



by

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By various maxims, forms and rules,  
That pass for wisdom in the schools,  
I sought my passions to restrain;  
But all my efforts proved in vain.  
But since my Savior I have known,  
My rules are all reduced to One,  
To keep my Lord by faith in view,  
This strength supplies and motive too.

- John Newton

40 Days of Purity

Helping God's People Stay Sexually Pure

John Doyel

 Cover by Brian Port

## Forward

This devotional has been written for **two reasons**. First, it was a means of therapy for myself. When 30 years of full time ministry and education came crashing down because of my struggle with sexual sin, I needed to remind myself what God's Word teaches about sin and our new life in Christ. Second, it is an effort to teach God's people His **biblical principles** so that we can know **His truth** and allow God to use the truth to help us maintain sexual purity.

This is not a manual that is going to help anyone achieve sinless perfection. That can only be done by God when, at long last, He removes from us our sinful flesh and transforms our mortal bodies into immortal ones. This will happen at the resurrection when Christ returns to call all that are His to meet Him in the air.

Until then we must find a way for believers to ***stand strong in the strength of the Lord***, have ***victory over sexual addictions*** and become ***an army*** who are **shoulder to shoulder** with each other protecting themselves, their families and friends and **strengthening the Church**.

My prayer has been that God would give me two men to stand shoulder to shoulder with me. I envision one on my right and one on my left. **We are locking arms, putting on the full armor of God and standing strong in the strength of His might**. As God brings to each of them one other man to lock arms with them we become five. My prayer is that ultimately we will become a wall of thousands standing strong in the strength of God's might.

The numbers of people who are being drawn into sin of sexual through pornography and sexual sin is staggering. This potentially can ruin our nation. Consider the following statistics...

\* At \$12 billion a year, the revenues of the porn industry in the U.S. are bigger than the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball combined. Worldwide porn sales are reported to be \$57 billion. To put this in perspective, Microsoft, who sells the operating system used on most of the computers in the world (in addition to other software) reported sales of \$36.8 billion in 2004. (Family Safe Media)

\* According to the Justice Department, in 1998 there were 28,000 X-rated Web sites generating \$925 million in revenue. Within just three years this number increased to 280,000 X-rated Web sites.

\* 60% of all website visits are sexual in nature (MSNBC Survey 2000)

\* 77% of online visitors to adult content sites are male. Their average age is 41 and they have an annual income of \$60,000. 46% are married. (Forrester Research Report, 2001)

These statistics are dated and the problem has only grown worse.

## Introduction

I have known the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior for 46 years. For many years I have struggled with an addiction to sex and pornography. Thanks to the grace and forgiveness of our loving God, the love and support of my wife and children and the ministry of IntegrityDotMen at Vineyard Columbus and my counselor, I am in recovery and **God is healing my wounds and inhabiting my brokenness.**

**How many times** have you, like me, said that you would never look at porn again? Are you tired of the weight of your sin? Does it anger you that you cannot seem to get free and stay away? If you are still **trying to stop on your own** and have not **confessed your struggle** to someone who can help you, then you are not **utilizing God's provisions.** If you are not in **a weekly support/accountability group**, then how long will it take and **how much destruction** will happen before you make the steps you need to start recovery?

This devotional will not substitute for any of the things I just mentioned. They are the first steps we all need to take. Without them we cannot be set free. This work is my effort to help myself, and my brothers in Christ, understand the biblical truth about sin. I believe biblical truth can help to set us free. Jesus said; "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." But just knowing the truth is not enough. I have been a student of the bible for over 40+ years and it was not enough for me. We need both...**we need truth and we need relationships but also we need truth in relationships.**

Now, I have never liked devotionals. They are either too short, too much fluff, too old or too uninspiring. They are the fast food of the Christian life, not bad for a quick snack...but I would much rather grill that rib-eye steak and do some serious eating.

This devotional is not fluff. Everyday you will read several verses from the Bible. I believe we must learn and understand God's Word so we can see our sin and our sin nature for what it truly is. Then we can understand what God has already done for us and see the incredible glory of His grace and love ... which is the only place we can find healing for our sexual brokenness.

Here we find **no excuses** just the biblical facts about our sin nature, life and death. We will learn about God's grace and forgiveness and how we can live a life set free from the bondage of sin. We will never be sinless until we get to heaven. However, **there is a freedom from the bondage of sin.** As addicts we do not feel that way. Our years of experience shout at us saying we are not free from the bondage of sin. You have not been able to get free and stay pure. So, who are you going to believe? Our sin nature, which has lied to us all of our lives, or the word of God?

One day a leper came to Jesus, fell to his knees and said; **"If you are willing you can make me clean."** Jesus was willing and healed him. Another time Jesus met a man who had been crippled for 38 years and Jesus asked him; **"Do you want to get well?"**

How about you? Do you want to be clean? Do you want to get well? Do you want to be pure today? The bondage of sin and our sin nature in our lives has been broken. It may not feel that way but it has. We need to believe it and we need to understand it...and then we can begin to live it.

Some estimate that 50% of Christian men struggle with pornography and are addicted

to sexual sin. Some say it is as high as 70%. Imagine how that is impacting the church and the men who do not step up for ministry and leadership because they have this secret problem and are filled with shame. **Or who serve anyway in the flesh and not in the Spirit or are using His gifts to empower their ministry.**

God knows the truth and perhaps together, by God's Word, God's Spirit and God's Church we can grow stronger and have more victory when we become an army of men standing shoulder to shoulder in the strength of His might, wearing the full armor of God **EVERYDAY!!!**

Here is what will help this devotional work for you

- **Commit the next 40 days to working your way through it. Seek to be disciplined about setting the same time aside everyday for 40 days. You have struggled long enough and know that spiritual discipline will help you in the battle.**
- **Have a place each day where you can be uninterrupted and have about 30 minutes to not only read the one or two pages in the devotional but time to reflect on what you have read.**
- **Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart and makes notes on what He is telling you to do. Write those things down in the notes section and allow that to become your daily journal.**
- **Be willing to forgive yourself for past failures and courageous enough to seek whatever help you need to find victory in this battle. Sexual purity is possible. However, it will take time and support from others to get out of the darkness and into God's light.**

I have struggled with pornography since I was first exposed to it as a child. Over a period of time I became seriously addicted. To some degree there are times when I am still tempted and struggle. Three times I have fallen in almost 10 years.

It has not been the result of my will power. It has been the grace of God and by understanding the biblical truths you will learn from this work. Others factors have been essential in my continuing recovery as well.

However, my heart is that **you begin** your road to recovery. I pray that through learning these biblical truths you will understand the forgiveness and grace of God for you and begin again to walk with your Father, full of the Holy Spirit and in constant fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He will heal your wounds. He will inhabit your brokenness. He will speak to you through His Word. Welcome to a place of healing and recovery.

## **Day 1**

**“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Romans. 6:1-2**

We have said it to ourselves a thousand times. I might as well go ahead and sin, get it over with, confess it and move on...maybe this will be the last time. We know that is a lie. It will not be the last time. If it were the last time, then why are we facing another last time this time, and the time before that and the time before that and the time before that?

Then we fall a little further and think; "If I sin again then God's grace reaches a little further and I am a little more forgiven and grace and forgiveness are good things...right? Notice what Paul says at the beginning of verse 2. **"By no means!"** This is one of the strongest phrases Paul could have used to say...Absolutely Not!!! No Way at all!!! To take something as incredible and wonderful as the grace of God and His forgiveness and use it as an excuse for sinning...that has got to be one of the worst excuses and the most ridiculous logic of all time.

Then he makes this statement; **"We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer."** Now here is some truth to chew on. First, **we have died to sin**. We will understand that phrase more as the chapter unfolds. However, notice that second part of that verse; **"How can we live in it any longer?"** The answer that we need to think about and burn into our brains is...WE CANNOT **LIVE** IN SIN ANY LONGER!!!

When this passage uses the word live here think of it as more than just being alive. We can certainly be alive in sin...we do it all the time. However, we are miserable and we feel our life sucks. However, God wants us to be ALIVE! To live with a sense of love and wellbeing and to have joy and peace in our life.

Sin always has and always will cause death. It separates and destroys. In the garden of Eden death entered the world through sin. It destroyed the perfect intimacy between Adam and Eve. It has brought separation between you and God and everyone around you. We cannot **live** in sin...we **die** in sin. The signs of death are all around us when we choose to sin. The signs of death are fear, anxiety, anger, rage, sorrow, depression. We hate ourselves and despise others. That to me does not sound like **living**...it sounds more like **dying**.

Our sin nature lies to us. It says; "Want to "live" a little? Go ahead and rebel, this will feel good and you will feel alive. After enough times it almost becomes automatic...we become addicted. Sin and our desires carry us away with less and less resistance. However, after we bite and the thrill is gone...which usually happens moments after we sin, then we are not feeling life but death. **There is and never will be for us life to be found in sin.** Life comes only from God. Life feels like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Choose life for yourself today. Say no to sin and yes to God and He will give you the life that you really want. It is real and it is so much better than the momentary cheap thrill we get from following after our flesh.

So fellow struggler, do you want to pursue purity? Do you want to experience the true life that God has for you? Do you want to be well and allow God to heal you of the wounds that are causing you to act out in sexual sin? This devotional will teach you first what you need to know and then what you need to do.

However, let me warn you. There is a battle going on for your life. God wants to see you grow in grace and be healed. Satan wants to destroy you. Please, do yourself a favor and be faithful to read this devotional everyday for 40 days. Fast from television or reading the paper. Set aside half an hour for reading this devotional and for prayer. Pray the prayers I have written out loud. Then make a few notes of what the Spirit of God says to you during your time with Him.

**Heavenly Father - Thank you that I have died to sin. Thank you that I am alive in Christ today and can experience real life from you. Help me to see sin for what it is and to not believe the lies that it tells me. I want to be pure today and ask you to fill me with the Holy Spirit. Please open my eyes to see sin as it really is and what it does to me and those I love. Help me to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh.**

**Proverbs 3:3 “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.”**

**Notes**

**Day 2**

**“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:3-4**

We all know the cliché; “It’s not what you know but who you know.” Well, I would argue

that both are important. Do you know God? Do you have a relationship with Him through receiving His son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior? That is where new life begins. He is the source of God's grace and forgiveness in our lives and so we must start there. However, so many believers stop there and never move on to the "what you know" of the Christian life.

In verse 3 Paul asks; "Or don't you know..." OK here comes a news flash and this is something that if God were not telling us this information then we would not know that; **"...all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"** What the heck does that mean???

In the New Testament the word baptism has several meanings. Literally, it meant to immerse or to dunk under the water. It also had a figurative meaning. Used in the cloth dying industry it referred to the action of submerging a piece of cloth into the dye. Then, when the cloth was brought out of the dye, it had changed color. What was once white was now red or blue or whatever color the dye was. The action of baptizing the cloth into the dye **changed the cloth** so that it became completely identified with the color of the dye.

The bible says that we were baptized into Christ Jesus. We are the cloth and He is the dye. That means that we have become **identified with him**. Being baptized into Him has in a way colored our lives. It means that what happened to him has been transferred to our lives. So when Jesus was crucified, died, was buried and rose from the dead, **the effects of all those things are given to us**. We are baptized or united with him in those things. They never actually physically happened to us but God applies what happened to Jesus to us and so **the effects of those actions become a part of our reality**. We are the cloth and his actions are the dye, so God baptizes us into Him and we become like him. Complicated isn't it...that is why the verse says...Or don't you know?" No, we didn't know that...**but now we do!** So what does that mean for us?

Ok, we have been baptized, or united with Christ. As a result we have become united with Him in his death, his burial and resurrection. Read it again out loud in verse 3 and 4. Go ahead I will wait. Good...now note that this is what God has done this for us. He has united us with Christ in these things so that there could be an affect in our lives. Pay attention, because what he says next is crucial if we are going to be able to experience being set free from the bondage of sin!

Why has God done this? He tells us in verse 4. **"...in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."** By uniting us with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has made it possible for us to live a new life. The most important word in these verses is that little 3 letter word "may". It is **possible** for us to live a new life. This is now possible because since Jesus died it is as if we too have died and since Jesus was raised to a new life it is as if we too have been raised to a new life. In this new life that we have in Christ the bondage of sin, or the control of sin in our lives **has been broken** and now we have a choice. We can choose to sin or we can choose to not sin.

So if you have ever felt like you are being tempted and you have to sin...that is a lie. If you feel that you are addicted to sin and it has you in its grasp and there is no letting



go...that is a lie. If you feel you must masturbate in order to relax and go to sleep...that is a lie. We are not chained to sin any longer. We can choose to give in to the temptation or we can choose to walk...or run away.

Look, I know this isn't Sunday Morning Comic Strip truth. It is complicated truth and not easy to understand. God has told us this because we need to know it if we are going to be able to experience the new life that is possible in our relationship with Christ. So do not give up and go back to your "fluff of the day" devotional, or worse yet, no devotions or study of God's word at all. Hang in there and God will get us through it. See you tomorrow!

**Heavenly Father – Thank you for what you have done for me. I want to fully understand what this means that I have been baptized into Christ. Thank you that his death, burial and resurrection has paid the penalty of sin in my life and broken its power so that I do not have to sin. The chains have been broken and I am now free to choose to not sin. Help me today to make that choice at every moment of temptation.**

**Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”**

**Notes**

### **Day 3**

**“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”**  
Romans 6:5-7

Verse 5 is a review of what he just said in verse 4. If we have been united (notice he has changed the word “baptized” to the word “united”) with him in his death, and we

have, we will also be united with him in his resurrection. OK, so do you have that down now? God has united, or baptized us into Jesus Christ. The reality is that everything that happened to Christ in his death, burial and resurrection has been taken by God and applied to us. So when he died, it is as if we had died. When he was buried it is as if we were buried and when he rose from the dead, it is as if we rose from the dead and are living a new life. Like we learned yesterday a new life is possible. Got it???

Now what? Verse 6 says; **“For we know...”** There is that word “know” again. New stuff to learn. There are three things for us to know from this verse.

**“...our old self was crucified with him...”** What is the “old self”? Before we became believers we had only one nature and the Bible says it was a sinful nature. So our “old self” had a sinful nature. The sinful nature controlled our old self and by that nature we sinned. So what the bible is teaching us here is that our “old self” was crucified with Christ and therefore it died. It no longer exists. We have been born again into a “new self” or we have been resurrected to a new life because God has united us with Christ.

**“...so that the body of sin might be done away with...”** Here is great news!!! That body of sin that dwells within us, also called our flesh or our sin nature, which before we knew Christ had a monopoly on our actions...now...after becoming a believer and having our old self crucified...it is possible for that body of sin to be ‘done away with’. Confused...let me illustrate.

Let’s picture ourselves before we became Christians and imagine that our sin nature, or body of sin is some huge WWF wrestler “The Hulk” who has us in a headlock. He is in control and can shake us around as he wants. We can resist but he is bigger and stronger and wins almost all the time. Then we become believers. Our old self has been crucified with Christ and there is a new me...but The Hulk is still hanging around. However, his power to hold me in the headlock has been changed. It is not automatic and he gets me in the headlock when I chose to sin and place myself back in the ring with him. What has changed is that I can chose to not enter the ring...I can tag team with the Holy Spirit and let Him enter the ring for me. I will say more on that later.

**“...that we should no longer be slaves to sin- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”** Since the old self has been crucified and died, so that our flesh or body of sin might be done away with...or his headlock might be removed, now we do not have to be a slave to sin. Being united with Christ in his death and resurrection has freed us from the controlling power of sin in our lives. Got it???

So when we are tempted, when sin comes along and says; “Look, you have sinned so many times already what is one more?” Or sin says; “You might as well go ahead because you know you are going to sin anyway. You are such a weakling and loser get into this ring right now so I can put the headlock on you.” **WE DO NOT HAVE TO DO IT. THERE IS NO POWER THAT CAN MAGICALLY TAKE OVER AND DRAG US IN TO THE RING. WE NOW HAVE A CHOICE.**

We can jump in the ring thinking...maybe I am strong enough now to handle him. Perhaps God has made me strong enough now...don’t believe it. Get into the ring and he will whip your butt every time. Bad option # 2 is to think...ok...I am not getting into

that ring today, but I will stay ringside and listen to him or play with the temptation. Bad idea our past experience tells us if we stay ringside we eventually will enter the ring. So what should we do?

Remember what these verses teach us. The old self has been crucified so that the body of sin might be done away with and we do not have to be slaves to sin...we have been set free. Tag team with the Holy Spirit. We tag team through prayer turning to God at that moment and asking Him to go into the ring and battle the temptation for us. In prayer ask God to help you. Do what the Bible says; "Flee youthful lusts." Run away if you have to. Leave the location where you are being tempted. Drive away from the book or video store. Get out of bed and stop the fantasies.

Tag team # 2 – Call for support. Call your small group leader, accountability partner, pastor, friend or whoever.

Do these things and I promise you that you will begin to experience less slavery / addiction to sin.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you that you are united me with Christ and that because of His death and resurrection I no longer have to obey the sinful desires that I feel. Thank you that I can call upon the Holy Spirit and that He can give me the strength to change. Help me to listen to Him today when the temptations come and to do everything I can to remain pure and obey your will for my life.**

## **Notes**

## **Day 4**

**"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:8-10**

## **Review**

We have died to sin and cannot live in it any longer. We can now live a new life

because we have been united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. The monopoly of sin has been broken. We no longer have to be slaves to sin. We have been freed from the power of sin.

Again Paul continues with the idea that we have been united with Christ in his death. Let me give you another biblical example of the same thing that may help us understand how this whole deal works with God and us.

