

GRACE AND SIN

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Many Christians believe that a genuine Christian should not sin at all after regeneration, otherwise, he cannot be considered as a Christian. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the believer is saved by grace and not by works, though he continues in sin, he remains a child of God and saved – his lifestyle does not matter. What exactly is the true teaching of the Bible on the subject of grace and sin? Can a Christian sin? Does his act of sin nullify his salvation? One who claims to have been saved and continues to live in sin as he used to before conversion, can he be regarded as truly saved? Can a believer lose his salvation? What about this “once saved, always saved” teaching?

SAVED BY GRACE

Salvation is an act of God’s grace shown to a believer. It is the deliverance of man from sin and the consequences of sin. Salvation is a free gift of God through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ of His life on the cross of Calvary. It is not obtained by the keeping of the laws of God or self-righteousness, but by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and confessing same with the mouth.

Eph 2:4-9

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved . 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

NIV

Rom 10:10-13

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved ."

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Rom 3:20

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

KJV

It must be made clear that the law was given to the Jews and not to the rest of the world; and since God desires to save the whole world, salvation by the keeping of the Jewish laws has to be set aside to make room for other nations. Faith in Christ atoning work is

the means of salvation for those who desire to be saved. Moreover, it is very difficult to keep the law perfectly to be saved by it.

Rom 3:27-31

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

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Salvation is by faith in Christ and not by works or deed of righteousness. It is the grace (unmerited mercy and favour) of God that saves man. Salvation is a gift from God and not merited because of our sinfulness. No man or woman is qualified to be saved. We are all qualified for destruction. But grace brought us salvation.

Salvation is in three phases:

1. Spiritual salvation – regeneration at the moment of receiving Jesus Christ. At this point the person is said to be saved because he has been given the power to become a son of God. It is instant. It is once and for all. This experience makes him one with God and energizes him to live the life of God.
2. Soul salvation – Renewal of the mind which leads to transformation of character and lifestyle. It is a continuous exercise. It is till death. The word of God and the Holy Spirit are the agents of mind renewal.
3. Salvation of the body – the resurrection of the righteous dead. At the resurrection the mortal body puts on immortality. This completes the salvation of the believer where his spirit with the soul and body as one will now be with his God forever.

WHY WE ARE SAVED

1. We are saved in Christ Jesus to live for God's glory and honour, and not for ourselves anymore. We are saved to live the life of Christ here on earth. We are saved not to do our will but God's will.

2 Cor 5:15

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

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2. We are not saved because we do good works, but we are saved in Christ Jesus to do good works. The life of Christ received at conversion energizes us to do good works and manifest the character of God at all times in all things.

Eph 2:10

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

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3. We are saved to reign in life and not to remain under the dominion of the devil and evil habits and character. Sin and Satan does not have dominion over the believer. It is only what you permit to dominate you that dominate you. If you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

Rev 5:9-10

9 And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

KJV

Rom 5:17

17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

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Luke 10:18-19

19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

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Rom 6:14

14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

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Col 1:13-14

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

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4. We are saved to represent God on earth and be His witnesses and instruments of change and administration. We are saved to bring others to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved to become world changers. We are saved to play the role of the "light of the world" and "salt of the earth". So the world in its present state cannot do without us, so we cannot afford to fail. We are saved to stand up for God and make sure that righteousness reigns and His will be done on earth.

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

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2 Cor 5:20

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

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Matt 18:18

18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

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THE CHRISTIAN AND SIN

The Christian though free from sin does sin sometimes out of weakness. God understands that there is always a crisis at the curve of change – the conflict between the spirit and the sinful lifestyle we have been programmed to live by the sinful nature. So, he made provision for forgiveness of sins for the believer who will sincerely repent from his heart.

1 John 1:5-10

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. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

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The above passage explains that no one in Christ practices sin at will. The Christian walks in the light of God's word and not in the dark. He walks in the light of the nature of Christ that he now has. Sin loses its appeal to him. Sin becomes utterly sinful to him, and he avoids it. The scripture went further to declare that anyone who claims to know and have fellowship with God and walks in darkness (sin) is a liar. So, the Christian who lives as though he is still a sinner and claims to be saved is deceiving himself. He is not a Christian yet, but a pretender.

On the other hand, the same scripture acknowledges that the believer does sin and if he claims he does not sin, then he is a liar. The Apostle John recognizes the struggles of the believer with the life he is used to and the temporary defeat that he suffers in his quest to be completely free and reign in life (vs 7-10). He went further to explain that God has provided for this failure by His willingness to forgive us each time we fail and confess our failure from our hearts.

