

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Living Free from Sin

Don't misunderstand the title of this article. It is not meant to suggest that some of us live completely apart from sin. The truth is, we all sin from time to time. John wrote, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)."*

As Paul once suggested, we all sin and come short of the glory of God at times (Romans 3:23). This being admitted, it is still true that we can live free from sin. As Christians, we do not have to be under the cruel dominion of sin. In fact, if we are really Christians, we have escaped sin, or as Paul put it, we have become dead to sin (Romans 6:2). Paul goes on to suggest that we, as Christians, having been separated from sin by the blood of Christ, i.e., by being baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3), are free from sin (Romans 6:7). Paul elaborates on this truth even more in verses 17 and 18: *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."*

God has made it possible, then, for man to live free from sin. Indeed, living free from sin is the only way one can make it to heaven. There are two requirements that must be met in order for one to live free from sin.

One Must Obey the Gospel

Once a person sins, there is no other way to be free from sin than obeying the gospel. The gospel contains words that are able to save the soul (James 1:21). When one obeys the gospel of Christ, his sins are washed away and his soul is purified (1 Peter 1:22). The Greek word for purify here means *"to make clean."* When a person sins against the God of heaven, his soul is spotted and unclean. Obedience to the gospel cleanses the spotted soul and allows one to be accepted by God once again.

God's plan involves both God's work of grace and man's labor of love. Purification is made possible only because God was willing to send His only begotten Son to pay the price for man's iniquities. However, it is clear that man plays an active role in being purified. Peter said, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..."* We take note of the fact that man must purify himself. That's not to ignore the fact that without God's work purification would have been impossible; but it does emphasize man's part in the process. How does man purify himself? Peter said it is by obeying the truth, i.e., the gospel of Christ. Until man obeys the gospel of Christ, he is still in the bondage of sin and under the captivity of Satan. But, when one calls on the Lord by submitting to the gospel of Christ, his sins are removed. He now stands in a state of no condemnation (Romans 8:1). He now is blameless before God, even as if he had never sinned (Ephesians 1:4). That person can now live free from sin.

One Must Walk In The Light

Only by walking in the light can one remain free from sin. In Romans 6, Paul pictured sin as a cruel slavemaster. When the slave escapes the master, he is free, but only so long as he remains separated from that master. The master who loses a slave will surely pursue that slave in order to recapture him. The slave, then, must do everything in his power to elude that cruel master.

That is how it works with sin. Through the blood of Christ and obedience to the gospel, we have been made free. However, sin is constantly pursuing us, trying to capture us again. We must remain dead to sin, i.e., we must remain separated from sin, by yielding ourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead (Romans 6:13). As long as we refrain from going back to living a life of sin, we live free from sin. What is the end result of such living? Eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

Don

You Just Have To Know Him

Charles N. Spence, Jr.

While in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).

Whenever we want to impress upon someone how loveable a person is, we sometimes say, "You just have to know him." One would find it hard to love someone who he does not know. The Bible says that those who keep the commandments of God are those who know God. "By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says I know Him, and does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). The Bible also says that those who keep God's commandments are those who love him. Jesus said in John 15:14, 23, "If you love me, keep my commandments...If anyone loves me, he will keep my commandments." According to 1 John 5:2-3, the love of God is to keep His commandments. So to love is to know God (1 John 4:8).

Jesus said eternal life is for those who know God. Paul wrote that God has prepared good things for those who love God (1 Corinthians 2:9). All things work together for good in behalf of those who love God (Romans 8:29). Those who love God will be given a crown of life (James 1:12). They are also heirs of God's kingdom (James 2:5). Paul equated knowing the Lord with knowing the power of the resurrection. Evident in all of this are the benefits that those who know and love God will receive. The common thread to knowing and loving God is keeping His commandments (John 14:15). Are you doing God's will (Matthew 7:21)?