The bible teaches that Adam and Eve were together in the Garden of Eden. When they chose to sin, death entered the human race and people have been dying ever since. The bible teaches that Adam and Eve were our representatives and that we were present in them. Specifically, it teaches us that the whole human race was present in the loins of Adam. So that what he did, choosing to sin, has been applied to all the human race. So in the biblical sense you and I were “in” Adam. When he chose to sin the entire human race was in him and so the consequences were placed on us. We do not like that. We may not think that is fair, but that is the way it is.

Well that is the bad news...we were in Adam and because he sinned we are born with a sin nature and someday will die. **However, here is the great news.** Just as we were present in Adam and suffer the consequences of his actions, so also ***God places us in Christ and gives to us the consequences of Christ's actions.*** So when he died and rose again to a new life, so also, when we believe in Christ and receive Him as our Savior we are united with Him in his death and resurrection and we are given a new life.

Now with that in mind look at the verse again...

**Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.**

The point of these verses is to remind us that we have died with Christ, that we will also live in the future in heaven with Him **and that we live in the present with Him as well.** The consequences of his actions apply to us as well as to Him. He cannot die again and death no longer has mastery over Him. So also, death does not have mastery over us. Our bodies will give out but we will pass through the valley of the shadow of death and go right to heaven.

Before accepting Christ sin had us in its powerful grasp and death was awaiting us. Now, in Christ, we have been set free from sin and the power of death is gone. Death is now only the door through which we will pass on our way to eternal life. But note this, now, the life we live, **we can live to God.** We are set free from the power of sin. We are free to choose God over sin everyday. We do not have to sin. We can chose to either go back to sin and experience the crap that it brings into our lives and the lives of those around us, or we can grab hold of God everyday, ask His Holy Spirit to fill us and experience the “life” that He has for us.

So everyday we can make a life or death decision. Do we want to experience the life that God has for us? Why wouldn't we? Because sin has deceived us. It has made us

believe that life apart from God will be more fun and have more pleasure than life with God. ***Has that proven to be the case?*** If you think so then you have not really experienced all of the destructive force of the consequences of your sin, you have not experienced the true life giving joy of a strong relationship with God and so you are playing games with yourself and God and hanging out between the two.

God says in Revelation 3:16; **“So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.”** Spit is a polite translation here. Literally it is the word vomit. Ever have something in your mouth that just makes you gag? Is that what you want God to do by being indecisive about whether you are going to follow Him or not? Sure He loves us even in our sin and rebellion but if we want His blessing we must take the actions that allow Him to do that for us.

**Heavenly Father – I want to experience today the life that you have for me. I realize that I cannot live in this place of double minded thinking. Trying to live for you at one moment and then walking into sin the next. Lord, show me the root issues in my life and in my past that allow sin to have such a power over me that I would walk away from your place of life and blessing into a place of sin and evil. Reveal to me these things so that I might rebuke them and allow the Holy Spirit to break the power they have had in my life.**

**Proverbs 28:13 “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”**

## **Notes**

## **Day 5**

**“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”**

Romans 6:11-14

## **Review**

We have died to sin and cannot live in it any longer. We can now live a new life because we have been united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. The monopoly of sin has been broken. We no longer have to be slaves to sin because we have been freed from the power of sin. We need to choose daily to be united with God and experience His life each day.

In this paragraph we are told some amazing things. First, we are to **count ourselves** dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ. He starts off by saying "In the same way..." In other words in the same way that Christ died and is alive to God we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. The key word is the word "count". It means to consider or to take it as fact. We say; You can count on it, consider it a done deal."

**This is the attitude we need to have toward sin.** We used to be under its monopoly and in its power. But, now that Jesus has died and rose to a new life, ***He has taken us through that with Him and we have died to sin.*** We cannot live in it any longer. It does not automatically have power over our lives. We need to stop staring at our sin and fearing it and worrying about how it is going to get us. We are alive to God. Our focus needs to be on Him. We need to be daily fixing our eyes on Jesus.

OK, I can hear you thinking; "But how do I do that???" Now look at verses 12 – 14. Here is what we need to do everyday and maybe even multiple times a day until we establish it as a habit in our lives and thoughts.

Remember, in Christ we now have a choice. We can offer ourselves back to sin and let it become our master again. We can put sin back in charge of our thoughts and actions and follow it around again, back through all the crap it wants to drag us through. It says that we must not offer back to sin the parts of our body. Do not give our mind to sexual fantasies. Do not give our eyes to looking at pornography or looking lustfully at another person. Do not give our hands and arms to commit sexual sins. Do not give our genitals to adultery or fornication. We must stop offering that parts of our body back to the sin that only wants to destroy us. Instead...remember we now have a much greater option.

Here is the answer...everyday offer your body and every part of your body to God and ask Him to help you use them as instruments of righteousness to do good things. Use the parts of your body to do acts of love and grace to others. Be a giver not a taker.

If I think about what sin has done for me it makes me want to puke. It has deeply hurt my wife and all four of my children. It has demolished any sense of trust between my wife and I. It has destroyed my career. It has caused me to leave God's calling for my life in ministry. It has filled me with shame and disgust. Why would I ever want to go back to it and let it slap its iron shackles of lust and sexual sin on me again? When I can instead go to the one that loves me and is good and gracious in everything He does?

Everyday we must start the day offering ourselves to God and the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness. Do that right now. Bow your head and pray and offer every part of your body to God. Ask Him to fill you and every part of you with His Holy Spirit. Do not even look back at sin or listen to the whispers of its pathetic temptations. We are moving on to enjoy the grace and life that our God has for us today.

**Heavenly Father, I offer to you my body today. I want every part of my body to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. I want every part of my body today to be used as an instrument of righteousness and not to be used to sin. Guard my mind and eyes today and help me to look away from anything that will cause me to lust. Block and erase every thought that might lead me to sin and let me experience the full grace of God that you have for me today.**

**Notes**

## **Day 6**

**“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”**

**Romans 6:15-16**

The question from verse 1 is asked again in verse 15. The wording is a little different but the point is the same. It speaks to the attitude that some can develop in regards to sin and grace. Hey, if God has already forgiven me for everything and I am not under the law but under grace, then I can just go ahead and sin and there will be no problem.

If we truly understand the full impact of the grace and forgiveness of God it is true that our sinning does not change our eternal destiny and will not keep us from going to heaven. However, there is so much more that sin impacts. It does affect our relationship

with God. It doesn't end it but sin strains our relationship with God and keeps Him from being able to bless us. Plus, **sin destroys our relationships with other people and deeply harms us.**

But consider what we have learned about sin and what being included in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ has done for us. Sin used to be our master. It held us in bondage and would not let us go. The results of sin is death and not just death at the end of our lives but **death in our current relationships.**

What Paul is saying is now that we have been set free from the bondage of sin why would we go back to that bondage simply because we are not under the law but under grace?

It's like sin, that WWF wrestler, is coaxing us back into the ring so that it can get us in his hands once again and squeeze the life out of us. We have been set free, Christ has taken us out of the ring, but everyday we have to choose if we are going to stay out and enjoy the life He has for us, or if we are going back into the ring against an opponent that we have never nor can we ever beat.

A strong biblical truth is that **we become slaves to whomever we offer ourselves.** Offer ourselves to God and we can become slaves to Him and receive the fullness of life He has for us. Offer ourselves back to sin and allow it to become our master for another day and we can experience the destructive power of sin. The only thing sin wants to accomplish in our lives is death and destruction.

I know it might sound crazy to you, but I am so glad that my sin has been exposed. It cost me my job and the career into which I had invested 30 years . It nearly destroyed my marriage. It has damaged my relationship with all 4 of my children. The choices that I was free to make have caused deep pain to those I love and **for them it was not a choice.** I have wounded them but at least now God is at work in our lives again. This road of healing is difficult. Everyday is a huge challenge. There have been many deeply sorrowful moments. But there have also been glimpses of healing, flashes of joy and moments of true intimacy with my wife and God that are so incredible that I cannot describe them.

I told my wife, the other day, that in my life there was a hole like the Grand Canyon. I tried to fill it up with sin, but that only made it deeper. Now that I am broken and in recovery, now that my relationship with God and her is being restored there are moments where God and she can fill up that void in a second. It is in those moments that I have found true intimacy instead of false intimacy. Isn't that is what all sex addicts are looking for? We long for someone or something to fill the aching void in our lives. I have learned that it has to start with God and getting intimate with Him. We must do that on a daily basis by not giving ourselves back to sin but offering ourselves daily to God.

**Heavenly Father, I want to be yours today. I want to experience a closeness with you that leads to righteous living. I no longer want to be a slave to sin and reap the destruction that sin brings. I want to be a slave to you so that you can pour your life into mine and I can be healed.**

**Notes**



## Day 7

**17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.**

A slave to righteousness? Sounds thrilling doesn't it? Probably not. Righteousness sounds boring right? It can bring up images of holier than thou people with long robes looking down at you and making you feel guilty. It sounds like a group of people sitting around praying and meditating and doing nothing so that they might not sin. Let's learn a little today about this word righteousness.

In a broad sense this word means; "...**the state of him who is such as he ought to be.**" Huh? Ok here is a more specific meaning; "...**integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting.**" Still sounds boring to the sex addict. Let me give you an illustration.

Have you ever had the experience where you did something and it was just easy for you? You have a gift or ability so that you can do something better and easier than most

people. We say people are made for things. Tiger Woods was made to play golf. Archie Griffith was made to run the football. If and when you have that experience there is a sense that you feel and it is a good feeling. It is like you have discovered that you were meant to be able to do that thing.

Now, when we do not give ourselves to sin, which only wants to bring death into our life, and actually give ourselves to righteousness we are falling into the state that God has created us to be in. And it feels good. Righteousness is the place where we belong. It is the state in which we ought to be.

Sin always wants us to believe that sinning is where we want to be. It looks so appealing. It promises to satisfy. Give in and have enjoy yourself. Then after we do that, what do we feel? We are ashamed, disgusted, angry, embarrassed. We want to blame God and others. We withdraw from those who love us and embrace those who do not. We go back to dying instead of living.

I am here to tell you that after 8 years of sexual addiction compared to 6 months of recovery and living in truth and righteousness...righteousness is where it is at. It doesn't suck the life out of you. It pours life into you. It doesn't create shame and guilt, it gives joy and fulfillment. Righteousness is walking with God everyday, being filled with the Holy Spirit and saying no to sin and yes to God. Let me tell you...it feels good. You can go to sleep with a clear conscience. You do not waste energy worrying about who is going to find out that you are such a phony.

Look at this verse... **"1John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."**

In righteousness there is light, purity and fellowship. It is the place you were meant to be.

**Heavenly Father, Help me to fall in love with righteousness and hate sin. Open my eyes to the beauty of me living the way I was meant to be. Show me the foolishness of sin and the disaster that it can bring to me and my loved ones and fill me with your Holy Spirit today so that the members of my body can be used as instruments of righteousness.**

**Notes**

## Day 8

**“I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”** Romans 6:19

Sometimes Paul stops and speaks to those of us who are a little slow. He puts it nicely and I appreciate that. He could have said; “Now for John, the slow learner, I am going to repeat myself. Let me make it clear and tell you in “baby steps” what you need to do.

You used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and ever increasing wickedness. **Does that hit the nail on the head or what?** Can you look back over the years of your life, like I can, and see an ever increasing progression of deepening sin? We dip our toe in to check out the temperature of the water and before we know it we are jumping off the high dive into the deep end and we cannot even swim. And notice that it says: **“...ever increasing wickedness.”** It keeps getting deeper and deeper. One thing will lead to another and to another until the police show up, or your doctor tells you about the STD you are infected with, or your wife leaves you and your family hates you.

You used to do that...but now offer the parts of your bodies in slavery to righteousness

leading to holiness.

The idea of giving ourselves on a daily basis as an offering to God is found elsewhere in the Bible. In Romans 12:1 we read: **“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”** Notice a couple of things from this passage.

The tense of the verb “offer” is a present tense verb, which means it is an action we are to do on a continuous basis. So this is something we are to do everyday.

We are “living sacrifices”. Unlike the animals that were offered to God on the alter of the temple, whose throats were slit, blood drained out and dead bodies burned on an alter of fire, we are living sacrifices. God wants us alive so that He can fill us with the Holy Spirit and experience what He has for us each day.

We are a living sacrifice which is “holy and pleasing to God”. When we offer ourselves God doesn’t look down and say get away from me your sinful person. No, it says that we are holy and that we are pleasing to God.

What is the result of this offering of our bodies to be slaves to righteousness. Look at the verse in Romans 6 again. The result is holiness. Does holiness sound good to you or is it another of those religious terms that you cannot relate to? Let me illustrate it.

Imagine that you have a choice of where you want to live. Choice “A” is living on the streets in the slums of Manila, Philippines. I have been there. It was unbearably hot and humid. The smoke rising from the burning trash filled the air. There were poor people everywhere begging for money or food. Then on the sidewalk in front of me lying on its back was a baby sleeping in the filth of that crowded area while her drunken mother was passed out in the chair next to her. All around me was poverty, filth and people suffering from the effects of a fallen world.

Choice “B” is living in a beach house in Hilton Head, South Carolina. The surf crashing nearby, beautiful golf courses surrounding you and everything is peaceful and beautiful. Ok now, do not give me the Sunday School answer by choosing A. Of course that is where Jesus would be but I am talking about living in a place where you are that baby lying in the filth because you have chosen sin to be your master. That is where sin wants to take us. **Holiness, is the place of beauty where we can find healing for our brokenness.** We need to begin to see holiness as a beautiful place where God is working to transform us into the men He wants us to be.

**Heavenly Father, I want to offer to you today my body as a living sacrifice. I want the members of my body to be used as instruments of righteousness not wickedness. Fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to be used by you to live a holy life and be helpful to others.**

**Notes**

## Day 9

**“When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:20-23**

Remember what it was like to be a slave to sin. Remember how you did things that you are now ashamed of now. Remember how much it hurt you and those you love when your sin was discovered and you had to confess? For me it was September 9<sup>th</sup>. I will always remember the horror I felt waiting for my wife to come home and my news would bring our world crashing down around us. I recall the pain on her face and on the faces of my children, the tears, the anger and the weeks and months of pain that have followed. That was the result of my sinful choices. That was the “benefit” that I reaped when I was a slave to sin. Just as we watched in horror the Twin Towers collapse on 9/11, my life, full of lies and deceit came crashing down with equal devastation in the lives of those I love.

“Those things resulted in death.” My wife’s ability to trust me died that day. My children’s concept that they had a father they could trust and depend upon came crashing down and any shred of respect was killed. We need to feel the weight of that. We need to feel the pain that we have caused our loved ones. Remember the death and destruction of

sin the next time temptation and the thought of looking at porn enters your mind. Fight their urges to sin with the reality of the destruction sin brought into your world.

“But now...” I love those words. There has been a change. We have confessed our sin and are seeking God’s daily healing. Now, we have been set free from sin by being united with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection. WE HAVE A NEW BEGINNING!!! Everyday we have a new beginning in Christ and now we can choose to be a slave to God instead of to sin.

So everyday we wake up and can choose between door # 1 or door # 2. Number one has the three letter word SIN on it and behind it lies the wasteland of death filled with destroyed lives and rotting bodies covered with maggots. Is that where you want to spend the day? You have gone through that door so many times the hinges are almost worn out. Do you think for one second that you are going to find something behind it that will really satisfy you? OR COURSE NOT, NEVER HAS, NEVER WILL, NEVER CAN!!!

Door # 2 also has a 3 letter word on it, GOD. Behind that door is life, healing, intimacy and relationships with your loved ones. There is holiness and eternal life. There is peace and rest. Nights of sound sleep and days of energy. Man, I tell you living without that black cloud of shame and walking in the warm sunlight of a good relationship with God is infinitely better than anything sin can give you. Take your pick. You are free to choose everyday and even many times in your day. In fact every time you are tempted you can now choose. Choose sin and you will begin to experience death, the wages of sin. Choose God and you will begin to experience life, for you and your loved ones.

**Heavenly Father, today I want to choose you. I want to experience saying yes to you and no to sin. I give myself to you today. Fill me with your Spirit today. Begin to heal the wounds that cause me to act out in sin. Reveal to me the root causes of my sin and then come and heal me. Also, inhabit my brokenness. Do not fix my brokenness so that I become strong and independent of you. Inhabit my brokenness and become the strength in my weakness.**

**Notes**

## Day 10

**“Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”** Romams 7:1-4

Paul starts this chapter using a phrase that he used two times in chapter 6. So forget the chapter division, he is on the same thought. (In case you did not know chapter and verse divisions were added to the bible much later. Chapters were introduced in the 1200's and verses in the 1500's)

“Do you not know...” was also used in verses 3 and 16 of chapter 6. There he taught us two key things. First, that all believers have been united with Christ in his death. Second, that we become slaves to the one we obey either sin or God.

Now he wants to teach us something about the law. In his mind “the law” refers to the laws that God gave Israel. There were 613 of them. You have probably heard of the 10 commandments, the Cliff notes of the Law. However, there were many more that God gave to them after he had given them the 10 Commandments.

What he says is that the law only has authority over a person as long as that person is

alive. For example, get a speeding ticket and die before the court date and you cannot be punished for your crime because you are dead. Now look at his example.

A married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive. We normally hear at the wedding... "Till death do us part." So if your spouse dies then, obviously, both of you are released from the commitment and the rules that governed your marriage relationship. So you die and then your spouse can remarry someone else. She is released from her vows to you because they were fulfilled when you died. Then she can remarry and not be an adulteress. The point we need to get here is that death separates one from their previous relationships and the laws that governed those relationships.