There is a willful sin and there is a sin out of weakness. Willful sin is a sign of hard-heartedness and unwillingness to repent and follow the Lord with the whole of one's

heart. A truly converted Christian does not sin willfully as Apostle John taught in the passage we just considered. He only sins out of weakness, not because he wants to but a little bit weak in manifesting his freedom in Christ. His failure does not nullify his salvation. Each time he fails, he feels very sad and determines more than ever to overcome and walk in holiness. But the willful sinner does not feel any remorse but always explains it away when confronted. His conscience seems dead. He will do it again and again without repenting of the very evil act. Such a person cannot be said to be saved but pretending to be a believer.

Rom 6:1-4

6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 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.

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Apostle Paul by the Spirit of God reveals in the above question and the answer given that grace is not to be abused. Grace is for those who want to be free from sin and not for those who are not willing to be free and serve God through Jesus Christ. That God's grace is available to forgive and free from sin does not mean that we should continue in sin without a definite resolve to be free. He went further to explain that the sinful nature has died in the life of the believer, and the believer now has the power to live the life of God through Christ Jesus.

That a believer has confessed Jesus Christ as Saviour does not mean he will make it to heaven except he continues in faith and walks in righteousness.

Matt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

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The Lord himself tells us that not all who confesses Him as Lord will enter the kingdom, but only those who do His will, and did not walk in evil. This means that a man may be saved for a season and later lose his salvation because he continued in sin or went back to his evil ways after some time. The Lord is addressing His followers or disciples and not just the Jews. Anyone who calls Him Lord must have been born again. No one will use His name to cast out demons, prophesy and do miracles without being born again or having known Him as Lord and Saviour. Yet, only those who do His will and depart from evil will enter His kingdom. Confessing Jesus as Saviour alone is not enough to enter the Kingdom. One must depart from sin and stay faithful and loyal to Christ and His word as long as he lives.

This proves that a believer can lose his salvation if he returns to his sinful ways or refuse to walk with the Lord in righteousness. It also proves that the theory of once saved always saved is not completely true. It is true only for those who continue with the Lord in faithful service and holy living in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Those who willfully continue in sin or backslide later back into their sinful life will not make it to heaven.

In the letter of Jesus Christ to the seven Churches in the book of Revelation, the Lord kept talking about overcoming. He made it clear that only the overcomers (those who hold on and continue in faithfulness that will make it to heaven and be rewarded. The believer has to continue believing and walking in obedience till he closes his eyes in death to be declared an overcomer.

Rev 2:11

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

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The second death being spoken of in this passage is the eternal separation from God into the lake of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth forever. Only the overcomer in Christ escapes it. The believer who falls by the way side or goes back to his former sinful ways for any and every reason is not an overcomer and will suffer the second death.

Rev 3:5-6

5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

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In this passage God promises not to blot out the name of the faithful follower who overcomes temptations and trials, proving in the process that a man's name can be blotted out from the book of life if the person turns his back on God and His salvation. You must show yourself willing and ready for the salvation of God. Grace belongs to God and willingness to be saved and remain free from sin comes from you.

CONCLUSION

All you need is to walk with God with all your heart and walk out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Phil 2:12-13

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

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While relying on the grace of God, you must be determined to be faithful to your commitment to follow and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. That you have confessed Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and you have joined a Church does not mean you will go to heaven if you don't turn away from your sins. That you have been saved, healed, baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit, and you prophesy and do miracles in Jesus name does not mean you will enter heaven except you depart from sin and truly walk with God in faithful obedience to His teachings and principles. You must bear fruit of repentance all the days of your life. You can't be enjoying sin and claim to be saved at the same time. It is either you love God and hate sin or you love sin and hate God.

James 4:4-8

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."*

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

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If you have not given your life to Jesus Christ, do so now. If you used to be a believer, but right now you have backslidden, return to the Lord right now. Pray this prayer out loud and God will forgive you in Christ, cleanse you and save you.

“Lord Jesus Christ, I believe in you with all my heart and I confess that you died for my sins and was raised from the dead after the third day for my salvation. I repent of my sins and call on you today to save me and become my Lord and Saviour. Thank you for saving me and coming into my heart. Reign in me Lord and keep me thirsty for you and your word forever in Jesus name, amen”.

Email or call and let me know you prayed this prayer from your heart. Visit or Church and let's get to meet you and help you grow in the Lord. God save and keep you in Jesus Christ name, amen.