

Our Relationship to Sin

by William MacDonald

A child of God can sin, but it is not characteristic of their life, and God has made provision for sin through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 50:14

Scripture: Hebrews 10:26

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing the conflicting emotions and struggles that believers often face in their spiritual journey. They describe feeling both great and clean, but also afraid and tempted by sin. The speaker emphasizes the need to reckon oneself dead to sin and surrender control to God through Jesus Christ. They acknowledge the ongoing battle against sin and the frustration that comes with falling into temptation. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's love and the hope of being transformed to be like Him when He appears. The speaker encourages believers to purify themselves and abide in Him to overcome sin.

Transcript

Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Father, we've been hearing this afternoon about the gifts that you have given, and we would indeed pray for each one of us that we might not go to life missing, that which you call us, or deliver us from chasing butterflies or playing with bubbles. We just pray, Lord, that we will indeed stir up the gift that is in us. We pray to you that we might walk with an ungrieved, holy spirit.

We pray that we might not relegate him to some dispensational pigeonhole, but that we might realize that he is our true parishioner, and that we might honor him and obey him. We thank you, Lord, today that you've not given us the spirit of fear, the power of love, and the sound mind, and we just pray that you will deliver us from that fear of man which brings us near, and we pray that we might go forth with all the holy boldness of the spirit of God. We ask that you guide us in the gospel that you've entrusted to us, and pray that we might be faithful in our stewardship of it, and then, by day, give us more of an evangelistic spirit.

Then we pray, Lord, let us open the crown as our Savior did, so that our eyes would tears grow dim, and let us view with pity the wandering sheep and love them for love of him. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen. Sir, I'm going to be pleased to 1 John, chapter 3, and we'll begin reading with the first verse.

1 John, chapter 3, and verse 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath his hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.

Do you know that he who hath manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin? Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Still, children, let no man deceive you.

He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. On this purpose the son of God would manifest that he might destroy the work of the devil.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

So this is a message that he heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was not that wicked one, and slew his brother. Nor, of course, slew he him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. For thinking about the text of life, as I found in John's first epistle, and he comes this afternoon to a very difficult one.

If you squirm, as I read those verses of Scripture, like verse 9. Verses of Scripture that have been the torture and torment of many sincere, conscientious children of God. We saw last night that one of the marks of a true believer is that he obeys the commandments of the Lord. This characterizes his life.

He is an obedient child of God. And we saw in the story that a second test of life is that one who has been fully born again of the Spirit of God does not love the world. He walks in separation from the world, and all is lost away.

And this afternoon we want to think about the relationship of the child of God to sin, because that, of course, is what John is speaking about here. Now, when you read those verses in the King James Version, it certainly sounds as if a child of God doesn't sin, period. But that creates a problem, because in the same epistle it says that Christians do sin, and that leaves us with a problem.

I'd like to just put together the verses that are found in this letter, and see if we can bring the subject into focus. First of all, in 1 John Chapter 2, verse 1, John says, My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. Part number 1, God's will is that the believer should not sin.

Now this is very important. God doesn't say in that verse, My little children, don't sin any more than you have to. Sin just a little? He doesn't say that.

You know why? Because it would be God if he said that. God is holy, and God is righteous, and God is pure, and God can't approve anything. And if that verse of Scripture says, My little children, just sin a little, I know it wasn't the Bible, and I know it wasn't inspired by God.

God's standard for his people is absolute protection. It has to be. But the verse doesn't stop there, does it? It says, And if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

In other words, God's will for me is that I should not sin, and if I do sin, God has made provision for me. And that provision is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Notice, He's still my Father. Some say we have a man who came with God. That would be true, too.

Well, I think it's very significant that John says, We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He's still the child of God, even if the child of God does sin. The eternal security of the believer.

And he is a propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world. Propitiation. Hard word.

Here's a helpful word. What does it mean? Try to keep it simple. To me, the word propitiation means a means of obtaining mercy.

It's very simple. It's not very theological, but it's true just the same. Propitiation is a means of obtaining mercy.

So, it says, God be propitiated, God be merciful to me, a sinner. It's the same word that you have mercy speak in the Old Testament. And God has found a means of showing mercy to us on the basis of an acceptable sacrifice.

That sacrifice's name is Jesus. He's a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. I like the way that John says it here, as if any man sins.