In the next verses Paul makes his point.

**Rom. 7:4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.**

Now apply the illustration to us. We are like the woman in the illustration. And we were bound to our sin nature just as the married woman was bound to her husband. Now, because God has united us with Christ and we died when he died we are now free to be united to someone else.

Just as the married woman was bound to her husband so also we were bound to our sin nature and controlled by it because we were bound to it. Now that we have died to the law through the body of Christ we are free to belong to another...and that other is God.

The great thing is that now there is a reason for all of this. The reason is not just for us to be set free from the monopoly of sin controlling our lives and actions although that has happened. It is also not just for us to be able to choose what kind of actions we are going to make or what kind of lives we are going to live. We were not set free to live for ourselves or set free to live for others. Our freedom is for one purpose...so that **we can be united to God and be able to bear fruit for God.**

This is a crucial point for us to be living lives that are fulfilling. We have all chosen to try and fill the void in our lives with many things and sex has been one of them. Has it satisfied and brought forth good things? No. Has it made us happy and given us a sense of fulfillment or left us empty, guilty, ashamed and wanting more. Everything we do has consequences or bears some kind of fruit. God's fruit satisfies. God's fruit is fulfilling. Unite yourself with God and discover true intimacy with Him, and work on maintaining it everyday and you will discover life as it was meant to be.

**Heavenly Father, I want to live for you today. I want to experience the fullness of life that only you can give. I want to be as close and intimate with you as I can possibly be because I know that you are the giver of life. I want your fruit in my life. I want the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**

**Notes**



## Day 11

**“For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”**

Romans 7:5-6

Two very important points are introduced in these two verses. On the one hand he is continuing the thought from verse 4 that we **were** controlled by the sinful nature. The law caused sinful passions to become aroused (he will talk about how this works later). The result of being controlled by the sinful nature and our passions aroused by the law was that we sinned and we bore the fruit of death. Again, what has sexual sin and pornography brought into our lives and families...death to our relationships.

Because God has united us with Christ in his death we have been released from what once bound us and we are free to serve in **“the new way of the Spirit”**. Paul mentions this in a subtle almost offhanded way but the thought is crucial. In fact, it may be the most important point of all for anyone wanting to live the Christian life and discover the joy of holiness and the wonderful grace of living a righteous life.

Ok, we have been set free from the controlling power of sin. **We can choose who will be our master**. We can go back to sin and experience more of the death that it brings, or we can be daily united with God and bear fruit that will fulfill the aching brokenness we feel inside. But we all know one thing...we do not live in a vacuum. It is not just a matter of choice as if there were not other factors playing upon us everyday.

So here is the deal. There is a reason why we do not just automatically live for God everyday. There are **three active enemies** we have to deal with. **One is the enemy within**...we still have a sin nature, or the flesh. It is rotten to the core. It remains with us until we die and it is filled with sinful passions that are being aroused all the time. Those passions are aroused sometimes by thoughts we have and linger on. They are also

aroused by the world around us and by the spiritual forces of darkness.

The **second enemy we have to face daily is the fallen world we live in**. The messages it delivers to us are upside down and they are always lying to us. For example when the world tells us if we make a lot of money or have a lot of things we will be happy. Casual sex can be quick and easy with no consequences.

The **third enemy is what the bible calls the spiritual forces of darkness**. This would include Satan and the angels that became demons when they chose to follow the Devil in his rebellion.

Now, put those three forces together. One lives inside of us everyday and has been with us from birth and is desperately wicked in and of itself. The second surrounds us everyday and bombards us through our senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch, taste and even our imagination. The third has special powers that are also combating against us everyday.

How do we stand a chance??? It is like we have been thrown into the ring with someone far worse than Mike Tyson, our arms are tied behind our back and our feet are shackled together. There is no place to run, no place to hide, we are defenseless and our opponent is angry and wants to destroy us. We only have one chance of not getting creamed...the new way of the Spirit.

Listen guys, the absolute fact of the matter is that we are never going to experience God's healing of our brokenness and the ability to live a godly life and daily choose to not sin unless we are controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Heavenly Father, today I recognize that I need to receive from you the filling of the Holy Spirit. I need his power in my life. I want to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of my flesh. I need his strength to not give into the temptations of the world around me and I need his power to put on the full armor of God and stand firm against the spiritual forces of darkness.**

**Notes**

## Day 12

**“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.”** Romans 7:7

Paul’s concern here is that we do not get the wrong idea about the law and think that it is something bad or evil. We must live now in the new way of the Spirit, but that does not mean that the old way of the law was bad or wrong. No, God gave the law to Israel and us to teach us that we need a Savior.

What he is trying to teach us in these verses I call **the “wet paint” principle**. What do you do if you see a sign that says wet paint? You immediately want to touch and see if the paint is wet. You do not go around touching all the painted things around you to see if they are wet. Without the sign (or the Law), there is no desire to touch. But have someone put up the sign and you want to touch. The sign caused a desire to rise up in you to take an action you would not have taken if the sign had not been there.

The sign was not a bad thing. It was trying to keep you from getting paint on yourself. The sign was good but it gave rise to a bad desire. The law is like the sign. Paul uses the illustration of coveting. Coveting is to desire things that are forbidden. You may or may not want something. But have the law say you are forbidden to have that or do that and bingo the desire comes to life and you covet almost everything that is forbidden. We naturally do this because we are rebellious in our hearts.

Paul’s point is in verse 8. Sin, which is an active force in our lives and in our world, seizes the opportunity that is created by any commandments and **sin creates in us all kinds of sinful desires**. The commandments are not bad. They actually cause sinful desire to become aroused so that we learn something about ourselves. **We learn that we are sinners and are in need to a Savior**. We learn that we can never do it alone and so we need help. So the law is not bad but is good because it teaches us that we are broken inside and need God to heal us.

So the Law, or all the commands of God, reveal to us that we are rebellious and have this sin nature that tries to drag us into sin. But remember, the **power of this sin nature has been broken** and we can now have **a choice** to obey God and not sin. So today, when you are tempted try going to God and reminding yourself that you do not have to sin. You do not have to touch the wet paint. Put your hands in your pockets and walk...or run away.

Now is it a little clearer why we struggle with sexual temptation? God has given us the command to be sexually pure and to avoid even the hint of sexual immorality. That commandment causes sin to spring to life within our rebellious hearts and our sexual desires come alive and want to be satisfied. But we know that the more we feed it the more hungry it grows, drawing us deeper and deeper into sexual sin.

What do you do when you start to feel the need to sexually sin? You feel hungry and want to feed that desire with porn? Some are so calloused that they dive right into the sin. Others feel weak and dread that the temptation has come knowing that they will probably give in to it. Instead of letting the alarm arouse your sexual desires and make you do what you do not want to do we often reach over, hit the snooze button, roll over and try to go back to sleep. Then we become aroused again and again until we give in. Men, we have to take action that takes us away from the temptation, remember its power has been broken and you can choose. The action has to be one of going to God, or a friend or your accountability partner immediately or both.

**Heavenly Father, Today, when I am tempted, I thank you for your law which tells me what is sinful so that I can know what is good and what wants to destroy my life. Help me today to flee temptation. To condition my mind to run away from sin and into your presence so that I can begin to retrain myself in saying no to sin and yes to you. Help me to see sin as a burning flame and to call my accountability partner and tell him there is a three alarm fire about ready to burst out of control and to please help.**

**Notes**

## Day 13

**“Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”**

Romans 7: 9-12

These are some strange sounding words. If we are upside down in our thinking they do not make sense. If we have trusted in Christ and become a child of God's we are turned right side up and they can make sense to us.

When Paul says that there was a time he was alive apart from the law he means that there was a time in his life that he did not know the law. Not knowing the law meant that certain temptations to sin were not in his life. Like when we were children. When there is innocence of the law. But once he grew up and learned the law, because of the rebelliousness of sin in his heart he would choose to sin. Just like you and I have done.

But notice something about these verses. Notice that when Paul talks about sin it is as a force that has a life of its own. Sin “seizing the opportunity...deceived me...and put me to death.” As we well know sin is a very active force in our lives. There is God's command to not look upon a woman and lust after her. He commands us to not allow even a hint of sexual immorality to be found in our lives. To break the commands of God causes death in our life. It separates us from God and from everybody else. Our relationships with our spouse and children grow apart. We sin and then get mad. We get mad at ourselves but ultimately we get mad at God for making us this way and placing upon us laws about sexual purity. Amazing isn't it? We get mad at the two good things, the law and God and do not address our anger at the real culprit, which is sin.

I believe that for our healing to take place we need to understand that God is good. His laws are good and for our own good. It is sin that deceives and destroys. We must begin to hate our sin and the sin nature that dwells within us and in the world. We must love God and his commands as well for they are not given to torture us but to keep us from harm. If you are a father with children you know that. You do not give rules to your kids to torment them but to keep them from getting hurt.

What I have learned in the this first year of coming out of my sexual addiction is that

there is a vastly more incredible pleasure than the temporary pleasure of sexual sin. **It is the intimacy that I am developing with God and the intimacy I am developing with my wife.** Because I have been broken and my sin exposed...because there is honesty and openness with God and my wife through daily sharing of our feelings and thoughts there is a sexual intimacy with my wife that is greater than anything I have ever experienced sexually.

I cannot describe to you how much more incredible it is unless I use an illustration that is in poor taste. However, I realize that sometimes we need to be shocked in order to hear what is being said...so here goes. Which would you rather put in your mouth...a piece of freshly grilled juicy steak...or a spoon of dog poop? Would you be willing to give up eating dog poop for steak?

That is what the world is feeding us...dog poop...but what God has intended for you and your spouse is so much better. My friend, its time for you to get a new menu.

**Heavenly Father, I am so sick and tired of the crap in life that the world and the flesh offer to me. Thank you that you are good. Your laws and commands are good and intended for my good and pleasure. Open my eyes to what I am really doing and what I have been giving up. Create in me a deep desire for you and help me to take advantage of the people you have placed around me as my support base.**

**Notes**

## Day 14

**“Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”**

Romans 7:13

Paul is still defending the value and goodness of the law and trying to show us where the real problem exists. Our problem is not with God's law. I have heard people say and even though it myself; **“God must not be a good because he gives me these desires and then gives these commandments which tell me I cannot fulfill the desires.”**

Well, we have three options that we can choose believe and two of them are bad.

**Option # 1** is that God is not good and He finds joy in tormenting us through our sexual desires. That is bad option # 1. ***God is good in everything he does. He never seeks to harm his children.*** He loves us enough to sacrifice Christ on the cross for our sins so that we might be forgiven. Doubting His goodness is the temptation Satan used on Eve and Adam in the garden. **Rebuke that thought!** God is completely good and in Him is no sin at all.

**Option # 2** is that God is good but the Law is bad. Well, if God is good and He created the Law and gave it to us with a purpose can that Law be bad? OK now...think like an adult instead of a child. When parents give a rule to their child is it to harm them or help them? Good parents give rules to help their children and save them from harm. **God is always good so His law is completely good as well.**

**Option # 3** is that God gave us the Law so that it could show us where the real problem lies. The real problem is sin and sin dwells within us. Notice verse 13 again...in order that **sin might be recognized as sin**...sin produced death in me through what was good so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

Let's rip the mask off of sin. It does not produce pleasure that remains. It does not give us life. It does not make things better. It is enjoyable to us for a moment but carries with it results that last a long time. It brings shame, grief, pain, disease, withdrawal from those who love us, separation from God, and ultimately death.

However, **we have learned to play with sin.** We have danced on the edge of temptation for years. We come to the edge and peek over to see the pleasure offered just over the lip of the cliff and we strain further and further to get a better look until we

fall off again. We hit the bottom...get up and climb back on top only to go to the edge the next day and look again.

Proverbs 8:13 says; **“The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.”** If we are going to be healed and be able to live in purity we have to learn to love the Lord and hate evil. I encourage you to begin to make this a daily prayer.

**Heavenly Father, help me today to love you, love your commandments and hate evil. There is sin within me that wants to lead me away from you. I rebuke my sinful nature and ask that the Holy Spirit fill me today. Help me to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Help me to flee youthful lusts, to guard my eyes and mind and not allow any sinful thought, work or action to be a part of my life today. Help me to keep in focus that my body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit and it is to be surrendered to you and your good will for me.**

**Notes**



## Day 15

**“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”** Romans 7:14 -16

Most people relate to this passage perhaps more than any passage in the Bible. So much of what we have been reading has been hard to understand and in words and ideas that are strange to us. But not these words. **They strike right at the heart of our problem and ring absolutely true.** In these verses we have God revealing to us one of the most important truths that we need to understand if we are going to grow into stronger and more obedient followers of Christ and begin to have victory.

He has made the point that **God is good** and the **Law is good** and **sin is what is utterly sinful**. Here he says that the law is spiritual. It is true and right and good. But then he says that we are unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. There has been great debate over the centuries about whether Paul is talking about himself and us before we were Christians or after. I believe he is referring to not only before we received Christ but also even after we have received Christ and he is referring to our old nature...or our sin nature. **Before Christ we were certainly unspiritual** and sold as a slave to sin and there is still that part of us that remains that way. We can call it our flesh or our sin nature. It was born that way and will always be that way. In fact it cannot and will not ever be different. We cannot change our flesh and make it better. However, it will cease to exist once we die or are taken to heaven.

The other way to look at this is to say that Paul is talking about what he feels and experiences in his life not truly understanding what is happening in his life...just like you and me. **He does what he does not want to do.** Sound familiar? Whenever we choose to sin we do what we do not want to do. For example it is time to go to sleep and you are wound up. You think the only way to sleep will be to masturbate. So instead of turning to God and seeking what He can do to heal the pain you feel you turn to sexual sin and medicate the pain your self.

Sure there is something in us that wants to sin and that is why we sin...but there is another part of us that does not want to do it. So we end up doing what we hate. Our sin nature loves it but **in our new nature we hate it and suffer the shame and remorse after we sin.**

When we do what we do not want to do...when we realize that sin is harming us and those around us we see that the law is good. Think about the act of being tempted and sinning as existing in **three phases**. **Phase one** is the temptation phase. Our sin nature kicks in, we are tempted and we draw near to the sin...just to have a closer look. The

battle is on. One part of us, our new nature says **don't do it**...the other part of us, our sin nature says do it. Nobody will know, its just this once...you know the lies we have heard and told ourselves a thousand times. Then we decide to do it. We have told our new nature to shut up, I can handle this, just one more time...blah blah blah.

So we sin again and that's **Phase two**. Then the time of pain, shame, remorse, confession and sorrow is **Phase three**. At that point we agree that the law is good. We see that we have been lied to. We see that this moment of pleasure is making our lives horrible and is destroying the relationships we have with our family and is causing God to have to discipline us. The law is good and sin is what is bad.

Look, plain and simple. God is good. His laws are good and for our protection. What we need to do is to love God and learn to hate what is evil. Here is the truth. The joy and pleasure that God has for us in doing things His way is so much more superior to the pleasures that sin offers us it is absurd. It's the steak verse poop illustration.

For example, we have all experienced the momentary pleasure of sexual sin. View the porn, fantasize, masturbate, have affairs on and on it goes. Was there pleasure there, yes, a little followed by great pain and the harming of those we love. However, compared to having a close intimate relationship with God where ***He is blessing you instead of disciplining you***, to share ***an open intimate relationship with your spouse*** and to be able to ***stand before your kids and not having anything to hide***...there is absolutely no comparison. **We need to quit giving up what is of immense value and precious for garbage**. See sin for what is really is...GARBAGE, and experience the far greater joy of the good things of God and you will never be sorry.

**Heavenly Father, I have lived like such a fool for so long. Thank you that you and your law is good. Thank you for your faithful forgiveness and for not letting go of me. Open my eyes to see the truth about my sin and your grace. Help me today to be filled with your Spirit. To walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh. I want to be holy but I need you to enable me to do that today. I confess that I am powerless to overcome my flesh and sinful nature. However, I realize that through the finished work of Christ and by abiding in Him I can have the victory and glorify you.**

**Notes**

## Day 16

**As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 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.** Romans 7:17-20

At first, in these verses, it sounds like Paul is passing the buck and not taking responsibility for sinning. He says that when he sins it is no longer he himself that does it but it is sin living in him. What we have to remember is that Paul is writing these words under the direction of the Holy Spirit and God is revealing truth to us. So he is not passing the buck or making excuses, **God is trying to teach us a very important truth.**

That truth is this. When we became believers in Jesus Christ we were born again. We experienced a spiritual birth and we became new creations. We were born of God and were given a new nature. Before we were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1) but God made us alive in Christ. We were drastically changed and **we became new**. However, there remained in us one thing that did not change and that the bible calls our sin nature or also calls the flesh.

What we need to realize is **who is the real us? Who are we in reality...in our new spiritual reality?** Are we the new creations that God has made or are we the old us that existed before we received Christ. The problem is that many times **we feel like the old us**. Satan lies to us and tells us we are the old us. We still sin...we have not changed...we are phony...**again all lies**. When we sin we feel all those things but God is trying to explain the truth to us in this passage even though it is not what we feel.

Notice verse 18; **“...nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.”** That is the old part of us that has not changed and cannot or will not change till we die. We have the desire to not sin, we want to do the right thing which comes from the new nature but the old is right there kicking in. So on goes the battle, day after day, and all of us have had the feeling that we will never win and that we will always fail.

