19-23, Matthew 18:3, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 13:3; 5, Luke 14:25-33, John 3:1-5, John 8:23-24, John 8:32, Acts 2:14-47, Acts 3:19, Acts 8:12-39, Acts 9:1-20, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 16:13-15, Acts 16:25-34, Acts 18:8, Acts 19:1-9, Romans 1:16, Romans 5:9-10, Romans 8:24, Romans 10:9-17, I Corinthians 15:1-4, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 1:23, Colossians 2:12, James 1:21-25, I Peter 2:1-2, I Peter 3:20-21, II Peter 3:10-14, etc.).

The false conclusion of salvation by “grace alone” is easy to see. If you understand the truth about grace you know grace requires many things on our part (Titus 2:11-14 and II Peter 3:18). Now ask yourself, if this one Scriptural matter requires so much reasoning, what about every other Scriptural matter? Doesn't this tell us there is often more than a one-verse answer to every question? In our next study we are going to cover how Scriptures sometimes have other Scriptures that qualify the conclusion you would reach through proper study and reasoning.