He doesn't even say when any man sins. He says, as if any man sins. And I heard Dr. Ironside Smulders on Thursday night using the illustration of a fire escape.

There's a fire escape on the building. It's not your usual means of entry or access, but it's there, available, in case you need it. And here you have a little fire escape in a sense.

It's not the usual thing for the child of God, but it's there in case you need it. If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. Now, that verse teaches that Christians do sin, doesn't it? It teaches that Christians do sin.

Not only that, but in 1 John chapter 1 and verse 8, it says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Verse 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

So, here are three verses in 1 John chapter 1 and chapter 2 that say a Christian does sin. And yet, in chapter 3, we come to those verses that seem to say, If a person sins, he hasn't been born of God. So, how do we solve this dilemma? Well, sometimes you go back to verse 3 again and read the verses as they are in the King James.

Now, there are different ways of handling these verses. Some Bible students believe that those verses say that we have a new nature that cannot sin, period. Well, that's true.

We do have a new nature that cannot sin, but is that what John is referring to here? Personally, I don't think so. I may be wrong, but I don't think so. I'll tell you why.

It isn't the nature that sins, it's the person that sins. And, as I can't say, Oh well, sorry about that, it's my old nature. I'm proud of my old nature, but God holds me, feeling that I'm responsible for that, not the old nature.

The person is responsible for the sin, and I cannot shift the blame. I cannot have the buck. I cannot explain it in a way that's being unnecessary.

But another way of explaining these verses has to do with the sense of the word, and that is what I find most satisfying in an explanation. In other words, whoever is born of God does not practice sin. Sin is not the dominating influence of his life.

Sin is not characteristic of his behavior. Go back to verse 8. He that practices sin, presence, we might call it presence, continuous tendency, everything in a non-technical nature, he that practices sin is of the devil. So, the devil sinneth from the beginning.

It's been a matter of practice with the devil, and it's a matter of practice with all his followers as well. Whoever is born of God, verse 9, does not practice sin, for his seeds remain within him, and he cannot go on sinning because he is born of God. So, although Christians do sin, it isn't that which characterizes them.

In other words, John says, if I see a man and his life is just one story of sin, forget it. He isn't saved. He's never been born of God.

John says, Christians have this difference. Christians confess their sin. When they sin, they come to the Lord and confess their sin.

If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin, cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and our sins are forgiven, he says, for his name's sake. You know, even this creates a problem in the minds of many, and I'm speaking especially to young believers who are insensitive, who have a soft heart before the Lord, want to please the Lord in all things, and I'm going to tell a story in terms of a young fellow named Dale. And if anybody here has the name Dale, it's completely coincidental.

I would choose something that nobody here has. But, Dale was in an agony of despair. It was about a descending sin in his life.

He had had it before his conversion, and now, three years later, he's still battling the ding-dong battle of sin. And I'm going to let him tell the story. He says, I know I'm a Christian.

At least, he says, I've done everything that the Bible says to be. I'm a Christian, and if I'm not one, I don't know what more I can do. I trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

He's my only hope for heaven. I turned over control of my life to him, and he says, that isn't enough. I don't know what else to do.

But, the trouble is, I don't have victory in my life. I'm fighting a battle against sin. Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down.

I go along for a while thinking that this Goliath has been conquered in my life. And then the temptation recurs. And my first reaction is to grit my teeth and resist.

But pleasurable fantasies float through my mind, and pretty soon I'm on fire with passion, and I yield to the temptation, and I fall flat on my face. And that momentary pleasure is followed by shame, and guilt, and remorse, and frustration. I'm angry, angry at myself.

After a while, I pick myself up from the mud hole, and I confess my sin to the Lord, and I'm determined before God it's never going to happen again. Everything is great. I feel clean.

I've regained my song. I can lift up my head and face the world, unafraid. And things go along so smoothly and so long that I feel that at last I've found complete deliverance.

And then Satan comes along and stops me with a double whammy. The avalanche awakens and refuses to be silenced, and pressures build up within me, and the temptation seems to be irreducible. I know I should yield.

One part of me doesn't want to do it. Another part does. I'm a moral schizophrenic.

This is what I am. I'm a split personality, and all my best resolutions crumble, and my strongest determinations dissolve, and history repeats itself. The scenario is disgustingly similar.