**What this verse is trying to teach us is so important.** Accept it as truth. When we sin as believers it is not actually the **new us** that is doing it, but it is **sin within us, our old sin nature or flesh, that is doing it**. In our minds we need to grasp this idea and believe it even if it does not feel right. Once we do that and separate the two we can begin to work on the solution that God provides.

I am a new creation in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says; **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”** When I sin it is no longer the new me that is sinning but it is when I yield to the old sin nature that is within me that I sin. This then raises the question; “Well, how the heck can I, as a new

creation in Christ, get strong enough so that the old sin nature does not lead me to sin again. How can I win this battle that I have been losing for so long? Is there any hope?"

***Thankfully, there is hope. We can have victory. We can win the battle.*** But we are going to have to stop trying our methods and learn God's methods. Others have done it and you can do it as well. I know you feel your situation is worse than everyone else's. Satan has told all of us that lie as well. But in reality your situation is not worse than everyone else's. He wants you to believe that so that you remain ashamed, isolated and hiding your sin. You are much easier for him to ruin that way. In fact your sin probably is not as bad as others. God has tools and methods for winning this battle and I will share them with you as the text unfolds.

**Heavenly Father, I want to know that truth. I want to understand who I am in Christ. I want to find victory over sin and live a life that is pleasing to you. I want to experience your blessing and have the joy of obedience. However, I have failed so many times it is hard for me to believe that there can be victory over my sin. So by faith, I thank you that you can change me and that I can learn and apply your methods to have success in living a more holy life through faith in Christ's death for me and by abiding in Him.**

**Notes**

## Day 17

**“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”** Romans 7:21-25

Here, in no uncertain terms the battle that we live everyday is laid out for us. It is also spelled out in Galatians 5 and Ephesians 6. So before we go on to Romans 8 we are going to learn about all three of these passages because in them I believe we have God’s methods for overcoming our sin nature and experiencing a greater amount of victory over sin.

Here Paul tells us the true spiritual law that is happening in every one of us. Whenever we want to do good, there is evil right there wanting us to sin. **There are two parts to my being.** The **new nature** that God has brought into existence when I became a Christian and the **old sinful nature**, or flesh, that wants me to sin. The new nature, or the **new real me** (who I now really am even if I do not feel like it) **delights in God’s law**. Hey, the reason you want to stop sinning in the first place is evidence that God has made you a new creation. So the new me is the real me.

However, when I want to do good and obey God the war starts in the members of my body. It seems like Paul is saying that the mind is where the new real me exists, I know what I need to do and should do, but then in the members of my body sin kicks in and the battle is on.

Some have used humor to express this tension. We, as men have the capacity to think with one of two heads. There is the one head on our shoulders and there is the other below the belt. If that metaphor works for you then use it. The head on our shoulders is that new you and is what God says is the real you. The one below the belt is the old sin nature and is the one focused on sexual sin. You decide with head # 1 that you want to obey God and not sin and no sooner have you decided and prayed for that then head # 2 wakes up and wants to stand to attention and get your attention.

We have all struggled and failed so many times that many have given up the battle. When head # 2 cries out for attention many of us have been to the place where we go ahead and satisfy it just to shut it up for awhile. At that point we have arrived on the path of sexual addiction. **BUT THERE IS HOPE AND WE CAN RECOVER.** Look at the next verse.

**“Wretched man that I am who will rescue me from this body of death?”** I have felt that and prayed that and you probably have too. Now, notice that there is an answer. Thanks be to God- through Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul shouts out what we all need to know. There is the potential for victory and it must come from the Lord Jesus Christ. God knows the answer cannot come from me. After years of failure we should know that

it cannot come from ourselves. **We are powerless...He is powerful.**

This thought takes us back to the very verses we studied in Romans 6. Because Christ died on the cross and has broken the power of sin and its monopoly on us and we have been crucified, buried and raised to a new life with Christ, ***we can be free and have victory over sin.***

Can we completely stop sinning and become perfect? No, not until we die and the sinful nature is removed. As long as the sin nature or flesh is in us we will sin. However, we do not have to live in its grasp and be mastered by it. Once we learn to have victory in one area of life God shows us other areas that we can work on to become more and more like His Son. However, right now, let's just concentrate on gaining victory over our sexual sins. We can stop losing the battle in this area and start being sexually holy. We can stop acting out if we will learn and apply the methods that God has given us.

From Romans 6 and 7 we have learned the biblical truth about sin and what God has done to give us the freedom to not sin sexually. Tomorrow we will look at three other passages so we can form a full understanding of the tools God has given us to live a holy life.

**Heavenly Father, You have sacrificed your Son so that I can have forgiveness and be set free from my bondage to sin. I want to be sexually holy. I want the powerful grasp that sin seems to have in my life to be broken. You have done your part and now help me to learn and apply your methods so that I can live a life without a hint of sexual immorality.**

**Notes**

**“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:10-12**

Let us be clear about ***where some of our battle lies***. We learned from Romans 6 and 7 that part of that battle is ***internal with our sin nature***. We have been set free because of what Christ has done for us and we can win that battle by being filled with the Holy Spirit. We will learn more about that later. For now we are going to focus on the external battle that we face everyday and it is an awesome one and a fearful one but one that can be won using God’s methods and supplies.

First notice who this battle is with. **It is not against flesh and blood**. We are not learning about our struggles with other people. We may have some but this battle is far more difficult and deadly. We battle against **“...the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”** Sounds to me like we are outnumbered, out flanked and are facing an enemy we cannot even see. But we cannot allow this to discourage us. In fact, the strength and size of our enemy does not even matter because God has given us all we need for victory. It is called the **“full armor of God.”**

First, before we even get to the armor, notice what Paul says we are to do. **We are to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power**. Without this being done first the armor will not hold. Are you strong in the Lord? Are you strong in His mighty power? It is a question of location. If Christ is our strength and power in order to be strong in him we have to be close to him. Soldiers that wander off on their own are easy pickings for the enemy. We have all wandered from the Lord and became ensnared in sexual sin. So first we have to get back to being close to Jesus if we are to be strong in Him and in his mighty power.

It comes down to this. **Is Jesus Christ at the center of your life?** Have you surrendered yourself to him completely and **do you do that on a daily basis?** That is an ***absolutely essential*** action we must take in order to see Him win the battle for us. So, since we are taking in military terms here, everyday we must get up and ***report for duty, everyday***. No shore leave, no AWOL, no vacations, but everyday at the beginning of the day, report for duty and offer yourself to God. Present the members of your body to him as instruments of righteousness instead of instruments of sin. Just like we learned in Romans 6.

In Romans 12:1-2 it says it like this; **“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

Offer your bodies, report for duty, get up and be reminded that you are in a spiritual battle everyday and so you need God’s help everyday. When we are defeated by our sin and feel shame we do not feel like doing anything. We want to sleep. We become

lazy. We think nothing can help us so why even try. **Man, I know what defeat feels like. However, I also know what victory tastes like and it is sweet.**

So it is going to take some **training** and **discipline** so we can begin to experience God's power in our lives. I do not care if you start with 10 minutes at the beginning of your day, or make a time of prayer to God every morning as you are driving to work. It is better if you are in a quiet place and not disturbed or distracted by traffic or people. But do what you have to do to get with God and give yourself to him and allow Jesus to be the Lord over your life. As that becomes a habit and you begin to listen to Him and obey him you are going to start growing strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. When temptation comes you are by His side and you will be able to draw strength from him and stand strong in the strength of His might.

**Heavenly Father, I want to be strong in Christ. I want to experience the strength of His might. I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. I confess that I have been trying to live on my own. I have rebelled against you and your ways. I repent of my rebelliousness and submit myself to Christ. Lord Jesus, come back into the center of my life and be the Lord over my life so that I can be strong in you. Please do this first because you are the Lord, you have died for me and have purchased my life so that is your rightful place. However, also I need you there because I want to have victory over sin.**

**Notes**

**Day 19**

**"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so**



**that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”** Ephesians 6:12 -13

If you wake up in the morning and hear there was 12 inches of snow on the ground you would dress for it. If you were going to meet with President George Bush for a black tie dinner at the White House you would dress for it. If you were invited by the IRS to come in and be audited for your tax return you would come prepared.

So why do we get up everyday and enter into a spiritual battle with the forces of spiritual darkness without being prepared for their attacks? We see images of our soldiers in Iraq covered with their battle gear. **None of them go to battle in just their underwear.** They protect themselves in every way they can. Today I want you to see the scope of the battle we all face everyday so that you will see why we often fail and then learn what God has provided for us to have victory.

The first level Paul mentions are the **rulers**. This word is actually the word used in the bible for “beginnings” like “In the beginning...” of Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. That is its basic meaning. When it is used to talk about a person or power it means someone who is the first person or at the beginning. The term is used by Paul to describe angels and demons holding positions entrusted to them in the order of things. We could call them low demons on the totem pole.

There is an order to God’s creation of the angels. Lucifer was the highest of the angels and when he fell into sin by wanting to be worshiped as God the bible says he took a third of the angels with him. That third became demons and I believe there is a chain of command among them. These “**rulers**” would be the foot soldiers in Satan’s army. ***They are real, invisible, crafty and you face them everyday.*** I believe that when we yield ourselves to sin, ignoring God’s word and go our own way, we give them some room to operate in our lives.

For example in Ephesians 4:26-27 it says; “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **and do not give the devil a foothold.**” So when we sin we can give the devil some kind of foothold in our lives. Now I do not believe that Satan himself can do this because he is not like God and able to be everywhere. He is limited to one location. So he has his rulers and part of our battle is against them.

Next there are **the authorities**. This word means someone who has authority over others and so refers to people in a higher position. Paul uses it to refer to the more powerful among created beings superior to man. They are spiritual angels or demons. Are they stronger, meaner and uglier? I don’t know, but what I do know is that we are in a battle against them and please, get the idea of Ghostbusters out of your mind. I think of them as more like the Orks in The Lord of the Rings. These guys are real and hell bent trying to destroy you.

The next word is a word in the Greek that is a combination of two words and mean **world- rulers**. I believe that he is referring to specific demons that have been given by Satan the responsibility to command the demons over a portion of the world. Maybe they are over Continents, who knows but they are real and powerful.

Lastly he mentions the **spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**. I do not believe

there are demons in heaven. The heavenly realms refers to the atmosphere or sky. Ephesians 2 mentions the prince of the power of the air.

**So we are up against some fierce forces of evil.** If we are going to go up against these guys a bowl of Wheaties ain't going to cut it. However, God has given us supernatural armor and it is called the full armor of God. We are told to put it on, in fact **it is a command.** Also, this command is in the present tense that means we are to do it continuously. We should never have it off. Tomorrow I will explain what the armor is and how to put it on.

(I would recommend you listen to the tape series by my friend Dr. James MacDonald on this passage called "In it to Win it." You can find it at **HYPERLINK** "<http://www.walkintheword.com/Store.aspx>" [www.walkintheword.com/Store.aspx](http://www.walkintheword.com/Store.aspx) and clicking on Audio Series)

**Proverbs 18:1 "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire: He breaks out against all sound judgment."**

**Heavenly Father, I did not realize the powerful forces that are against me and desire my destruction. I have been foolish to think that I do not need you and your provisions in order to have victory. Forgive me for not putting on this armor as you have commanded. I want to stand strong in the strength of your might. Please help me to put on the full armor of God and to stand strong.**

**Notes**

**Day 20**

**"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place..." Ephesians 6:14**

In Paul's description of the full armor of God he has in mind the equipment of a Roman soldier. In his day it was said that a Roman soldier well trained in warfare and properly

equipped was able to defend a space six feet wide from an advancing army. Yesterday we saw that we have an army against us. Just remember two things. God knows the battle we face and He has given us exactly what we need to be successful. This armor has supernatural power and will allow you to stand firm in the strength of His might. Even more importantly is the passage that says; “...**greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.**” (1 John 4:4)

Now let's learn about this armor and how we can put it on and use it. First there is the “**belt of truth**”, I have learned through years of meditation on this passage to think of each piece of equipment in two ways. What does it mean literally and what does it mean for me today?

**The Belt of Truth** - In Paul's day the belt was central to the uniform because *it held everything together*. God wants us to know that our belt is truth. **Truth needs to be central in our lives** if we are going to defeat the enemies that have been assaulting us for so long. Most addicts become liars in order to hide their addiction. We lie to those closest to us like our spouse and children. We may have to lie to our boss and friends and we certainly lie to ourselves. It is not by accident that Paul mentions this belt of truth first. For it is when we finally decide once and for all that we are going to tell the truth that we stop running from God and everyone else, turn around, dig in our feet and face this enemy.

Now Jesus said; “...**you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.**” Lies bind us up and imprison us but the truth sets us free. Over the years of our addiction we have learned to cover up and lie. When someone starts to probe into our actions or asks us about something we are ashamed of the immediate reaction is to cover up and lie. Putting on the belt of truth is God's way of helping us change this habit and transform us into truth tellers instead of deceitful liars.

Now the way to put on the armor of God is to pray your way through the pieces of armor everyday at the beginning of the day. So I pray that I am putting on the belt of truth so that two things would happen. **First**, that I would know the truth and see things truthfully. That I would not be deceived by the father of lies (Satan) and be able to see through the lies of my enemies. **Second**, that I would speak the truth at all times. That I would be truthful to God, to others and to myself. So everyday put on the belt of truth.

**The Breastplate of Righteousness** – What an incredible piece of armor this is. Literally it refers to the breastplate that a soldier wore to protect his vital organs. A strike to the arm or leg would not kill and he could continue to fight, but a strike to the heart or bowels and death would come. So what is our breastplate of righteousness.

First we must understand that **God has given us a righteousness** that comes from the finished work of Christ on the cross. God has declared us righteousness even though we still struggle with sin. It is called **imputed righteousness**. To impute something is to add something to one's account. If I impute to you a hundred dollars I would place it in your account. It becomes your money even though I earned it and I placed it there, but once it is in your account it is yours. Let me show you this in the bible. **Rom. 3:21 “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.”** Also; **2Cor. 5:21 “God made him who had no**

**sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”**

So to put on this armor we must start everyday reminding ourselves that God has declared us to be righteous. When Satan comes with his lies and accuses you of your sin and tells you how horrible a person you are, your answer is; “True, I am a sinner but God has given me the righteousness of Christ. So accuse me all you want but **God has declared me righteous**”. Secondly, we need to then pray that God will help us to live a righteous life. **We need to live out what we are**. God is transforming us into the image of Christ (more on that when we get back to Romans 8) and so He wants us to live righteously and He will help us to live righteously if and when we get that armor on and cinch it into place everyday.

**Heavenly Father – I thank you for the armor that you have given me. I want to stand firm in the strength of your might and defeat the enemies that face me. I thank you that your Holy Spirit who lives in me is greater than all my enemies. So I put on the belt of truth. Help me to know the truth and to speak the truth at all times. I also put on the breastplate of righteousness. Thank you that you have declared me to be righteous. Thank you that I have a righteousness that is a gift from you because of what Christ has done for me. Now, help me to live a righteous life today. So the decisions I need to make and things I need to do in order to live a righteous life.**

**Proverbs. 8:13 “To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”**

**Notes**

**Day 21**

**6:14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace – Ok, this**

sounds like a weird piece of armor, but God has some shoes that we need to put on everyday and they are vital. Notice that they are not left to the end like some add on unnecessary piece but ***fall third in the list***.

Obviously if you are going to stand and fight someone ***your footing is key to victory***. If you are falling all over you cannot stand firm so footing is key and what is on your feet is vital to good footing. My understanding is that the Romans invented footwear that helped their soldiers stand firm. They added to the soles some kind of cleat to help them not slip. So what does this mean for us? The key word is “readiness”. It is the word in the Greek that means **to be prepared** and added to that idea is the gospel of peace.

This is the hardest of all the pieces to understand but here is what I think it means. We are Christians. We have believed the gospel and God has called us to share the Gospel with the world. When we are active in sharing with others what God has done for us and wants to do for them it identifies us and lets people know where we stand. ***If we do not share with others and they think we are like them then it is easier to do the things that they are doing***. When we speak out what we believe then if we act like they act or do what they do they should say; “Hey, I thought you were a Christian!” So when we share the gospel with people it helps us to live like believers. If we live undercover Christianity it makes it easier to fall into sin.

So everyday we need to put on the shoes for sharing the gospel. We need to speak to others about what God is doing in our lives. Believe me, if you start to do that it produces a strong incentive for your actions to match up with your words and this helps us to stand firm.

**The Shield of Faith** – Let me tell you I think this has been the most helpful to me in beginning to have victory in my battle with the forces of evil. The Roman shield was an incredible defensive piece of equipment. Behind it the soldier was protected from the spears and arrows that their enemy could launch at them from a distance. Some shields were made of wood and could be soaked in water so that if the arrows had fire on them they would hit the shield and the flame extinguished.

**Our shield is Faith.** It is our faith in God and believing in Him in spite of what we feel that makes all the difference. Everyday these enemies of ours are firing flaming arrows at us. For example, I lost my job and have struggled to find decent employment. So the flaming arrows the enemy shot at me were fears of money and losing our home. Dealing with my addictions and the wounds I caused my family were substantial and so I thought that staying in our home would at least provide a familiar place for us to live. So Satan attacked me with fear and worry about money. When I started lifting the shield of faith, believing that God knew exactly what we needed and asking Him to provide, I saw those fears and worries cease even though my income for five months was \$890.00.

