

Battle Summary

We all must realize that every Christian can and will be tempted to sin. The Apostle Paul had the same struggle as we do with temptation and sin. In Romans 7:18-20 Paul says,

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

The Bible also says in James 5:17 that *Elias [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are....* Although we are a new creation in Christ as believers, the power of sin still indwells the body...it is in you, but not you. Before salvation, sin defined your very being; at salvation, that old sinner was crucified with Christ...holy and righteous now define your true nature. This new identity and relationship to sin is defined below.

Reference	Your True Identity "in Christ"	Your Relationship to Sin	Reference
2 Corin. 5:17	I am a new creation	I am free from sin	Rom. 6:7
Eph. 1:1	I am a saint	Sin shall not rule over me	Rom. 6:14
Eph. 4:24	I am righteous and holy	I am forgiven (past-present-future)	Col. 1:14

Christians are "drawn away...and enticed" to sin as God given needs/desires are thought to be met outside of God's design. The sin often comes when we believe the lie that we must take control or responsibility for meeting these needs our own way. Externally, satan and his evil forces work on us to doubt God; the world has people, activities, sensual sights and sounds, places, etc. that promise to meet our needs. The internal temptations that confront us are patterns or ways of thinking developed over time and in varying intensities as a result of our disobedience and sin. These flesh patterns involve desires we feel and experience in the body as well as our thoughts and emotions. Together, these tempters work to deceive us in willful sin against God.

Most often (if not always), the battle begins in the mind. When we are at the point of temptation to act or behave, the battle of the mind (believing a lie) has already been lost. How do we respond? Whenever you find yourself conscience of the struggle:

1. Affirm your identity in Christ and relationship to sin ("I am dead to _____, no matter how I feel")
2. Ask Christ to manifest His victorious life in this situation (Heb. 4:16)
3. By faith, walk in obedience (whether "denying the lie" or "renewing the mind", etc.) trusting that Christ is overcoming this temptation through you (see "Fighting the Battle" on the "Battle Blueprint")

How does it work without me drumming up my resources and willpower to fight? Remember, "the battle is the Lord's." When you give-up on your attempts to fight and by faith depend on Christ alone, the omnipotent resources of God overcome through you...a supernatural victory!

When we do sin, praise God we have a way to restore our fellowship with Him. If you should fall, repent and confess your sin quickly and make restitution if necessary. Remember—you are already forgiven IN CHRIST. Confession does not gain forgiveness, it restores intimate fellowship. If you find some sins continually defeating you: 1. Continue to affirm who you are in Christ 2. Bind satan in the name and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in that specific area and command him to leave 3. By faith, take back for the Lord any ground given to satan 4. Memorize and meditate on scripture allowing the Holy Spirit to renew your mind 5. Seek counsel as the Lord leads (James 4:10)

If we choose to continue in willful, unconfessed sin our conscience can be seared (numbed), our Christian faith and testimony become of little value to others, and God will discipline us (Heb. 12:4-13) even to the point of death in extreme cases (1 John 5:16); the worst consequence, however, is a "lost" intimacy with Christ. I thank God, however, that even if we sear our conscience and have damaged our testimony, God can quicken our hearts and rebuild our life and testimony for His glory when we come in repentance and confession to Him. We may still bear the consequences of our sin, but our intimacy and service to God is restored.

Although Christians can and do choose to sin, the inconsistent Christian life is not the normal Christian life. The normal Christian life is one of victory because "Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Since Christ IS my life (Col. 3:3), His life is victorious. We must learn to appropriate Christ by surrendering our will and allowing Him to manifest His life through our every experience. Our focus must not be on the avoidance of sin but rather the victory we have in Christ. I thank God that the power of sin over the believer has been broken by the resurrection of Christ. It's my prayer that each believer will walk intimately with Christ so as to realize the power available to live and walk consistently in victory!