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## What You Need to Know About Sin in the Life of a Christian

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SIN IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

One of the truly great and far-reaching blessings of salvation is God's dealings with the subject of our sin. The repenting sinner is immediately and eternally saved from the penalty of sin (in the past), provided with victory over the power of sin (in the present), and guaranteed final removal from the presence of sin (in the future). But what happens when the Christian fails to use the available power and falls into sin? How does God view sin in the life of his child? Is it indeed possible (as some have claimed) to remain sinless from the cross to the crown?

**A. The fact of sin** – Let it be said up front that the one claiming sinless perfection ascribes to himself that which neither Paul, nor James, nor John claimed for themselves. Note the testimony of these three apostles:

1. **Paul** – *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 3:12). *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief”* (1 Tim. 1:15).
2. **James** – *“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body”* (James 3:2).
3. **John** – Charles Ryrie writes:  
Being a Christian does not free one from sinning. Of course there are some who teach eradication of the sin nature in this life, but the picture and doctrine of the New Testament seem to teach otherwise. In fact, John mentions three false claims which people in his day made in this regard in 1 John 1:8-10. *“If we say that 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”* (1 John 1:8-10).

Verse 8 speaks of denying the presence of the principle of sin. Verse 9 speaks of the denial of particular sins. Verse 10 speaks of the denial of personally sinning (*A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, p. 112).

**B. The effect of sin** – The child of God immediately loses the following eight things upon sinning. The ninth may be lost.

1. **The loss of light** – *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* (1 John 1:6).
2. **The loss of joy** – *“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit”* (Psa. 51:12). *“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”* (John 15:11). *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith”* (Gal. 5:22), *“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”* (1 John 1:4).
3. **The loss of peace** – There are two kinds of peace enjoyed by the believer.
  - a. The peace **with** God, enjoyed by all believers regardless of their spiritual condition (Rom. 5:1).
  - b. The peace **of** God, enjoyed by only those believers living in the center of his will. This is the peace sin causes one to lose.
4. **The loss of love** – *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him”* (1 John 2:5). *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1 John 2:15-17). *“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4:12).
5. **The loss of fellowship** – *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also say have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ... If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:3, 6-7).
6. **The loss of confidence** – *“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight”* (1 John 3:19-22).
7. **The loss of testimony** – *“No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the*

*children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:9-10).*

8. **The loss of rewards** – *"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath peat recompence of reward" (Heb. 10:35). "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8).*
9. **The possible loss of health and even physical life** – *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30).*

C. **The restoration following sin** – How can a "sinning saint" be restored to full fellowship? In essence, he or she must know and apply both the means and the method of God's cleansing and forgiveness.

1. **The means is the blood of Christ** – *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).*
2. **The method is the confession of the Christian** – *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).*

D. **The preventives against sin**

1. **The role played by the Word of God** – *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It has been often observed that the Bible will keep one from sin, or sin will keep one from the Bible.*
2. **The role played by the Son of God** – *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:23-25).*

3. **The role played by the Spirit of God** – *“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”* (Zech. 4:6).
  - a. **As seen through his praying ministry** – *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Rom. 8:26).
  - b. **As seen through his teaching ministry** – *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God”* (1 Cor. 2:12).

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