With my shield of faith up I have learned to say to myself during the day; **“Who is my provider? It is not my employer! It is not my bank account! It is not my retirement money! No, God is my provider and I thank you Lord that you know our needs and you will provide all that we need.”**

The enemy is expert at using fear, anxiety, depression, lies whatever it takes **to hurt you and make you doubt**. He can use the words of others, even our spouses to try and get us to give in to the fear and anger and self medicate with sexual immorality. Get your shield up everyday and believe in the goodness of God. When the flaming arrows of fear come, stop and thank God that He is in control. **Faith produces prayers of thanksgiving to God even when fear is screaming at us. Smash fear in the mouth with your shield enough times and eventually he shuts up.**

**Heavenly Father – In addition to the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness I want to put on the shoes to be ready to share the Gospel today. Help me to speak out in a kind and loving way to others around me regarding what you are doing in my life. I also lift up the shield of faith to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. Thank you Father that you are in control and that you will provide for me and my family. Help me to stop listening to fear and to start living by faith.**

**Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”**

**Notes**

## **Day 22**

**“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17**

**The Helmet of Salvation –** Obviously we know how important a helmet can be. If you have ever played football, lacrosse, hockey, seen a race car crash or been in a motorcycle accident you know the value of having your head protected. It was no different to the Roman soldier and it is certainly vital for us to have **our head, our brain,**

**our mind protected** from what the enemy wants to place in our thinking.

How many times have you sinned sexually without there being sexual thoughts coming from either your eyes, your ears, your nose or your imagination? My guess is that you cannot sin sexually without some or all of those factors being involved.

This piece of armor is crucial for us. Remember it is God who is telling us to use these pieces of armor. So how do we put on the helmet of our salvation? I do it in two ways. **First**, I thank God in prayer that He has saved me. I recall to my mind that it took God giving his Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross in order for me to be saved.

So my salvation is an enormous and costly thing. Jesus voluntarily gave himself into the hands of brutal men who beat him and crucified him so that I could be forgiven and saved. My salvation is a precious and costly thing and ***I need to learn to keep cherishing it and not take it for granted.***

**Second**, I ask the Lord to help me to think like someone who has experienced salvation so that I can think like it and act like it. I am a child of God's. He has taken me from the dominion of darkness and brought me into the kingdom of His son. He has placed me in Christ and I have been raised to a position of authority in Christ (more on the importance of that idea later). ***So I need to begin to think the thoughts that God wants me to think and I do that by reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on the words of the Bible.***

When sinful thoughts want to enter my mind and I am tempted to fantasize I need God to give me the strength and mental fortitude to switch my thinking to something else. The best thing I have found to do here is to recall Scriptures that I have memorized and meditate on them. (To meditate on them means to think deeply about what they mean and how they apply to us.

If you struggle with your thought life before you go to sleep or when you wake up in the morning try this. Memorize a portion of the Bible and keep running it over in your head. You will fall asleep at night with your helmet still on and when you wake up in the morning get your butt out of bed and spend time in the word and in prayer. Developing this discipline will change the way you think and help you stop sinning.

**The Sword of the Spirit** – I think these two pieces of armor are mentioned together because as we have already seen the helmet of salvation works when connected to the Word of God. The sword of the Spirit is the Bible. Hebrews 4:12 says; ***“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*** Notice that this is the only offensive part of the armor and it is to be used in two ways.

**First**, the sword of the Spirit has a powerful effect on demons. I have had a couple of experiences as a pastor when I was involved in delivering people from demonic oppression. They cannot stand the word of God because it has power and authority over them. So when a temptation comes don't just offer up some lame words to God. Attack those thoughts with the word of God. For example say; “No I am not going to think about that because God says there is not to be even a hint of sexual immorality

found among us.

**Eph. 5:3 “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity.”**

This is using the Bible to attack the thoughts the demonic world is throwing at you.

**Second**, the sword of the Spirit is to be used internally. Remember you have an external enemy as well as an internal one. The forces of darkness know your weaknesses. They know what temptations can hurt you based on the desires of your sin nature. Your sin nature has been deceiving you for years. The word of God can be active here as well. Use it internally by asking the Spirit of God to take His word and have it pierce into the thoughts and intentions of your heart. Ask for it to cut open your actions to reveal your true intentions.

For example, when I was working at this one office complex there was a lady that would take over the receptionist spot when she went to lunch. She was sexually appealing to the eyes so I found myself wanting to go get some coffee or some lame excuse to walk by the desk while she was there so I could get a look at her...you know exactly what I mean. So when the word of God pierced my heart and intentions God showed me what I was really doing so I could stop myself and not go out there and if I really had to walk past her I would not look at her nor stop to “chat”!

How many times have you done something that on the surface seemed innocent enough but underneath there were evil intentions? It happens many times that lead us into sin. Revealing those intentions helps keep us from situation where we could be tempted to sin. So take up the sword of the Spirit and ask the Holy Spirit to use it to pierce the thoughts and intentions of your heart.

**Proverbs 20:7 “The righteous who walks in his integrity— blessed are his children after him!”**

**Heavenly Father – I thank you for the helmet of my salvation. Thank you that I am saved and you have made me one of your children. You have done this totally on your own. It was your choice that has saved me so help me to think like a child of yours. Help me to think and act like someone that is saved and a child of God. Also, I lift up the sword of the Spirit and want to use it against any demonic forces that are trying to lead me into sin. Help me to also have it pierce my thoughts and intentions. Lord show me the truth about myself and my actions today.**

**Notes**



## Day 23

**“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”**

Ephesians 6:18

Many people stop thinking about the armor of God after verse 17. There are 6 items that a Roman soldier would wear so when the illustration ends so does their investigation of the full armor of God. However, remember that we are being taught by the Holy Spirit and these last two items are crucial for our victory.

**Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests** – Prayer is part of the full armor of God and here it says to pray in the Spirit. He uses words for different kinds of prayers 4 times in this one verse. Four times in one verse...that is very unusual. In fact it may be the only place in the Bible where this happens. Let me teach you something here. In the Bible **if something is mentioned twice it is for emphasis**, like when Jesus says; “Truly, truly I say to you...” it was a way of saying listen up guys

this is important.

Several times words are used in triplicate, like in Isaiah 6 when the angels around God's throne call out; "Holy, Holy, Holy..." But here the idea of making prayers and requests is mentioned FOUR times. Get the point? Standing firm in the strength of God's mighty power and putting on the six pieces of armor must also be tied to prayer.

One of the first things we should think about if we are struggling to maintain sexual purity is are we spending time in prayer. Are we beginning our day in prayers where we offer ourselves to God and ask Jesus to be at the very center of our lives and be the Lord of all we experience that day?

We are going to prayer during the day when we face situations where we are tempted? Are we praying for our spouses, friends, children even praying for those people that may present temptations to lust in our lives? If you want to have spiritual power and attack the forces of evil that are trying to destroy us we have got to become men who pray. If you are not praying then I would suggest that you are not really serious about getting right with God and ending your addiction.

Also, what is the content of your prayers. Make the focus of your prayers your position in Christ. We have been placed in Christ and we are told to fix our eyes on Jesus and look to the things above. Get the focus of your prayer off you yourself and your failures. Do not think about **your condition in sin**. Focus on your **position in Christ** and believe it by faith.

**Be alert** – Here then is the last piece of the full armor of God. Literally this word means to be sleepless, to be on guard to be intently focused on something. In other words, wake up and pay attention. You are in a battle and your enemy never sleeps and never rests and will keep at you until you finally put on the full armor of God, **stand strong in the strength of His might** and after a season you will find that you are winning the battle. For years we have been losing the battle. For years we have been defeated because we have not been using the stuff that God has for us to have victory.

For years I lost the battle. I fought and fought and tried to win but kept getting defeated because I had not hit the bottom. I resigned from the ministry after 26 years. I had to confess my sin to my spouse and children and to the leaders of my church. Since that time, by the grace of God and putting into practice what I have known to be true I have gone almost a year and only stumbled once.

Like any other addiction we only have to fight the battle one day at a time. If you start to do this everyday, putting on the full armor of God and offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice, offering the members of your body to be instruments of righteousness, praying for the Holy Spirit to fill you and help you to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh then you will begin to have victory as well. (Tomorrow we will learn about being filled with the Holy Spirit from Galatians 5 and Ephesians 5.)

**Heavenly Father – Thank you for the full armor of God. Help me to put it on daily. May the helmet of my salvation protect my thoughts so that I think like a believer. May the breastplate of righteousness help me to live a righteousness life. May the belt of truth help me to see and know the truth and to always tell the truth. May**

the sword of the Spirit defeat my enemies and pierce my thoughts and intentions revealing any sin in my life. May the shield of faith put out all flaming arrows that Satan wants to shoot at me today. May my feet be fitted with the Gospel so that during my day I speak of you instead of trying to be cool or funny or fit in with the crowd. May I pray throughout this day in the Spirit and never let my guard down for one second.

Proverbs 21:16 “One who wanders from the way of good sense will rest in the assembly of the dead.”

Notes

## Day 24 - Galatians 5

**“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”** Galatians 5:16-17

We have learned that **Christ has set us free** from the monopoly of our old sin nature and that God has given us **a new nature** that helps us desire to live a holy life. We have also learned that we are in a daily spiritual battle against spiritual forces of darkness and how we need to daily put on the full armor of God and stand firm in the strength of His might. Now, we turn our attention to **the source of power** that God has given to us to help us live a life that is growing in purity and holiness.

The work of the Holy Spirit is done in many ways. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come and convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. So part of his work was done in your life when you were convicted of your sin and your need for a Savior. He showed you the need and gave you the faith to believe in Christ.

He removed the blindfold of Satan that was keeping you from believing (2 Cor. 4:4), regenerated your mind so that you could see the light of the gospel and worked in your

life so that you could become born again. I tell you these biblical truths because you need to know that He is alive and has been active in your life already. Do not listen to **the lie** that God is done with you and that you have sinned so much that He does not want to work in your life.

***You are not condemned to a life of sexual sin and being disqualified for the work of God.*** Actually, before God saved you He knew all of the sins that you would commit and He decided to chose you anyway.

So now what we need to do is to learn how to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives on a moment by moment basis everyday. The Bible talks about this in a couple of ways. In Ephesians 5:18 we are commended to be “filled with the Spirit”. We are commended to be “live by the Spirit” in this passage. We are also told later in this passage to “walk in the Spirit”. All of these phases are telling us to do the same thing and that thing is to **allow the Holy Spirit to be in control of our lives.**

He is alive and is an active force in the world and in our lives. The Bible teaches us that we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. We have all received the Holy Spirit when we accepted Christ as our Savior (Eph 1:13). Our bodies are called the temple of the Holy Spirit in **1Cor. 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”**

Now, one of the purposes of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us is to give us the power and ability that we would not have in and of ourselves to live a godly life. The passage for today clearly shows that there is a battle within us. We already know that. There is part of me that wants to do good and part of the old me that wants to sin. But this passage tells us that the battle is **between our old sin nature and the Holy Spirit** as well. Now imagine your old sin nature as a 800 pound, 10 foot tall Kodiak Grizzly Bear and you are the proverbial 90 pound weakling...ok...190+ pound weakling. Can you defeat your sin nature? Have you been able to **beat the bear**? If you are reading this devotional probably not.

So either we can choose to try and keep battling and losing or we can call on someone, who dwells within us, to fight the battle for us. Remember the Holy Spirit is God, equal to God the Father and God the Son in power and deity. Doesn't it make more sense to ask Him to fight this battle for us?

This passage tells us to live by the Spirit. Literally the word here is “walk”. It means to be yielded to Him and allow Him to lead and guide us. Further, the verse says that ***when we are walking in the Spirit we will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*** The seemingly simple solution to sinning sexually is to be walking in or by the Spirit. What does this mean and how do we do it?

It all goes back to daily offering and giving ourselves to God. Do you want to be in control of your life or do you want God to be in control? When we are in control we have a history of being defeated by our sin nature and the forces of evil and we sin. However, **we can become strong in the Lord, we can be filled with the Spirit, we can experience the power of God through the protection of the full armor of God and**

## **the internal power of the Holy Spirit.**

Christ has made it possible for us to have this choice. If we want to taste the momentary pleasure of sin we can and we will suffer the consequences. If we want to experience God working in us and helping us be more godly men we can have his power and blessing in our lives and in the lives of those we love.

I challenge you to make this ***an act of your will***. Do not go by how you are feeling at the time. Develop the discipline of meeting with God everyday in the morning and checking in with Him regularly throughout the day. Rush into his presence in prayer when you are tempted. Ask the Holy Spirit to take control of you when sin tries to lead you away.

As you do this you will grow stronger and you will be able to live a life without falling into sexual sin. I promise you the rewards that God will bring into the lives of His children that are trying to live in obedience to Him will far outweigh anything that sin can give us.

**Heavenly Father – Today I want to walk in the Spirit and I do not want to fulfill the desires of the flesh. I repent of the times that I have quenched the Spirit, when I have ignored His leadings. I ask that you would fill me with the Holy Spirit so that I might not fulfill the desires of the flesh. I want Him to help me keep my eyes focused on Jesus who is the author and finisher of my faith. I want Him to defeat the temptations that come my way today.**

**Proverbs 22:11 “He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as a friend.”**

**Notes**

## Day 25

**“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19**

So how do we know if we are walking in the Spirit or in the flesh/sinful nature? Paul says it is obvious, just look at your actions. The way we are acting or living will show us whether we are being controlled by our sinful nature or by the Holy Spirit.

Notice that the first three words in the list have to do with sexual sin. Literally, in the Greek there are four words used here, they are adultery, fornication, lustful living and carnality (or sensual conduct). So if you are sexually involved with someone outside of your and or their marriage, sexually active as a single person, allowing your mind to focus on lustful thoughts or are acting in a sexual and sensual way then **you are being controlled by the sinful nature**. The second word in the list is literally the word “pornia”, from which we get the word pornography. isn't it interesting that in this list of 16 items the first four are of a sexual nature?

However, do not stop there. Do you see other things in this list that you can identify in your life? When we are controlled by the flesh or sin nature the natural result is to do **things that are destructive**. Sure, it is possible to rationalize things away in an effort to justify our actions, but ultimately they are all choices that we have made and everyone of them eventually will cause suffering and harm to ourselves and others around us.

That is why our sinful nature, which we have within us until the day we die, can never be transformed. It must be starved to death by not feeding it what it desires. Remember that within us is also the Holy Spirit and it is by His power, by yielding ourselves to Him everyday, by holding onto His hand and walking in the way that He leads us, that we can experience His power to overcome the sinful nature.

Now let me address the last sentence in this verse that might be causing you some concern. Paul says that those who live in this way will not inherit the kingdom of God. Does that mean that if we have committed sexual immorality that we will not go to heaven? On the surface it would seem to say that.

Literally the passage says that “...those who practice such things...”. Now this is one of those passages that create a problem for us in bible interpretation. I believe that the Bible was written by the Spirit of God. He used human beings as His instruments but they wrote down exactly what He wanted written. Now, the Holy Spirit, being God, knows all things and must always speak the truth. He would not contradict Himself.

Clearly in many passages we are taught that we are not saved by our actions but by the grace of God. It is not our good deeds that make us eligible to go to heaven, but because of the finished work of Christ and the grace of God. Here it sounds like not living a holy life, or put another way, living a sinful life will keep us out of heaven.

What Paul is really saying is that those people who live this way, people who commit

these things daily, with no remorse or sorrow, no confession or repentance are showing by their actions that they are not children of God.

Sure, every believer sins and we all probably sin everyday. However, what differentiates us from those who do not know God and are not going to heaven is that we realize it is sin and we confess and try to repent from it. The problem is we have not learned God's methods of having victory over these sins and they have a hold on our lives.

However, it is never a bad thing to examine ourselves and ask the question: **"I really a believer in Jesus Christ?"** Have I really stopped trusting in my own goodness and embraced the Lord Jesus and asked him to be my Savior? Do I believe that He died on the cross in my place and for my sins and have I asked him to come into my life and cleanse me from all of my sins?

If we have done that then we are born again by the Spirit of God and we are his children **forever**. We have become trapped by our sin nature and developed our addictions, but as we reach the end of ourselves and grasp hold of God, learning His methods and yielding ourselves everyday to the Spirit, putting on the full armor of God we can begin to gain victory and decrease the number of times that we fall back into sin.

Brothers in Christ, God wants to bless us. He wants to help us to our feet, cleanse us off, even carry us back to Him if need be. **He is the loving father we may have never had.** He is strong and His love and grace has no limits. He hates sin and what it does to his children, **but he never hates his children.** His love has no limits.

Believe that because it is true. Cry out with prayers of thanksgiving for the eternal love of our Father. Allow the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ to wash away all of our sins and take those things that were as **red as scarlet** and God can make them as **white as snow**. The Bible says that He has separated us from our sin as far as the east is from the west. He has buried our sins in the deepest part of the oceans. He has said; "Your sins and lawless deeds I will remember no longer."

**Heavenly Father – Sometimes I cannot believe that you still love me and want me to be one of your children. However, that is exactly what your word tells me. Thank you that you love me. Thank you that the death of Jesus on the cross has purchased the freedom from the penalty of all of my sin. I want to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit today and not fulfill the desires of the flesh. I ask Him to fill me and possess me so that I walk in Him and with Him every step of my life today.**

**Proverbs 23:26-28**

**"Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways. For a harlot is a deep pit. and an adulterous woman is a narrow well. Surely she lurks as a robber, and increases the faithless among men."**

**Notes**

## Day 26

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”**  
Galatians 5:22

Extreme makeovers are all the rage today whether it is someone’s home, wardrobe, hair style or teeth there seems to be a show for everything. However, in each case the idea is somewhat the same – something old is made new. A house is demolished and a far better one is built. Someone’s looks are revitalized and they become more beautiful, at least on the outside. Well, guess what? God wants to do an extreme makeover in our lives. Here is his plan according to Romans 8: 25 **“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...”**

How does God do this? First **He sacrifices His Son Jesus** to pay the penalty for all of the worlds sins. Then **He gives us the faith to believe** in Christ and when we do our old nature is crucified, demolished, and **He gives us a new nature**. Then instead of just leaving us on our own **He places His Holy Spirit within us** and His job is to continue the makeover process, day by day, as we yield ourselves to Him, ask Him to fill us and follow His directions.