There I am on the ropes again, a moral failure. I hate myself. Dale says, I wish I was dead.

Time passes, and the scalding shame decreases, and I go back to the foot of the cross, and I cry out my confession all over again. And I wonder, how often will God forgive me before he gets fed up with me? Well, there's no other way for me, so in spite of all my depression and frustration and discouragement, I claim 1 John 1, 9 again. We confess our sins, faithful and just to forgive us our sins, cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Dale says, if I ever had any self-confidence, it's gone now. I determine I'm going to walk softly before the Lord all the days of my life, and I'm filled with horror that it might ever happen again. Eventually, I feel free to engage in Christian service again.

In fact, I literally try to busy myself in service so much that I won't have any temptations of sin, and it seems to work that way for a while. But, oh no. The overpowering passion is back again, and it's screaming for satisfaction.

I'm not ignorant of the fact. I know what I ought to do. I know what it's wrong to do.

I'm not being deceitful, and I go ahead and I sin because I want to. I don't want to, but I want to, and I go ahead and do it. You might say that I sin willfully.

And, you know, just by accident, I opened my Bible, and I just happened to open to Hebrews chapter 12. It's really strange. Hebrews chapter 12...10, sorry.

And, I read those verses in 26 and 27. Hebrews 10, verses 26 and 27, it says, "...for if we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary." I wonder what that means. I've sinned willfully.

These verses say there remains no more sacrifice for sin. So, there it is. It seems to me I've committed the unpardonable sin.

This plunges me into dark despondency. I try to square my committing the unpardonable sin with all that I've ever believed about the eternal security of a believer. What's safe, always safe.

And, by now, I'm living in a chamber of horrors. Finally, in desperation, I cast myself on the Lord. I find the words of Psalm 51 to be the best words that I can come.

They seem to fit my case best, and so I use them in expressing my repentance and confession. "...Against thee, the only, have I sinned, and done the evil in thy sight. Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture turned into the drought." I can't say that there is instant renewal.

Maybe God has forgiven me, but I have trouble forgiving myself. Maybe God has forgotten, but I'm haunted by the memory. And I know that time doesn't heal all things, but it does seem that with the passing of time, it helps me to get over my guilt and shame.

And whenever I think of my besetting sin, I recoil with horror. I praise the Lord for victory every day He gives it to me. And after a while, life is worth living again.

And then, Dale takes a brief trip to Hawaii. And it's really a vacation. He sleeps late, and he overheats, and he oversleeps, and in general, he tampers his body.

And way over there in Hawaii, the old temptation is back again, seemingly more urgent than ever. His spirit is willing, but his flesh is weak, and his resolve soon melts. The way from home, no one here knows him.

And he takes the insane plunge and sins. And after the momentary high comes the spiritual low. He's dazed, reeling, and numb.

And then he goes out and he turns on the radio. You know, it's a Christian program. And the man is speaking from Galatians 5, 19-21, which says that the people who practice the sins listed there will never inherit the kingdom of God.

And the man also turns to 1 John and reads those verses that we read in 1 John 3, verses 8-9. But the man reading on the radio paraphrases them. He reads them something like this.

He that practices sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God does not go on sinning, for his sins remain with him, and he cannot go on sinning because he's born of God.

And so Dale begins to think, what does that mean to me? How often times do I have to do it before it becomes a practice? Because it says that if you practice sin, you're not born of God. And the old windmill is going to work in his mind again. It really seems to Dale that he has practiced this sin.

And if this is so, that means he's not saved. But he believes he is saved. Christ is his only hope for heaven.

What else can he do? He doesn't know what to do. He doesn't know what to think. His mind is tired, and his spirit is exasperated, and he feels rotten to the core.

In fact, he feels paralyzed as far as any usefulness for God is concerned, and wonders which way he shall turn. What would you say to help Dale? Well, there are several things we can say. First of all, I think I would take Dale back to Hebrews chapter 10, and talk for a minute on the willful sin.

Hebrews 10, verse 26-27. If we sin willfully, as if we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour thee and return. And I think I would explain to Dale that the willful sin of Hebrews chapter 10 is a special sin that no believer can commit.

It's the sin of apostasy, very well identified in this chapter, and also in chapter 6 of this same principle. This is a very serious sin. In fact, it's a fatal sin.

