

SUNDAY ARTICLE

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When a Christian Sins

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Every Christian sins. Every child of light stumbles into momentary darkness. Every prince or princess acts like a rebel at times. As Christians in this world, we are sinners *and* saints. Redeemed, yet still needing to repent. Forgiven, yet still needing to forsake. Confessing Christ, yet still needing to confess sin.

This reality of our lives is not easy. In fact, few moments in life give as much pain or discouragement to the Christian more than the instant we become conscious of having committed yet another sin against our heavenly Father. Surely, it grieves us. And at times, it can lead to anxiety, guilt, melancholy, embarrassment, and even depression for many Christians.

In the midst of such struggle, the Christians do well to remind themselves of the gospel comforts of Scripture. There is peace to be had and love to enjoy. Our Heavenly Father ever extends His grace to us. The Christian also does well to take

to heart gospel encouragements. We desire to pursue Christ and work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). As we tread through this Valley of Baca (Psalm 84:6) let us readily embrace both the comforts and encouragements of the gospel. Falling into sin, though never good, provides such an opportunity.

Remind Yourself of these Comforts:

- **Forgiveness is yours.** Forgiveness is not a possibility; it is already a reality (1 John 2:12).
- **A clean record is yours.** Your debt is gone. The Lord paid the penalty, the record of debt has been cancelled, and the legal demands have been met (Colossians 2:13-14).
- **Peace is yours.** Grant yourself peace; God has. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).
- **The guilt is not yours to carry.** It has been born by another. "He said, 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30).
- **The Father is yours.** God continues to be your Everlasting Father. He continues to direct His love towards you. (Galatians 4:6-7)
- **Freedom is yours.** You are not forsaken. Your sin does not need to be the start of a life lived in habitual sin. This isn't the end. You remain in the palm of His hand. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28).
- **Christ's prayers are yours.** The faithful High Priest intercedes for you. Nothing is hidden from Him and He cries out for you (Hebrews 7:25).
- **Life is yours.** Your life is not over. You are united to Christ and will persevere to the end (John 6:39-40).
- **Grace is yours.** Though your sin may be great, Christ's grace is greater still. We have grace upon grace in Christ our Lord (John 1:16).
- **You are not disqualified.** God continues to use sinners for great purposes. God is not done working in you and through you. (1 John 2:1).

Remind Yourself of these Encouragements going forward:

- **You are not yet what you shall be.** What a glorious thought! “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).
- **You are to be a holiness-seeker.** Holiness is a constant pursuit and endeavour. We have not arrived. The need for growth in knowledge, wisdom, love, and maturity echoes in the canyon of our fall. “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).
- **You are to be a sin-hater.** Sin is an enemy that leads to death. It is no friend, it is not neutral, and it is not worth it! The consequences of sin always prove to be greater than any enjoyment found in it. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).
- **You are to be a soldier.** We need to have a wartime mentality. Every moment of our lives is lived in the midst of spiritual warfare. Our adversary is constantly prowling around seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8).
- **You are to be a watchman.** Vigilance is necessary. One moment of not being on-guard can be a moment that shapes the rest of our lives, hurts those around us, and grieves our Lord (Matthew 26:41).

- **You are to run the race.** Falling into sin reminds us that we have one goal: to finish the race before us to the glory of God. That is enough. The challenge is sufficient for a thousand life-times (2 Timothy 4:7).
- **You are to grow in the Lord.** No matter how mature we thought we were in the faith, sin reminds us that we have a long way to go (Colossians 3:1-17).
- **You continue to need grace.** Like a fish needs water, you need grace. You continue to need grace as much today as you did upon first coming to know Christ. Seek it, embrace it, and live in it. (Galatians 3:3).

A repentant and confessing Christian has much to remind themselves of when they fall into sin. We need the comfort of the gospel and its strong encouragements. We need reminders to quiet our souls with peace regarding the past and reminders to galvanize them for action going forward. We have a great God. Let us never forget that. A God whose grace is sufficient for the past and whose strength is sufficient for the future.



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