Unlike the extreme makeover show where the family leaves their home and comes back to a new one, the Holy Spirit stays with us and works to change us from the inside out. He does not force his will upon us. He wants us to make the daily decision of who is going to be the foreman for the day. Are we going to be in charge and ***ask Him to sit in the backyard out of the way or are we going to give him permission to continue the work in our lives day after day.*** If we do daily keep him in charge and do what He tells us to do, the passage for today tells us the character qualities He will develop in our lives.



There are nine “fruit of the Spirit” mentioned here. Read them again slowly thinking about what each one means and how valuable they would be in your life. What if you were that way? How would it impact the people you love around you? I can tell you one thing, it would go a long way to beginning to heal the relationships that sin has damaged.

Now God uses a metaphor in describing these words. He could have said that the results of the Spirit's presence in our lives is love...but He doesn't. He calls them fruit. Why do you think that is? Well, I am not a farmer but I have had fruit trees in my backyards in 5 homes we have lived in and there are things that are true about fruit. **It does not suddenly appear.** The tree does not start shaking and poof there are apples hanging there. It buds and flowers and begins small and over time if properly cared for and maintained delicious fruit appears, matures and ripens.

These qualities are the same in our lives. Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not instantly make you a more loving and joyful person. We will not suddenly have patience and gentleness. However, if we develop the discipline of daily meeting with God, offering Him our bodies and asking the Holy Spirit to fill us and then walk with Him through the day and obey His leadings then these fruits will develop in our lives.

As men recovering from our addictions notice that last fruit – **self control**. Isn't that exactly what we need to be able to be healed from our addiction to pornography and sex? Hasn't it been the inability to control our thinking, our fantasies, our actions that lead us into sin? We see an image flash on the TV screen or work with a woman who we are sexually attracted to and we begin to think sexual thoughts that lead us to find some porn and masturbate.

What do we really need to stop this...**self control**. Do not think that God is going to just eliminate all temptation from your life. What we need is the ability to control our actions and thoughts when the temptations come. Well guess what – it is a fruit of the Spirit and the best way to have it in our lives is to allow Him to be in control of our lives.

In order for that to happen we must yield our will to Him. Now in the Greek this word is a very specific one. In Thayer's Greek Lexicon it says this about the word; **“the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites.”** Sounds like exactly what we need, doesn't it. We go to bed and we are stressed so we feel the need or desire to fantasize. It just seems like we cannot keep the thoughts out of our head even if we wanted to.

We have gone down this road so many times that it is a downhill slope and it seems slicker every time we go down. We are at the office and that attractive secretary is at her desk and we know if we walk by we just might get a glimpse of something we might be able to fantasize about. We turn on our computer and no one is around and we just cannot seem to control ourselves and not go to the porn site we are drawn to. **MEN, WE DESPERATELY NEED THIS FRUIT OF SELF CONTROL!!!!**

Now here is the truth. The Holy Spirit can develop this fruit in our lives. Men with the same addictions as you and I have experienced this power from Him, but it takes discipline and consistency.

We cannot seek to walk filled with the Holy Spirit for a couple of days or weeks and then we have it for the rest of our lives. We must make it our daily habit. We must practice it throughout the day turning to Him at the very hint of every temptation. We must learn to bounce our eyes away from every sudden image that flashes before our eyes or into our minds (see the book Every Man's Battle), but I am here to tell you that it can be done.

This is where it is also very helpful to have the accountability of a support group of guys with whom you meet every week. Also, get the phone numbers of the guys in your group and call each other anytime you feel tempted or even call just to check in. We need to really help each other with this.

**Heavenly Father – I need your Holy Spirit to fill me and lead me everyday. Help me to develop the daily discipline of asking for Him to fill me. Help me to listen to His voice every moment of everyday when I am tempted with sexual sin. I want His fruit to develop in my life and I know that consistency is the key for that to happen. Please begin to develop within me the fruit of self control starting today.**

**Proverbs 24:5-6 “A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might, for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.”**

## **Notes**

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## **Day 27**

**“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:24**

I included this passage for a couple of important reasons. First, I wanted you to see that this idea about the crucifixion of our sinful nature is not just in Romans 6. It is a very foundational truth that we need to remember everyday. We have been crucified with Christ. We belong to Him and He purchased us from sin and the devil by giving His life

for our sins. Our sinful nature has been crucified as well. That means its power to control us has been broken.

We can give it power again by choosing to sin and allowing it to be our master or we can allow God to be our master by seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit everyday and throughout the day. We still have our flesh that battles with the Spirit and the Spirit battles with the flesh. So the only way for us to have victory is ask the Holy Spirit to battle the flesh because when we try and do it without Him we have a long history of failure.

Secondly, I wanted us to see verse 25. Since we live by the Spirit, in other words since we have learned that it is only by allowing the Holy Spirit to be filling us and bearing His fruit in us that we can experience the life God has for us instead of the crap that the world wants us to experience, we need to keep in step with the Spirit. Now what does that mean?

During my childhood I lived on the Naval Academy and for two years our home was right next to the parade field. Every Thursday, during certain times of the year there were parades when the entire brigade of midshipmen, about 4000 of them, would march on, practice some drills where all 4000 of them did certain things with their weapons and then march off. The brigade is made up of 6 battalions which are broken into 30 companies. So about 133 midshipmen in each company.

Now take 133 people, put them shoulder to shoulder and front to back forming a square of tightly packed humanity, caring rifles and doing drills the only way to have them do this without stumbling over each other or hitting each other with their weapons was to have everyone doing everything in perfect timing and precision of movement. You can't have 132 people stepping with their right foot forward and some numbskull with his left foot forward without some serious domino like damage. They all had to keep in step and that is why every company had a company commander whose job it was to keep everybody in step.

That is what God wants us to do with the Holy Spirit. He is giving the orders and we are staying in perfect step with Him. When He tells us to turn right we turn right. When He tells us to stop we stop or to flee youthful lusts we flee. If He says stop looking there we bounce our eyes away from a sexual sight of thought. He is moving and wants us to follow Him in perfect step with His voice.

Now the Bible mentions three things that we can choose to do in relation to the Holy Spirit. Keeping in step with Him by asking Him to fill us everyday and then obeying his commands is one and that is the positive thing to do. The other two are negative.

**Quenching the Spirit** – 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says; **“Do not quench the Spirit.”** The word quench here means to suppress or stifle. The NIV translation says; “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire.” How do we do that? When the Holy Spirit tells us to do something and we do not do it we quench the Spirit. He knows all things. He sees the future as clearly as the past. He knows where our actions and thoughts will take us next and if He says go here and do this and we refuse and get out of step with Him we take control of our lives and He backs off a little.

He does not demand control and if you choose to take control of the steering wheel of your life He easily moves over and lets you. Soon He may be in the back seat. The next day He stays in the garage. Before you know it He isn't even being invited to hang with you that day. You have quenched Him and He has grown silent. Now note this, He never leaves you. He is always present in your body but He just slips off into some corner and waits till you crash again and call out for His help.

**Grieving the Spirit** – Ephesians 4:30: **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.”** If quenching Him is not doing what He wants us to then grieving Him is doing what He does not want us to do. So when we ignore His positive instructions He backs off and says; “OK, so you think you can handle it go ahead” and we fall. But when we do what He has told us to not do it saddens and grieves Him not because He is not in control and filling us.

It grieves Him because He loves us and knows that our sinful choices are going to harm us. So instead we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him daily to fill you and put the full armor of God on and then listen to Him, follow Him and keep in step with Him.

**Heavenly Father – I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want to experience His power and guidance in my life. I confess that at times I have quenched His directions and grieved Him by my sinful choices. Holy Spirit forgive me for trying to live independently of you. Please, take control of my life today and help me to keep in step with you.**

**Proverbs 25:28 “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.”**

**Notes**

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**Day 28**

**“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let**

**us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians. 6:7**

I have jumped to this passage in Galatians before we return to Romans 8 because it is a truth that we need to print out and place on the top of our computer screen. We should repeat it to ourselves at every point of temptation and meditate on it as we battle to keep our minds off of our fantasies.

One of the most common lies we have bought is; “Go ahead, you are not hurting anyone. Nobody will find out. You can get away with this and it will make you feel good. Surely, after all the times you’ve done it, this one more is not going to make any difference.” Lies, all of those are lies we tell ourselves or our enemies whisper in our ears. **DO NOT BE DECEIVED!!!**

God cannot be mocked. What does this mean? Literally it is a word that means to turn up your nose at someone, to sneer at or to mock. It is that attitude that says one or both of these things; 1) I do not really care what God says I am going to do what I want to do and it really doesn’t make a difference anyway because God not really care. Or 2) I can do this and get away with it and God is not going to either notice, care or do anything about it. Again, do not be deceived.

Choosing to sin is like planting seeds in the ground. There will be a harvest. Our actions are seeds that we sow into our lives and there will come a time when what we choose to do will create a harvest. Sow to please our sinful nature and from that nature there will come destruction. God does not have to do anything. Sin will bring it’s own consequences. It is going to happen. It is only a matter of time.

The destruction begins deep within us as our character and integrity, the foundations of our lives begins to decay and crumble. In the secret places, where we need the Holy Spirit to be strengthening us, a cancer begins to grow and eventually we will have so much in us that we cannot function and do the things we need to do to have a good relationship with God, our spouse, our children or anyone else.

It may take a long time but destruction will come and the longer it takes the worse it will be. The sooner we realize this and the sooner we seek help through confession to God and to others who will help us the sooner healing will begin and the less destruction there will be.

Also, do not continue to fool yourself. You might be thinking; “Well, I have confessed my sin to God and am trying to do better. So there will not be a harvest of sin will there?” Yes, there will be. If you simply keep sinning and confessing and not seeking the help you need from accountability with others and understanding the reason you sin sexually, you will return to those sins.

The alternative is to sow to please the Spirit. This is what we have been talking about. **Everyday offering our bodies to God** as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). **Everyday putting on the full armor of God** so that we can stand strong in the strength of His might (Eph 6:10). **Everyday surrendering our selves to God** as asking the Holy Spirit to fill us and bear His fruit in our lives. **Everyday making the time to meet with God**, read His Word and spend quality time in prayer listening for His voice and making our

requests.

At least ***once a week being held accountable by a man or group of men*** who will not let you get away with anything and having one person you can call at any time you are facing temptation.

In my devotions this morning I read Proverbs 26. It is full of proverbs about the fool. I have lived like a fool for years trying to live two lives and thinking I could either handle it or it did not matter. What the hell was I thinking? When my world of deceit and sin came crashing down this verse was one of the things that was foremost in my thoughts and it is true. **God will not be mocked.** Sin will reap a harvest of destruction. However, we can limit that destruction by confession of our sin to God and to people who will help us and taking the steps that we have been talking about.

I want you to know that there is hope for you. You can be healed by the power of God and you can get strong enough in the strength of His might to where you are not falling into sexual sin multiple times a week. I once thought that was impossible and I had years of history that proved it. But now, as of yesterday, by the power and grace of God and others I have gone 6 months and only fallen one time into sexual sin. I never thought I would be able to say that but it is true and I am not alone. I know of many men in IntegrityDotMen who are fighting the good fight along with me. Some were sexually abused by family members or friends. Some battle against homosexuality, prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors basically anything you can think of there are men seeking healing. Guess what? They are making progress and so can you, but it will never happen if you try to remain isolated.

**Heavenly Father – My heart cries out to you for my brothers in Christ who are trapped in sexual sin. Thank you that you can deliver anyone and that it is never too late. The fact that we are still alive means that you believe in us and are giving us the time to discover your healing. You are not finished with us and want to do a powerful work of love and grace in our lives. Do anything and everything that you know needs to be done so that I can get clean and rebuild my relationship with you, my spouse or ex-spouse, my children or parents and anyone else to whom you lead me.**

**Proverbs 26:11 “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”**

**Notes**

## Day 29 - Ephesians 5

**“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:15**

Before we return to Romans 8 I thought we should look carefully about one last thing in regards to the Holy Spirit. In this passage we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit and I have mentioned that numerous times already. Let’s look more carefully at this concept so we really understand what it means and how we can do it.

As we recover from our addictions we have learned that the power for this comes from God himself and our discipline in using the methods He has given to us. There is power and help that comes from standing in the strength of God’s might and putting on the full armor of God everyday. However, along with this we need the power and help that comes from the Holy Spirit whom God has placed in us. He is “holy” and so He loves for us to obey God. He is God and so He knows all things and can help guide us in our day to avoid sin and evil. He is an active being who could force us to obey but He never does.

This passage tells us to be very careful how we live. Just like Ephesians 6 tells us to be alert at all times. Doesn’t it seem like the moment we let down our guard evil is right there to tempt us? We need to be wise and not stupid. The way we can do that is by following this command and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

First, notice this, it is a command. It is not an option. If we are going to live the Christian life and be involved in what God has for us we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is not just for a moment, a day, a season but for everyday for the rest of our lives. Why do so many Christians seem to just sputter along struggling to be all that God wants them to be? Often it comes down to a rebellious attitude that says I really do not need God’s help today. I can handle it. There are no major crises that I have to deal with so thanks for the offer God but I think I can handle things today. Wrong. If we are really going to experience God in a powerful and wonderful way we must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Second, this command is in the present active tense. Now I am sure we have forgotten what we were taught in English class, but what that means in the Greek is that it is something we are supposed to do and keep on doing it continuously. The literal

translation is actually "...be filled and keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit." It is supposed to be a constant state in which we live. There should not be a time when we are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

Third, how do we do it? Is there some system or list of things I need to do to make this happen? Does it happen at church or in my devotions? Are there things I have to do in order to be filled with Him. Look at this passage; **"1John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."**

We know that being filled with the Holy Spirit is God's will. He has commanded us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So if we simply ask to be filled, since it is His will we can know that he hears us and we can know that we have what we asked of him. It is as simple as that...just ask...everyday and even at moments during the day when you are being tempted. Now there maybe be times when we are tempted when we need to call a friend or sponsor. However, make your first call to the Holy Spirit and then call friend who can also help.

There is one more thing that I think is important. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit will fill us if there is unconfessed sin in our life or if we are treasuring sin in our hearts. Jay Carty says it is like trying to be on a diet and not eat sweets but keeping some éclairs in the refrigerator just in case we want to give in. Keeping porn on your computer or in your home, maintaining contact with someone you have been sexually active with...those are éclairs in your frig. We cannot be double minded about this because if we are James 1 tells us God does not give anything to the double minded man.

**Heavenly Father – How many times have I seen the weakness of my flesh and my need for the power of your Holy Spirit in my life? I know that I cannot have victory over the flesh without the power of the Spirit. So I ask today that you fill me with the Spirit and keep on filling me as the day passes. Search me by the Holy Spirit and see if there is any wicked way in me so that I can confess it and get rid of its presence in my life.**

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

## **Notes**



## Day 30

**“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1**

Today we begin studying what many have said is the pinnacle of Scripture. This chapter is the greatest expression of the love and grace of God. We should take off our shoes for we are standing on holy ground. We need to come into this chapter with our heads bowed and listen to what God wants to teach us about how much he loves us and how powerful and never ending His love for us is. There is much ground to cover before we read the words at the end of the chapter. So let's start to climb to the peak and see the vastness of God's love for us.

How many times have we said words of condemnation to ourselves? We hear words of condemnation in our minds. Our conscience convicts us when we sin. Satan, who is the accuser of the believers screams at us about our sin and tells us what utter failures we are. However, none of this condemnation comes from God.

If you are in Christ Jesus, if you have received Him as your Savior this verse declares boldly that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation...no condemnation, none at all. Shhhhhh...be quiet for a moment, close your eyes and say those words slowly. No condemnation for those who are in Christ. Am I in Christ? Yes, so there is no condemnation. Wow, that is almost unbelievable.

We feel and have felt condemnation everyday. We are so beaten down by our sin and the accusations of the devil. We are beaten down and broken. Sin has broken through the defenses of our life, perhaps destroyed our marriage and we are surrounded by people that may condemn us for what we have done. Now look into the eyes of your heavenly Father. Draw close to him and look into His eyes. No condemnation, just love and sorrow for the pain that sin has caused in your life.

Under the Old Covenant and the Law sin resulted in condemnation. God told Israel that if they obeyed Him He would bless them but if they disobeyed Him He would curse them. Condemnation literally means a damnatory sentence. It means that we would be damned for our sins and can expect to go to hell as a result. But for those who are in Christ Jesus that is no longer the case. Sure, we can still feel condemned. Satan can still lie to us and make us believe that God has forsaken us, but none of that is true.

When we sin we should feel guilty, but not condemned. There is a huge difference

between the two. Our conscience and the Holy Spirit convict us when we have sinned. That is normal and the way it should be. However, our loving heavenly Father never condemns those who are in Christ Jesus.