It's a sin from which there is no turning back. Verse 29, it seems to me, defines the sin. It says, Well, how much sure of punishment shall he be? Shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done death's fight unto the Spirit of God? Did you do that, Dale? Did you trample underfoot the Son of God? Did you count the blood of the covenant, wherewith you were sanctified an unholy thing? Did you do death's fight unto the Spirit of Christ? Dale said, No, I didn't do those things.

That's true. This is a special sin. It can't be committed today.

It is being committed today by people who profess Christianity. Maybe they're baptized and received as an associate of a local church, but subsequently they repudiate, maliciously repudiate Christ, deny the major doctrines of the faith, throw over Christianity maliciously. The Bible says it's not over for a person like that.

I'm sorry to say, I have known people like that. I have worked with people like that, and I've never known one ever to be repudiated. But that is not what Dale has done.

It's not right for Dale to go back to Hebrews chapter 10 and put himself there for that local sin. That is a special sin, the sin of apostasy. Some years ago, there was a man in one of the major cities of Canada, who seemed to have a spectacular ministry for Christ.

Seemed to have. Apparently, people were saved under his ministry. Some friend came to him and said, You know, you're really good.

Would you be better if you went to such and such a seminary? And he went to a seminary, and he told the United States that the veritable test house of his fidelity. And when he came out, he didn't believe anything. And he has repudiated Christ.

He's repudiated the gospel of the Lord Jesus that Brother Dan has been speaking about. He's turned his back completely on the Savior. The sin of apostasy.

Dale hasn't committed the sin of apostasy. He has not committed the willful sin. Well then, how would you answer his question, How many times do you have to commit a sin before it becomes practice? Because here in 1 John chapter 3, it speaks about the practice of sin.

Well, you know, that's an interesting thing. God doesn't tell Dale how many times. You know what? If God said 50, Dale would do it 49.

So would you. So God doesn't define in his word practices. But let me tell you something.

When John is speaking about the practice of sin, he's speaking about a man who can sin and it doesn't hurt. The sin. In other words, Dale's very attitude, in the way I have described it, is proof that as far as John is concerned, he's not practicing the sin.

It isn't just a number of times he's committed, but his attitude in committing it and his attitude after he commits it. And John would remind us today that the Christian did not sin last. But he does sin less, doesn't he? The Christian is not sinless, but he does sin less.

And it is true with every child of God that sin is not the dominating influence in his life. Sin is not what characterizes him. Sin is the exceptional, not the common.

Very important to remember that. When a believer sins, he is filled with guilt and shame and remorse and sorrow and discouragement. When a believer sins, he's ashamed of himself of that sin.

He thinks, That's what nails my Savior to the cross. And it is true. It's exactly the thing that nails the Savior to the cross.

And he doesn't feel happy about it. And when a true believer sins, he wants to go to the Lord in confession of that sin. Confession is one of the inborn instincts of the child of God.

He feels dirty and he wants to feel clean. And he knows how to get clean. And that's to go and confess the sin and forsake it.

Daniel does not want to practice sin as a way of life. And if you'll pardon me saying so, he doesn't sin with the same freedom he did before he was saved. I sometimes say he doesn't sin with a full consent as well.

Well, Dale might dispute that with me. But there's something which is true, just the same. That that tug-of-war going on inside him all the time.

So, I would say that when we think of the practice of sin in 1 John, it's not just a question of how many times you do it, Dale, but it's what your attitude is at the time and what it is afterward. Well, what are you going to tell Dale? Well, I would tell him, first of all, there are some things you ought to know if you don't already know them. And the first thing I would tell Dale is, Dale, your problem is not me.

We have a tendency to look at other people and say, well, he doesn't know anything about what I'm going through. He is on cloud number nine all the time. No ding-dong battle with sin in his life.

1 Corinthians 10-13, there hath no temptation taken thee but such as is common to man. I tell you, the good thing to remember, everyone has a conflict between the old nature and the new nature. And this conflict is fierce.

And it will continue as long as we're in the world. That's the first thing I tell Dale. But I tell Dale this, Dale, there's no sin in the book that God cannot give you deliverance from.

Young Eric say, I had to do it. Because when you say that, you're saying the Holy Spirit of God isn't powerful enough to enable me to resist that temptation. We get into wrong ways of thinking, and wrong ways of thinking lead to wrong ways of life.

