

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?

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Today we want to look at what happens when a Christian sins. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:8-9, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." As Christians, we will eventually stumble and we will eventually sin. The thing that makes us different from what we were when we were outside of Christ, before we were converted, is that we now have a new nature. It grieves us to sin. I don't want to sin, I want to live a righteous life. I want to live a holy life, but what happens when I do sin? Do I need to go back and get saved again? Is that what the Bible is teaching? In that case, my Christianity in a sense is that I'm constantly going to the altar, constantly asking God to forgive my sins. I'm possibly always thinking I need to get born again, again, again, and again. What does happen when a Christian sins?

Romans 4:2 says, "For if Abraham were justified [declared righteous] by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." He would have something to boast about, but not before God. If salvation was based on our merit, the things we do, then we could brag. We could say, "Hey, Lord, I really appreciate what you did on the cross, but remember the things I've done!" So throughout eternity, we're going to pat Jesus on the back and pat ourselves on the back for the things that we've done. No! God has designed salvation in such a way that there will be no boasting or glory on man's part. The only glory and boasting will be in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:27 it says, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Where is boasting? It is wiped out by the law of faith. In faith we trust, rely on, and cling to the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done as the means of the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life.

What happens when a Christian sins? Romans 4:2 says that if Abraham were justified by his own actions, he would have some reason to boast, but that's not what happened. How does the Scripture say a man is saved? by his own performance? by his own works? by the things he does? How was Abraham counted righteous or declared righteous? Was it through the things he did or didn't do, or was it that he simply believed, trusted, and relied on God through faith? The Bible says in Romans 4:3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

What would happen if one day I was driving down the highway, had lived a good Christian life for 25 years, and suddenly a guy ran around me really fast in his car, swerved, and I became angry and cursed him. Then because I wasn't watching where I was going, I turned, hit a telephone pole, and was killed. Would I perish because I didn't have time to confess my sin and say, "God, I shouldn't have gotten angry. I shouldn't have cursed, but I did." Would I perish? Some people might think I would, but I want to tell you what I believe the Bible says.

What happens when a Christian sins? What holds me in position so that I wouldn't perish even if I did sin? Scripture says Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. He was declared righteous and God put righteousness to his account through his faith—not through the actual works of his own righteousness, but because he believed God. Isn't that good news? The thing that holds me in position and keeps me from perishing, even though there are times when I fail and sin, is that Jesus bore all of my sin on the cross, and my faith in Him and His blood that was shed for me is a faith that believes His sacrifice was perfect, that he died once for all, and that the offering lasts forever.

Hebrews 10:1 says, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." I want to ask you a question: What couldn't the law do according to this verse? It says that it could not make the worshippers, or "the comers thereunto," perfect. The law could never make a man perfect, without defect or flaw. What else does it say here in verse 2? "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." Notice in verse 1 that these sacrifices were "offered year by year continually."

You see, the old covenant showed us through the very sacrifices offered over and over and over that it could not deal with sin. But the Bible says here that if a sacrifice came that could really deal with sin, it would remove the very consciousness of sin, and there was a sacrifice that came that accomplished that. Do you know what it did? Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," which those who are set apart to God by the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary for our sin. When we put faith in Him, it says by that one offering He has perfected us . . . for how long? a week? two weeks? until the first time we sin? No, it says He's perfected forever those that are set apart to Him.

I want to go back to Romans 4:6 and show you this verse: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." David of the Old Testament is saying there will be a day through a new covenant when God will impute righteousness, right standing, without man working for it. Then he said in verse 7, "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." This is the clincher: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. It doesn't say He might not, sometimes He will and sometimes he won't. It says blessed is the man to whom, the Lord will not impute sin." In the Greek that's what is called an emphatic negative. It means he'll never, not ever put sin to our account. This is the good news of the New Covenant. Hebrews 10:16 says, "I will put my laws into their hearts [on their heart] and in their minds [upon their mind also] will I write them," and part of that agreement is that God says this in verse 17: "and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

What holds you in position, in righteousness and right standing, even though you sinned and didn't have time to confess it? It's your faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work on your behalf. His name is Jesus and He saves people from their sins. Even though I had the car wreck, cursed, got angry, and didn't have time to confess my sin before I was killed, my faith in Jesus Christ, His salvation, and the forgiveness of my sins through Him never wavered. Therefore, I'm that man, that blessed man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. I'm that man of whom the Bible says in Hebrews 10:14, blessed is that man—"By one sacrifice He has perfected me for ever," because I've been set apart unto Him through faith in Him.