When we are feeling condemned we get that "...it really does not matter what I do" feeling. Condemnation is a tool of the devil and our flesh to make us believe we might as well plunge off the cliff and dive headlong into sin because we are such failures. It happens when you say to yourself; "I have done so much wrong already it is not going to make any difference if I do more." Do not believe it. It is a lie. There is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Why? Because now that we are in Christ the old law of condemnation is no longer in effect. We have a new promise from God. Our forgiveness and our relationship with God is not based on our actions. His love is not conditional upon our actions. See it in the verse..."**because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**"

We have been set free from the law of sin and death and it was Christ and what He did on the cross that has accomplished this. Please memorize this first verse and quote it back to Satan and your flesh every time you are feeling condemned.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you that I no longer am condemned by my sin. Thank you that the death of your Son on the cross, in my place, has broken the damning condemnation of sin and I am free to experience your love and forgiveness. Help me to no longer listen to and believe my flesh and Satan but to live today filled with thanksgiving and joy because I am no longer condemned.**

**Notes**

## Day 31

**“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8: 3**

The Law was powerless and remains powerless to help us. It tells us what God wants. It points the way in which we should go. It makes God's good plan and will for us clear but it is powerless in helping us. In fact, because of our sin nature, it becomes a burden reminding us that we are falling short of what God wants to let us know that we need a Savior. Even if you and I were not failures in sexual purity we would be failures in keeping other areas of the Law.

So it is the same for everyone regardless of what their issues of sin are. The law is good because it makes us know we need Christ but it is powerless to help us and we know how much we need help from outside of ourselves.

The great news is that God through Christ has provided all of that help. Since we have a sinful nature, which draws us away from God and urges us to rebel against His Law the good Law of God is not only powerless but becomes a standard against which our sinful nature can push. However these verses tell us that what the Law was powerless to do God did.

By sending Christ, His Son, in the likeness of us to be a sin offering for us He condemned sin in sinful man. Here is a very deep thought and wonderful thought. We are used to condemnation being ours. We have felt the condemnation of God against us and our actions. Our conscience, Satan and the world has condemned us for our sin. However, now, because of what Christ did by becoming a man and dying on the cross, God now condemns sin. We are not condemned, sin is and God has dealt with it for us.

Now notice what the result is; **“...in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”**

The righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us. Guess what??? Every righteous requirement of the Law of God has already been fully met in us. What that is saying is that in God's plan we have been given a righteousness that we could have never earned for ourselves. We are broken. We have a sinful nature and cannot live a righteous life. So God says ok then, I will give you a righteousness as a gift of my love and grace. Let me show you other scriptures that teach us this great truth.

**“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” Romans 3:21**

**“However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: Romans 4:5**

**“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21**

This righteousness is a gift that God has given to us. There is a fancy theological phrase for this. It is called “imputed righteousness”. It literally means that it has been credited to our account. If I were to go to your bank, fill out a deposit slip with your account number and hand the teller \$1,000,000 dollars you would be pretty excited the next time you saw your account statement.

You would think the bank must have made a mistake. You would probably try and find out where the money came from, who gave it to you or just figure out that the bank made a mistake. If you found out that I gave it to you, you would call me up and want to know one thing...can I keep it? Is it mine? That money has been imputed to your account and it is yours to do with as you please.

Now God has imputed the righteousness of Christ to our account. It is His righteousness but he has given it to us. So when God looks to us to see if we have a righteousness that we need to have a relationship with the Holy one, He sees a righteousness that we have been given, not a result of our works, but in spite of our works. It is a gift. It is what God’s love and grace is all about.

So today lets give God our love and obedience. Not so that we will have His love and blessing but because we have been given forgiveness for all of our sin and have been credited with the righteousness of Christ.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you for the righteousness of Christ that you have given to me through faith. Help me today to live a righteous life. Not so that I can be loved by you, because you love me just as I am and just as I was. Since I am not free from the bondage to sin may your Holy Spirit fill me and give me the power to live a holy life for you.**

**Notes**

## Day 32

**“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”** Romans 8:5

We have to be somewhat careful in these next few verses because we could misinterpret what God is saying here. He is comparing for us the difference between a person who is a believer in Christ and a child of God’s and a person who is not. These verses are translated a little differently in the New American Standard Version. That translation tends to be a little more exact is following the Greek in the original text.

There it says; **“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”** In the Greek it does not say those who “live”, implying those who are believers that choose to either live after the sinful nature or after the Spirit. Certainly that can be the case in real life. However, in these verses the difference is clear in the Greek that he is talking about two different kinds of people, those who **“are”** according to the flesh and those who **“are”** according to the Spirit.

When we were not believers we were according to our flesh or sinful nature. That old sinful nature controlled us and we naturally were lead to rebel against God’s ways and do our own thing. Then when we became believers we were born again and the old sinful nature was crucified with Christ and we were given a new nature as well as received the Holy Spirit to dwell within us.

Next he moves from talking about the state in which one can live (the flesh or the Spirit, not Ohio) to what the mind of either of these people is set on. The person who is in the flesh, or lives according to the sinful nature, they set their minds, by nature, on the sinful things of life and the result is death.

However, the person who is a believer, their mind can be controlled by the Spirit and the result is life and peace. He goes on to expand this a little more by saying that the mind of the unbeliever is hostile to God and does not submit to God’s law. In fact he says it cannot do so because it is separated from God and controlled by a rebellious and sinful nature. Then he says that person who is controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Now I will agree that a believer can choose to live like this as well. We can choose to live according to our flesh. We can set our minds on the things of the flesh, the world and the devil and live in sin. We can fill our minds with immoral thoughts and be in rebellion against God. We have all done that many times. However, if you will remember the first two weeks of this study we learned that God has done everything

that needs to be done to set us free from the grip our sinful nature held us in. When we choose to live that way we go back under the control of our flesh and we sin and we experience the feelings of separation from God and it feels like we are dying.

However, thanks to God's provisions of the Holy Spirit, the full armor of God and the help of being accountable to other believers our minds can be controlled by the Holy Spirit and we can enjoy the life and peace of God. We can actually experience a quality of life that cannot be experienced by anyone other than believers. We can have a life that is full and full of peace, joy and love.

We can experience the love and care of God everyday instead of the condemnation of sin. In order to do that we must make sure that everyday we offer ourselves to God and yield our minds to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We allow our eyes to look only at things that the Spirit wants us to look at and we allow only thoughts in our head that He wants us to think about.

Now God does not turn us into robots and fully control all that we think, see, say or do. He has and continues to give us free will. If we choose to submit to Him and offer ourselves to Him every moment of every day then His Spirit fills us and begins to transform us from the inside out to become true spiritual men who are becoming more and more like Christ.

In this state of daily yielding ourselves to God and being filled with the Spirit, putting on the full armor of God and spending daily time in His word and in prayer we do begin to be changed by God. I know that we can sometimes feel like the flesh is too powerful and we cannot stop our sexual acting out. We feel like we cannot stop the fantasies that are stored in our minds even if we could stay away from porn on the computer. If we are trying to do these things ourselves we are right and we will never be able to stop.

The whole idea is to show us that we need God to change us. We need His power and His provisions and His methods and He will change us. If we could do it without God then we would grow further from Him. But we cannot and so when we try we fail. We know that. God knows that and God expects that. Instead His plan is for us to come to Him and allow Him to do it along with us. We must do our part of seeking Him, reading His word, praying, daily asking for the filling of the Holy Spirit and putting on the full armor of God. If and when we do that God will do His part and continue the process of really changing us.

So today remember who you are. You are someone that God choose before the creation of the world. He loved you and choose you to be one of His children fully knowing the sin that you would commit and the things you would do. He choose you unconditionally so that by His power and by His Spirit He could change you and set you free from the power of sin in your life. Remember that today. You are His child by His choice to ask Him to take you hand and lead you through this day to live by the Spirit.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you for your marvelous grace and love for me. Thank you that I do not have to live after the flesh or sinful nature, but that I can be filled with your Holy Spirit and enjoy the life and peace that you have for me. I want to be fully controlled by the Spirit so I offer myself to you today as a living sacrifice,**

**holy and acceptable in your sight.**

## **Notes**

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### **Day 33**

**“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”**  
Romans 8:9

The lessons we have learned about the flesh and the Spirit are going to help us understand this passage. There are three types of people I want you to keep in mind...and it is not blonds, brunettes and redheads. The unbeliever is controlled by the sinful nature because that is the only nature he has. The other two types of people are believers. The believer, as we have learned, has an option.

Some believers walk in the flesh, do not appropriate what Christ has done for them and the power of the Holy Spirit within them and they are miserable and live in sin. We were like that. The third person is the believer who is walking in the Spirit and not the flesh and is having victory over the battle with the world, the flesh and the devil. Now in this passage Paul is talking about the difference between the first and the third people. Being controlled by the Holy Spirit should not be an option for us.

God commands it for our own good. It seems totally unreasonable to Paul in this passage that a person would have the Holy Spirit in them and yet not be controlled by Him. If you do not have the Holy Spirit you do not belong to Christ.

The great news is that we do have the Holy Spirit. Every person that puts their faith in Jesus Christ receives the Holy Spirit at that moment as God's deposit into our lives guaranteeing that we have become His children.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says; **"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."**

So the Holy Spirit is in you. We have been co-crucified, buried and resurrected with Christ into a new life and He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. Sin still lives in our flesh but our spirits are alive now because God has given us the righteousness of Christ.

So the question that we all need to settle is why do we continue to sin after all that God has done? How can I as a believer become addicted to sex and pornography and bring so much pain and destruction to my spouse, children, family and to myself? Verse 11 says that the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is living in my body and gives to me new life.

How the heck do we get so screwed up when God has done so much for us. Why can't I seem to be able to stop this addiction that I hate and get to the place where I am free from my sexual addiction? Let's look at two of the reasons. They are many and various and each person is different. However, here are two of the most common.

First, it shows us the power of sin. We have sin living in us. We live in a fallen world and we face daily an enemy that is not flesh and blood, but the demonic powers of darkness. You already knew that if you have been reading this devotional because we have covered all of them.

Here is what I feel is a second very common reason that I know was true in my life and I have witnessed it in the lives of some of the men that I know at IntegrityDotMen. That problem is that we do not really want to stop. There is this idea that we can get away with it, nobody will find out, I can sneak one more in and if I do happen to have to confess it to the guys in my group it is no big deal. So on we go limping around with our self inflicted wounds barely able to move when it seems like God wants everyone around to dance.

By the grace of God I have only committed one sexual sin in the past seven and a half months. That happened after four months of purity and I have been pure since then. For years I tried to stop without success or little success. What has made the difference? First I have confessed everything to my wife and I will not lie to her again. Second, she has taken a strong stand that she will not stand for me to continue in my sin. If I do not fight the fight and win then I could lose her and my relationships with my kids. So I am at the end of my rope, the end of the line and I cannot afford to blow it one more time.

Will I ever blow it again? I do not know the future, but I do know that if I apply the methods God has given us and that we have covered in this devotional we can experience the power of God to help us stay pure. And I know that I can do that for the rest of this day. Tomorrow, I will start again with Him.



My brothers in Christ, it breaks my heart to know that some of you are struggling day after day. You feel trapped and are discouraged. Please, walk with me back to God. Make Him first in your life everyday. Get the help you need to understand the psychological and emotional factors in your addiction and make yourself accountable to someone who will love you and pray for you daily.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you that it is possible to stop sinning sexually. It is possible for you to clear away the libraries of porn that is in our minds. Thank you that you can heal us in our brokenness and may we never leave you side again to pursue that which has been killing us on the inside. Help us today to walk in the Holy Spirit and to put on the full armor of God.**

**Notes**

**Day 34**

**“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to**

**live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 1For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 1The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Romans 8:12 -16**

Notice those words; “...we have an obligation...” The word “obligation” is the Greek word for debt. So we owe God something. Please take note...He did not save us, He did not die for us in order to make us have to be in debt to him. He is not like the Great Credit Card Man in the sky. He is not the bank holding a note on your home or car and you are repaying him for what you have.

Because if that were the case how much would you be willing to pay to be forgiven for all of your sins and be guaranteed eternal life in heaven? Those things that He has done for us are priceless.

There is a saying which says; “I owe, I owe so off to work I go.” We work to be able to afford the things we have and to provide for our loved ones. So let me ask you a question. When you cash your paycheck do you take it in cash and hand it to the guy standing on the corner with a cardboard sign that says; “Out of work...need help.”

Would you take the money and hand it to that person that hates you and wants to destroy you? Would you find a connection to some terrorist and secretly give it to him so he can help destroy your community and your family? Or do you have an obligation to take what you have and use it to the good for your and your family?

Everyday is a gift from God. Everyday is a fresh chance to live for him and take your life, your body, your resources and time and use them to glorify the One that loves you more than you love yourself. When we take our time, our bodies and our resources and give them over to sexual sin we are cutting ourselves off from the One who has given us all things and we give it to the one that wants to destroy us. If we live in the flesh and sin it will destroy us and all of our relationships. For what? A brief moment of orgasmic pleasure followed by hours, days and weeks of shame and guilt?

We have an obligation to the one who loves us to take all we have everyday and place it in His hands. We are His children. He is the one that gives life and not death. He is the one that forgives and can heal our brokenness. He can lead us in paths of blessing and growth and life. He is the one that has for us an inheritance that is greater than anything we have seen or can even think of.

We need to stop thinking of God as a stern and angry earthly father. We need to learn that He is the ultimate loving and caring Father. Did your earthly father fall short of being a good dad? Was he abusive to you? Did he destroy your self esteem, abuse you, criticize you and make your life a living hell? Do you project that upon the Heavenly Father? Let me ask you a question.

Who is more like your earthly father the loving God who gave His son to die on the

cross for you, or Satan, the father of lies who wants to destroy you? How is it that we project the mistakes of our earthly father on God and rush off to sin and in so doing go away from the one who really loves us into the arms of the one that wants to destroy us.

Brothers, we have an obligation but it is not to an evil taskmaster, but to the creator of the universe who loves us and wants to heal our brokenness. If we really want to be healed we will rush into His arms everyday, be filled with His Spirit everyday and put on the full armor of God everyday so that we can stand against the forces of evil that want to kill us and destroy us and our family.

**Heavenly Father – What a privilege I have to call you that. I come to you today and worship you. I fall before you and offer to you my life as a living sacrifice. I need your Holy Spirit to fill me. I put on the full armor of God so that I can stand firm in the strength of your might. Lead me away from all temptation today, help me to be alert at all times and to pray in the Spirit all day long so that I might live today in a way that is pleasing to you.**

**Notes**

**Day 35**

**“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the**

**creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Romans 8:18**

The thought that Paul ended with yesterday was of us being God's children, heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ. Suddenly it is as if he is standing at the end of this present age looking forward into heaven but also back upon history and time. He was familiar with suffering for his faith. He was looking forward to the time when his suffering would be over and he would have unending joy in the holy presence of God. So with that in mind he looks at the present sufferings he was going through.

We need to do the same. We need to get perspective on the struggle we face and the battle that rages around us. The weight of the burden of our sin, the pain of the shame we feel, the harm that we have caused others can sometimes be overwhelming. We are broken by our sin. It has crushed so much of what we hold dear and yet instead of a revulsion toward sexual sin we still feel drawn to it.

We feel it pulling us back for more and sometimes we have failed so many times we give up and give in to whenever it beckons. We know how miserable we feel about ourselves. We know how much pain we have caused and we bear the wounds of the people that have lashed back at us. We focus so much on these things that we need to gain a new perspective on things. Let's step back and look at our lives in light of heaven and earth and the plan of God.

We are presently suffering. We suffer if we give in to sin and if we do not give in we struggle in the battle against sin. Sometimes we might ask ourselves is it worth fighting for? The answer is yes, it most certainly is. This fight and the suffering that comes with it are not worth comparing to the glory that God has in store for us. It is not just us that are groaning and waiting for God to bring us into heaven...it is all of creation as well. When Adam and Eve fell all of creation was subjected to frustration as death and sin entered into God's perfect creation.

So I want you to stop for a few moments today and think about what God has for you in heaven. Peter tells us in his letter that we have an inheritance that will never perish, spoil or fade. First think about what it will be like to have our bodies changed from perishable to imperishable. They will last forever. I do not know if God is going to hand us a catalog and let us choose the body we will have forever. I doubt it. However, the one we will have will have nothing wrong with it. It will never become injured or sick. It will never grow old.

Second we will be unspoiled. That word is used to describe the holiness of Christ in the book of Hebrews. What it is saying is we will never sin again. Imagine that...we will live eternally without sin. It will simply not be present in heaven. We will have no sin nature and we will never sin again. So much pain comes from sin but that will be forever gone. I am not sure what we will be doing in heaven but I do know that our lives and the lives of our loved ones will never experience sickness or sin ever again. So for now we have to suffer. For awhile we struggle with sin, death and disease. However, it will only last for awhile and then we will be with God forever in heaven and the glory of that eternal existence is so much greater than what we have to fight against today.

Brothers, let us not give up the fight against sin and temptation. We do not have to give in to sin. We do not have to fall. God has given us the Holy Spirit and the spiritual methods to defeat sin and temptation. The glory of obedience and the joy of purity are only a taste of what our heaven will be like.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you for the eternal life that you have for us. Thank you that sin and death will be done away with forever. Help me today to live in obedience to you and your will. Fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to put on the full armor of God so that I can stand in the strength of your might.**

**Notes**

**Day 36**

**“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”**

Romans 8:26

If there is one thing I know about myself and it is probably true about you as well, I cannot fix myself. Sure, there have been times when I had some victory and did not self-medicate myself. The New Years Resolutions could last awhile. Eventually I would give in and go back to my sexual addictions. We can never win this battle alone. We need to confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9) and to each other (James 5:16). We need to have men who will hold us accountable, pray for us regularly and be there when we need help. If we start to feel that we can do things by ourselves, apart from our relationships with the people around us, that should be a huge red flag warning us that trouble is ahead.