Wrong doctrine leads to wrong duty. And he said, well, I had to do it. The devil made me do it.

Now, don't say that. No case is too hard for the Lord. And a believer should never lapse into hopelessness or despair on this shore.

Third, I would tell Dale, Dale, there are two extremes you want to avoid in your thinking. One is to think lightly about sin. All sin is serious in the sight of God.

You know, for many years, I used to wonder, it's funny this thought comes to your mind, I used to wonder, oh, poor Moses there. What a time he had with the people, you know. And finally, in anger, he strikes the rock.

And God says, okay, Moses, you're not going to do so bad. Just strike a rock. I used to wonder about that.

Why would that man, after a lifetime of faithfulness and service to the Lord, why was he kept out of the front of the land? Because he struck a rock. He said, well, he destroyed the tithe. I'm not sure if he's been kept out of the land to destroy the tithe.

He probably does. No sin is light. Any sin is serious, and it is true.

I really think that's the answer. So, Dale, don't think of any sin as being light. All sin is against God, first and foremost, in its seriousness.

But, it's also possible to go to the other extreme and immerse yourself in uncontrollable guilt when you don't have to, when the way is there for you to come to God. Yes, certainly. Under no circumstances, Dale, should you think that you have to sin.

We all do sin, but it's wrong to say that we have to. And Dale should really know that if he trusts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, he is eternally secure. No sheep of Christ will ever perish.

On the other side of that point is the believer has to sin and get away with it. We have our internal security, but God still has his woodshed. And sin affects every tissue of the human body.

Do you believe that? It does. Years ago, the British Medical Journal had an article that said, there is no tissue of the human body wholly removed from the spirit. Meaning that man is one unit, spirit, soul, and body, and one part or two affect all of it.

Is that really true? Sin affects the totality of man. Remember that, Dale. You can't sin and get away with it.

Dale Varadarajan was practicing sin, and for obvious reasons of scriptures, don't have a limit. God doesn't condone any sin at all. I would say there's a vast difference between, I would tell Dale, there's a vast difference between his experience and the experience of the average man in the world.

In Dale's case, he does not recognize sin as his rightful master. No child of God would do that. Though we yield ourselves servants to obey characteristically, we are his servants to obey.

But Dale does not want to practice sin as a way of life. He wants to turn away from it, and he agonizes over it. I used that word in the very beginning.

He was in an agony over it. Well, I was kind of angry, and agonizing over sin, and practicing it in the scriptural sense, in the 1 John 3 sense of the word. Dale wonders how often God will forgive him.

And we all wonder, how often before God gets fed up with me? I get great help from this, that Peter went to the Lord and said, Lord, my brother repents against me. How often shall I forgive him? Seven times? Jesus said, I didn't say seven times, but seventy times seven. Now, seventy times seven are 490, but the Lord didn't mean 490.

He meant indefinitely. Because if you forgave a man 490 times, I think you'd forgive him 491, wouldn't you? Yeah. 490 means indefinitely.

For me to forgive an offending brother indefinitely, how often will he forgive me? Will he do less for me than he's commanding me to do for my fellow brother? And, of course, the answer is, he will forgive me. Does that make any one sense? When I think of the cost of my sin, I want to turn from it. What a wonderful thing it is to know that when we confess and forsake our sin, the slate is clear.

I could not live another week and go on in Christian service at 1 John 1.9 of the book. It's a wonderful verse. If you haven't memorized it, memorize it, and it will become a great blessing in your life.

James says, I know God has forgiven me, but I cannot in the form of foolishness forgive myself. I have to. And, you know, that's a wonderful thing, how an omniscient God can forget you, doesn't it? How he can cast my sins behind his back in the depths of the sea as far as the east is removed from the west.

He'll remember them no more. That's a wonderful thing. Now, I'm not going to stay awake at night remembering what God has forgotten.

Then there are some things that Dale should do. As soon as he's conscious that sin has come into his life, he should confess and forsake it. And that keeps him pleased.

It really does. And he should yield himself to the Lord continually, turning over his life, the members of his body to the Lord, to be used as he sees fit. He should stay close to the Word of God, spending time in the Scriptures, becoming a man, a woman of the Book, as it may be, reading it, memorizing it, studying it, and obeying it.