Isn't this wonderful news? My friend, I do believe we need to confess our sins at the time we commit them, just like in any relationship. In my marriage when I do something wrong, I need to say, "Honey, I'm sorry I did that." But you know what? My relationship never changes. I am just as married before as after when I messed up or failed, but I need to clear the air. I need to confess and say, "I agree, Honey, I shouldn't have done that." There are times when I need to do that with God, but through faith in Jesus Christ and what he's done, He never held that sin against me. Jesus' blood was shed for me, and I put faith in Him.

God bless you today as these truths soak into you, as you continue this discipleship program, and as we discover these wonderful truths together.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Outline)

1 John 1:7-8: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

We will stumble and commit sin as a Christian. Now that we have a new nature, it grieves us when we sin.

Romans 4:2: “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

If we could gain justification or righteousness by what we do, then we could brag, but there will be no pats on our backs in eternity. There is no glorying or boasting on man’s part.

Romans 3:27: “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

What Jesus has done for us cleanses us.

Romans 4:2: “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

How are you saved? By your own performance? No, you believe in God and it’s accounted to you as righteousness.

Would I perish if I sinned and died immediately afterward? No, not if I am believing Jesus to keep me in a position of righteousness before God. Jesus bore all my sin on the cross. I have faith that his sacrifice was perfect.

Hebrews 10:1-2: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. <sup>2</sup>For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”

The Old Testament Law could not make us perfect, without defect or flaw. A perfect sacrifice eliminates even the consciousness of sin.

Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Jesus was our perfect offering to God.

Romans 4:6-8: “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, <sup>7</sup>Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” In the original Greek language this is an emphatic negative—God will never not ever impute sin to us.

Hebrews 10:17: “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

By my faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and forgiveness through Him, I'm a blessed man to whom the Lord will NOT impute sin. Just as in a marriage relationship, when one does something wrong to his mate, he confesses his sin to clear the air, yet the sin does not make him unmarried; neither does our sin change our right standing with God.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Teacher's Guide)

1. According to Romans 4:5, what is the only kind of person that God can justify?  
  
An ungodly person.
2. According to Romans 4:2-3, God put something to Abraham's account (when he believed) which he did not have before. What was this?  
  
Righteousness (right standing with God).
3. According to Romans 4:22-24, if we believe as Abraham did, what will be put to our account?  
  
Righteousness
4. According to Romans 4:6, believers are imputed righteousness before God without what?  
  
Without works.
5. According to Hebrews 10:14, how long are believers perfected before God?  
  
Forever.
6. A. According to Romans 5:17, how is righteousness received?  
  
As a gift.  
  
B. What does the word "gift" imply?  
  
Something freely given, without cost to the person receiving it.
7. To trust Jesus to be your personal Saviour you must trust Him to take you all the way to where?  
  
Heaven.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS? (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

<sup>1</sup> Have you ever considered the type of person that God justifies, that is, declares righteous? The Scripture tells us that it is the UNGODLY. "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5; NASV).

<sup>2</sup> The context surrounding this passage speaks of the man, Abraham. Abraham did many ungodly things, such as giving his wife to another man, lying, and so forth. (see Genesis 20). But never did Abraham have to worry about where he stood before God. You see, although God may have approved or disapproved of the things that Abraham did, Abraham's acceptance before God was not based upon his performance, but rather upon his faith and trust in God. Even though Abraham was a sinner, and when he put his trust in God, God put something to his account that he did not have before, and that was righteousness.

You see, ABRAHAM WAS CREDITED AS RIGHTEOUS EVEN AT A MOMENT WHEN HE WAS UNGODLY. Justification is not the act of making righteous, but rather declaring a BELIEVER as righteous even though he is in a sinning state (1 John 1:8).

<sup>3</sup> In Romans, chapter 4, it further states that the words "he (Abraham) was accepted as righteous" were not written for him alone. They were written also for us who are to be accepted as righteous, who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from death. He was given over to die because of our sins, and was raised to life to put us right with God (Romans 4:23-25; TEV).

Do you understand? God is willing, because of Jesus' death upon the cross, to declare you forgiven, in right standing and righteous in His sight. God does this because He wants to and can legally do so because of Jesus' death for our sins.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Romans 4:5, what is the only kind of person that God can justify?

<sup>2</sup> (a) Complete this statement "Abraham's acceptance before God was not based upon his performance, but rather upon what?"

(b) According to Romans 4:2-3, God put something to Abraham's account (when he believed) which he did not have before. What was this?

<sup>3</sup> According to Romans 4:22-24, if we believe as Abraham did, what will be put to our account?

<sup>4</sup>The Bible states in Romans 4:6-8 “ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, <sup>7</sup>saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man to whom the Lord WILL NOT impute sin.”