The focus for today is different from this. Do you realize what God is doing for us everyday? Sometimes, in our rebellion and hiding from God we buy into the lie that God does not care about us. Satan tells us that God is finished with us and we are worthless. He says that God is mad at us because in spite of all He has done to save us and forgive us, we spit in his face by continuing to sin. What a false image that is.

The passage for today tells us that God does not reject us in our weaknesses, but the Spirit helps us when we are weak. Today I want us to learn three very important truths about God and burn them into our minds so that we will not believe these lies from Satan.

First, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. One way He does this is to pray for us with groans that words cannot express. This phrase in the Greek describes someone who is overwhelmed with grief and therefore simply sighs. Have you ever felt like that? Overwhelmed with grief or sorry over your sinfulness and what you have done to those you love? When we feel that way, when we feel so far from God because of our sin, instead of God being angry with us and rejecting us, God the Spirit prays for us when we cannot or do not pray for ourselves.

The second verse says when that happens God, the one who searches our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit has been praying for us according to God's will. This passage tells me that the Spirit is praying for us all along. He prays for us to know and do God's will and when we are weak and do not know how to pray He kicks it into high gear and prays for us in our weakness.

Secondly, along the same lines, do you know what Jesus is doing? He rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God. However, he is not just sitting there watching but he is sitting there praying. Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is constantly praying, making intercession, for the saints. So not only does the Holy Spirit pray for us in our weaknesses but Christ is praying for us as well.

Third we need to be reminded of what God himself says about us. In Hebrews 13:5 God says that He will never leave us or forsake us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Not even our sin or death. God will never let us go and He stays with us forever.

Remember the first verse of this chapter? There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God does not condemn us. We are in Christ Jesus and how did we get there? God himself put us there. We did not get there by being good. We did not get there because at some point in time we so impressed God that He thought; "Wow, I

sure would be lucky to get that person into Christ, I hope they will believe in me and join my team.” No, Jesus says in John 6:44; **“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”** Now that word translated “draw” literally means to drag even against someone’s will. It is the word used when someone is dragged into court. Jesus uses the word in John 21 when the disciples have to drag their nets into the boat and they are straining to do it because the net is full of fish. Luke uses it in Acts 21 when the people dragged Paul out of the temple. We are in Christ because God dragged us in there and He did it because of His love and grace not because we deserved it.

He also did it knowing full well who we are and what we would do in our lives. God knows all things. The theological word for this is omniscience. Since God knows all things there is nothing that God does not know past, present and future. In fact God has always known all things. He knows exactly what is going to happen tomorrow in the lives of every person in the world. He knows every thought, word and deed everyone is going to think, say or do tomorrow and for a million tomorrows. In fact he knew it all before he even created the world. So, even before God drew you to Christ, even before you became a Christian, even before you were placed in Christ God knew every single sin you would commit. And guess what??? HE CHOOSE YOU ANYWAY!!! That is why there is no condemnation for those in Christ. That is why God still loves you and holds you everyday in the palm of His hand and will never let you go. Everyday the Spirit is praying for you. Everyday Christ, at the right hand of God the Father prays for you. Everyday God holds on to you and loves us, in our weaknesses and in our successes.

Instead of continuing in sexual sin we might want to let His love and grace pour into our lives and give us hope and strength again.

**Heavenly Father – Thank you that the Holy Spirit is praying for me in my weakness. Thank you the Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord is praying for me today. Thank you for your incredible love that drew me to Jesus even though you knew every sin I would commit. Now, I thank you that you can help me live a pure life for you today. Fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to stand firm in the strength of your might by putting on the full armor of God.**

## **Notes**

## **Day 37**

**“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Romans 8:28**

Today we are going to look into some of the greatest truth about God and His love for us in the entire Bible. Entire books can be written on these two verses. You may have memorized and quoted verse 28 but I doubt very many of us could quote verse 29 and

30.

Now verse 29 is a tremendously comforting verse but verses 29 and 30 contain some of the most powerful truth that we need to know and understand if we are going to appreciate how much God loves us. I would submit that those two verses are more important for the healing of our brokenness.

Now in verse 28 we find tremendous comfort. It teaches us that in everything ... absolutely everything, God works for the good of those who love him and have been called according to His purpose. It does not say that God is going to work everything out. It is not a promise that everything is going to turn out my way. It says that He is going to make everything work out for the good and not the good as we define it, but for our good in light of His purpose for our life.

Then Paul slams on the brakes and thinks about what he just wrote. The idea of God's purpose is huge. Suddenly we are seated in God's lap and looking down on the entire span of time. Look at that incredible time line. It starts before the creation of the universe, leads up to today and stretches forever into the future. It says that God foreknew us and predestined us to become conformed to the likeness of His son. What the heck does that mean?

The first word we need to understand is the word "foreknew". Literally it means to know ahead of time. Where this gets interesting is the figurative meaning of the Hebrew word "to know". We can know things by head knowledge like I read a book on skydiving and so I know some things about it. Then there is experiential knowledge which is knowing something by experiencing it. Jump out of an airplane at 10,000 feet and you will know a lot more than what you read in the book.

However, in the Old Testament this word "to know" has another meaning and that is to know something or someone intimately. There are many places where it says that a husband "knew" his wife. So attached to this word is the idea of intimately knowing and loving someone. When it says that God foreknew us it means that he knew us intimately and loved us completely ahead of time. When was that?

Well it was before we were born, before our parents were born and in fact before the creation of the universe. Ephesians 1:4- 6 it says; **"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.**

God knew you before he created the universe. He did not just know of you, he knew everything there was to know about you. He knew everything you would think, do and say. Then it says in love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons. In spite of all of our sin God loved and loves us. Think about that for a moment before you continue to read on.

The second word we need to look at is "predestined". That word simply means to determine ahead of time. God not only loved us before the creation of the universe, but he made a decision which determined what would happen in our lives. He determined



that we would be conformed to the image of His son. In other words He decided that He would make us like Christ. You might think that He sure has been doing a lousy job. I mean look at all our sin, look at our brokenness?

Well, how exactly do you think someone becomes like Christ? Before God can make us like His son we have to be broken so that we are willing to be made whole and new. Like the potter with his clay or the goldsmith with his gold that material that is going to be worked with has to be put into a form that it can be worked with. With gold you heat it up and pour it into a mold. With people we have to be broken so we stop relying on ourselves and become totally reliant upon God to work with us.

We have just considered two of the greatest thoughts in all of the Bible about what God is like and what He has done. What I want us all to realize is the extent to which God loves us. He has always loved you. He will always love you. There has never been a time when He has loved you more or less than He does right now. His love for us does not increase when we are good or decrease when we sin. You have not lost your salvation as a result of your sin. In fact tomorrow we will look at the eternal security we have because of this unconditional love of God.

**Heavenly Father – Your love truly is amazing and eternal. Thank you for loving me and choosing me to be one of your children before the creation of the world. Thank you that you foreknew and predestined me to be conformed to the image of your son. Help me today to work with you, to follow your will and your Holy Spirit so that I might walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh.**

## **Notes**

## **Day 38**

**“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. “ Romans 8:29-30**

One of the issues that many believers struggle with is if there is a pattern of habitual sin in their lives is the question of losing their salvation. Have you ever wondered if you have lost yours or if you were ever really saved? That is not unusual in fact the bible even talks about that happening.

For centuries there has been the debate if one can or cannot lose their salvation. I

believe the weight of the Scriptures comes down on the side of a truly saved believer never being about to lost their salvation. One of the reasons I believe that it verse 30. However, before we look carefully at that verse lets look at another passage that has to do with this issue.

In 2 Peter 1 we learn what happens to a believer who is not growing in his relationship with God and becoming more like Christ. We are encouraged to make a diligent effort to add to our faith “...**goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self- control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.**”

Then he makes the statement if these qualities are ours and increasing then they will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive for Jesus Christ. However, if we do not have them, if we are not working to grow in our faith and deepen our relationship with Christ then we are “...**he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.**”

Notice the words “nearsighted and blind”. Now I understand the concept of being nearsighted because when I was a child I was blind as a bat. My vision was 20/400. The only letter I could read on the eye chart was the big E at the top and they would have to turn it in different directions to see if I could see it.

When you are nearsighted all you can see it what is close to you. You cannot see things far away. What this passage is teaching us is that if we are not growing in Christ we become spiritually nearsighted and we forget that we have been cleansed from our past sins. We are blind and so we cannot look back to when we became a Christian and clearly see the forgiveness that God has given us. Then we begin to doubt and worry of we are still saved or were ever really a Christian. Once we are at that point then Satan has a field day with our thoughts and fills us with fear.

Listen, if you have truly trusted in Jesus Christ and asked him to be your Savior, believing that He died on the cross for your sins then you became born again at that time. You entered into an eternal relationship with God in which He is your father and you are his child. Nothing you can do can change that fact. Now I have 3 sons. I love them. They were born to my wife and I and nothing can change that fact. They might run away, change their names and never want to see me again. Does that change the fact that they are my sons...no. That relationship is not open for change. It is permanent and unconditional. It is the same between us and God. We are born again not by our will but by God's He drew us to Christ and gave us the faith to believe. He chose us from before the creation of the world and He tells us that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Now look again at Romans 8:30. “...**and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.**” Remember that he just said that he loved us and predestined us to become his children.

Then he says that the ones that He predestined he also called or drew into a relationship with Christ. Then the ones that He called He also justified. That means that

he declared all of them not guilty of their sins because Christ paid for their sins on the Cross. Then he says that the ones He justified He also glorified.

Now notice a couple of things about this verse. First he is talking about a group of people, specifically the ones that He foreknew or fore loved and predestined. Now, how many of that group that He predestined did God lose along the way? How many of those He predestined did God lose by the time we get to the group that He glorified? The answer is none. The same ones He predestined He also glorified. Since he did not lose one can anyone that is predestined lose that? Nope!

Lastly notice this. Paul is speaking in the past tense. Those he predestined, called and justified is all spoken about in the past tense. Doesn't it seem strange that when he talks about those He glorified that he also uses the past tense even though he is talking about a future act? Strange in English grammar but not in the Greek. This is a special verb tense in the Greek that uses a past tense verb in a future action. The idea behind that is that the thing that is yet future is so absolute that there is no chance it will not happen therefore it is spoken of in the past tense as if it has already taken place.

God does not lose anything. God does not let go of anyone. If you truly gave your life to Christ and were born again by the Holy Spirit then you are saved and you cannot change that. Quite believing the lie of Satan that God has rejected you because of your sexual sin. Fight the lie by knowing and believing the truth even if you do not feel it.

**Heavenly Father – I believe that you have loved me since before you created the universe. Out of your total grace and sovereign choice you chose me to be one of your children. You did not choose me because you knew I would live a pure life. You choose me knowing of all my sin. I cannot understand why you would chose me and die for my sins. Help me to feel and experience the depth of your unchanging love for me and to never doubt my salvation again. Lastly, help me to do the things that I need to do so that I will grow closer and deeper in my relationship with you.**

**Notes**

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## Day 39

**“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 3Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” Romans 8:31-36**

I hope we can forever grasp the extent of the love of God for us after learning what we learned the past two days. The human examples of love that we know of can never compare with the love of God. If you have had someone who knows you well and loves you unconditionally you are fortunate.

Perhaps a parent or grandparent. But in the back of our minds is always the thought that if they really knew us they would not love us. It is not so with God.

God knows everything you have thought, said and done. He knows everything you will say, do or think. He knew all of these things before He created the world and he chose you to be one of His children simply because He loves you...period. That love will never ever change based on something you might or might not do. You are forever in His family by His choice and you cannot change that if you are truly born again.

Based on that Paul makes this great statement; “If God is for us who can be against us?” Ok, time for an illustration. You and another third grade student are the captains for a pick up game of basketball. Each of you will pick from the group of ragtag kids on the playground to make up your teams. You get first pick and you notice a new kid there. He is bigger than the other kids...a lot bigger. You do not know his name so you ask him and he says; “Shaquille O’Neal.”

So you pick him because you know he is one of the greatest players in the NBA. The

rest of your team is chosen and you gather at the bench before the game starts. You might say; "Ok guys if O'Neal is on our team who can be against us?" That is a small illustration of what Paul is saying here.

If God is for us...and He is...He always has been and He always will be...then does it matter at all who is against us? No, because God is omnipotent or all powerful. He is a zillion times greater than Shaquille O'Neal. Nothing or nobody is even as powerful as an ant in his presence. God is for you. He is for your good, He is for your purity.

Then Paul says look what this loving God has done. He sacrificed his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ so that our punishment for our sins could be removed. If He has done that, the greatest expression of love that there could ever be...then will He not also give us all things?

He is the eternal judge, but his judgment upon your sins has been removed by Christ so who is left to judge us...nobody. If someone wants to bring a charge God says no problem I have justified that person. If someone wants to condemn us fine, our condemnation has fallen on Christ and there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

In fact the very one that died for our sins is sitting at the right hand of God and he is there praying for us. Imagine that, everyday Jesus is at God's right hand praying for you. Praying for you to look to Him and to be empowered by His Holy Spirit.

Since God no longer condemns us and since Christ who loves us so much He would die for our sins and since the Holy Spirit indwells us forever as a deposit guaranteeing our eternal salvation the we must conclude one thing. There is nothing and no one that can separate us from the love of God. Not **"...trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword..."**

Are you in trouble? Have you done things which if found out could land you in jail or cause you to lose your job? Are you experiencing hardship and have been divorced by your wife and hated by your children? Are you being persecuted because of your sexual sin? Are you wondering where your next meal is coming from, have only the clothes on your back and worried about someone coming after you for what you have done? None of that separates you from the love of God. Even if every single person in the world hates you and is disgusted with you and what you have done the love of God for you remains unchanged. Stop believing the lies from Satan and begin to thank God everyday for his unending and unconditional love.

**Heavenly Father – I want to thank you today for your love that will never let me go. I have been so disgusted with myself and hated myself that I have forgotten that you love me. I do not know what I will have to face today in temptation or persecution, however since you love me constantly help me to draw strength from you today. Pray for me today Jesus and help me to stay pure.**

**Notes**

## Day 40

**Rom. 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

We have climbed to the top. We have arrived at the pinnacle of the Bible relative to understanding the love of God. On several occasions I have had the opportunity to attempting to climb to the top of a mountain. Mount Hood in Oregon and another mountain in British Columbia. Getting to the top was hard work. It was exhausting, but once you get there sit down and look around yourself there is a humbling awe at how little you are and how awesome is the creation.

We have arrived at the peak of God's love. Sure, we might have known that God loves us and sang "Jesus loves me this I know..." as a kid. Hopefully now we have a deeper appreciation and understanding of the love of God for us. It is an eternal love because He loved us before the creation of the universe.

It is a sacrificing love because the Son of God became the man Jesus and died on the cross for our sins. It is an unconditional love in that it is and never has been based on our good behavior. It is a defending love because when we are under attack by the evil one and fall God defends us and reminds Satan that we are forever His children.

Therefore Paul closes this chapter with this great statement that I would encourage all of us to memorize and quote it the next time we are tempted. That verse is verse 38. We need to be convinced that death nor life will not separate us from God. When we die God is not going to meet us at the gate and throw us into hell.

There are no angels or demons that can separate us from God. Sometimes it feels like God has sent Satan to torment us like He did to Job. Well there may be some demonic activity involved in our life. You might be being tempted or demonically influenced, but that does not separate you from the love of God.

There is nothing in the present or anything in the future that will separate you from the love of God.

In fact there is nothing in all of creation that can do that. It is impossible for us to be separated from the love of God. So stop thinking like that has happened. Stop believing that God is angry with you and wants to destroy you because you have failed so often. Stop condemning yourself for your failures and start working on the solutions.

So I close with this list of what I would recommend you do everyday at the beginning of the day. It is not inspired by God and it can be changed and adapted to your own circumstances. It is a general rule of thumb guide to becoming spiritually and sexually pure.

- Meet with the Lord first thing every morning in a quite place where you will not be disturbed.
- Spend some time adoring Him and reading His word.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you so that you will walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh. (Ephesians 5:18 and Galatians 5:16)
- Offer your body to God as a living sacrifice which is holy and acceptable to Him. (Romans 12:1)
- Offer the members of your body to him to be used as instruments of righteousness instead of instruments of sin. (Romans 6)
- Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand firm in the strength of His might, (Ephesians 6:10)
- Pray through the items of God's armor including praying at all times in the Spirit and being alert.
- Spend some time thanking God for His incredible love that has never and will never let you go.

Where should you go from here?

I have written two other devotionals that I believe contain critical information you need to maintain your walk with the Lord.

**31 Ways Your Father Says; “I Love You!”** – This work will walk you through 31 passages of Scripture that teach the reality of the Father’s love for you. Many people struggle with a “father wound” because of how they were treated by their father. Learn of your true Father’s unconditional love for you and let that truth bring deep healing.

**Unconditionally Surrendered to the Spirit** – In the Church for the past 3 decades different beliefs regarding the Spirit has divided churches. Some think that the Trinity is the Father, the Son and the Bible and are afraid of the Spirit. How ridiculous is that? The one Jesus said would be our comforter and our counselor is a cause for concern? This devotional will help you better understand the third member of the Trinity and learn how He indwells every believer and is critical to being transformed into people who can walk in purity.