I'll tell you there's great strength in that. And he should pray continually. Pray continually.

He should cry out, Lord, Lord, make me as holy as is possible for a man to be on this night of heaven. Isn't that a good prayer? I didn't make that up. But it's a good prayer.

Lord, make me as holy as is possible for a man to be on this night of heaven. It's a mysterious merging of the divine and the human. We should pray that the opportunity to sin and the temptation would never coincide.

Sometimes you have the opportunity, but you don't have the temptation. Sometimes you have the temptation, but you don't have the opportunity. It's when they come together that it's bad.

Ask the Lord that the temptation to sin and the opportunity to sin would never coincide. Pray, as a man of God, of old, pray that we might not die. We could owe sin.

I think it's very important to keep busy for the Lord. That's where I invite us to do it. Idol hands are the devil's workshop still, aren't they? It says concerning David, at the time of the year when kings went to war, David stayed at home.

Did you know what happened? I bet she's the host there. The fire of passion boiled over. Pretty soon, poor David, he'll feel adultery, and then, to add to his shame, a murder.

Bad things when young people sit around tipping coats all day. Control of the plotline is basic. We control what we do.

Every one of us is a king or a queen reigning over a realm. And we can control what we think. In the pursuit of holiness, things like TV, movies, newsstand magazines are not assets.

They don't help me along that line. Occupation with Christ does help. We always unveil faith, the holiness of the Lord.

Even by the Spirit. Occupation with self brings... Occupation with others brings disappointment. Occupation with Christ brings delight.

Increase the number of moments you think about him. Dale should choose his companions with care. Evil companionships corrupt good manners, Paul says, writing to the Corinthians.

Cardinal friends reduce our spiritual temperature. Better to cultivate the acquaintance of strong spiritual Christians. I recommend to young people, everyone who wants to make history for God, have someone, an older brother or a sister who is a spiritual mentor to whom you can go with your problems, to whom you feel free to open up and go with your problems about the Bible.

I've tried to do that all through my life, and how much I like that, by Charles Van Ryn and Robert Little, who were willing to sit down with me and talk things over, and help me over the rough spots. And then I would text, tell Dale, Dale, we're fine. You just can't mess around.

If thy right hand offended thee, cut it off. If thy right eye offended thee, pluck it out. Better to go into like maiming than to go to hell with all your members.

Better that Joseph should lose his coat than surrender it to the seducer. Better that he should put a few healthy miles between himself and that wicked woman. Better to lose your coat than win the crown.

That's what Joseph did. And then I would tell Dale, tiny Dale, day by day reckon yourself to be dead indeed of the sin. This is what the Scripture tells us.

The Scripture tells me that positionally, in Christ, I am dead to sin. And it should become a matter in everyday life. If I had four young fellows back there right now with a coffin and a corpse in it, and they brought the coffin down.

I think you'd all sit up straight. And one day I should get down and I should start speaking to the corpse. Sam, speak to me.

No one answered. Sam, let's go out on the town. No one answered.

Dead. That's the way I should be, the sinful temptation. That's exactly the way I should be, folks.

When sinful temptations come knocking at the door, it's simply fun to put a corpse with me. Likewise, reckoning all through yourself to be dead indeed of the sin of the life of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, what are the marks of a believer? He doesn't practice sin.

Sin is not the dominating thing in his life. I mean, he does sin. It's a shame to pick those up and hasten to the Lord to attest the sin, to make it right, and to go on in happy fellowship with Him.

I hope this will be helpful to some of the young people, as I was young once, and went through all the battles, and it's still there. It's still there. The battles are still there.

But so is the Lord, and He is sufficient. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for your precious words. We realize that some of these verses, taken out of their context, can prove very troublesome to us, and we know that the devil can use them to produce discouragement in our hearts, and we're reminded today that you never use a discouraged man.

And so we pray that we might get our doctrine right on these things, and that our duty might be right to know experimentally what it means to reckon ourselves dead and beaten in the line of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us to be men and women of God. Lord, if we're never great orators, if we're never out in the public eye, we can just, Lord, be holy men and women.

How well satisfied we will be, if you ask us. And now, again, we give thanks for the provisions that are made for our recurring physical needs, and we just pray that you will bless the food to our new savings. Bless and reward those who have prepared it.

We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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