The Greek word that is translated “will not” in verse 8 is what is called an emphatic negative and it means “not ever.” This is the strongest language possible that says those who receive forgiveness will not ever have their sins held against them. He didn’t just say “did not” or “does not” but “will not” implying that even future tense sins have been dealt with through the sacrificial offering of Jesus once and for all (Hebrews 10:10,14).

Most Christians have the concept that the sins that they committed before they professed faith in Christ were forgiven at salvation, but any sins that are committed after that time are not forgiven until they are confessed.

All our sins—past, present, and future—were forgiven us through the one offering of Jesus.

If we had to confess every sin committed after our born-again experience to maintain our salvation, no one would ever make it. What if we forgot to confess some sin? That puts the burden of salvation back on us.

<sup>5</sup> I will state it once more. Justification is not the act of being made righteous by the things that you do, but rather, it is being declared righteous because Jesus’ blood was shed for you. This gift of righteousness is yours (to those who receive it by faith) and gives you a right standing before God, even though in your daily life you still make mistakes and sin (1 John 1:8).

<sup>6</sup> Can you see it? Jesus wants to be your personal Savior and Lord. Have you ever considered what a savior really is? If you were drowning in the ocean and I tossed you a book on “How to Swim,” would I be your personal savior? Of course not! If I got out of a boat and showed you how to swim, would I be your personal savior? No, I would only be your example. You see, a saviour is someone who rescues you and takes you safely all the way to the shore. To trust Jesus as your personal Savior means that you must trust Him to take you safely all the way to heaven or you have not trusted Him as your Savior.

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<sup>4</sup>(a)According to Romans 4:6, believers are imputed righteous before God without what?

(b)According to Hebrews 10:14, how long are believer’s perfected before God?

<sup>5</sup>(a)According to Romans 5:17, how is righteousness received?

(b)What does the word “gift” imply?

<sup>6</sup>To trust Jesus to be your personal Savior you must trust Him to take you all the way to where?



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?  
(Discipleship Questions)

Read Romans 4: 3-8

1. "Abraham \_\_\_\_\_ God and it was accounted to him for \_\_\_\_\_."
2. To him who works, the wages are counted to him as A. Debt B. Grace? (circle one)
3. Who does God justify according to verse 5:
4. Does that person work or believe? (circle one)
5. What is accounted to him as righteousness?
6. Does God impute or (charge to your account) righteousness
  - A. According to your works
  - B. Apart from your works
  - C. How nice a person you are
7. "Blessed are those whose \_\_\_\_\_."
8. "Blessed is the man \_\_\_\_\_."

Read Hebrews 10:14-18

9. For how long are believers perfected before God?
10. What is the Covenant the Lord makes with us?
  - A. (verse 16) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. (verse 17) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Again, how long will God remember our sinful deeds?

Read Romans 5:17

12. By what two means will we reign in life through Jesus Christ?  
By receiving:
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 John 1:7-10

13. What and Who cleanses us of all our sin?

14. What are we if we say we have no sin?

15. What happens if we confess our sins?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

16. How is it that we would make God a liar?

Read Psalm 32:5

17. What happens when we acknowledge our sins to the Lord?

Read Psalm 78:38

18. What is the Lord full of towards us?

19. What did He forgive?

Read Psalm 85:2

20. "You have \_\_\_\_\_ the iniquities of Your people;  
You have \_\_\_\_\_ their sin."

Read Psalm 103:12

21. How far will the Lord remove our transgressions from us?

Read Colossians 2:13-14

22. How many of our trespasses has He forgiven?

23. Where are our trespasses now nailed?

Read Romans 8:1

24. If our sins were nailed to the cross—past, present and future—how long should we wallow in self-pity and condemnation?

Read Mark 2:5-11

25. Jesus not only healed us physically, He also did what according to this verse?
26. This made the scribes indignant. Jesus perceived this, addressed the issue at hand, and asked the scribes what question?  
Verse 9 “What is easier to say, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.”
27. What do you think the answer is?

To say “your sins are forgiven you” is easier because there is no physical evidence.  
You must go on faith that it is so.

28. What did Jesus do to prove that the paralytics sins were forgiven? (verse 11-12)

Read Romans 6:1-2, 6, 15-16

29. Shall we go ahead and sin because we know we are forgiven?
30. What is Paul’s explanation as to why we must not follow sin?

Read Romans 3:23-26

31. Who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
32. Since we have all sinned, how is it we are justified freely?
33. Why did God pass over our sins that were previously committed? (verse 26)?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?  
(Discipleship Answer Key)

1. Believed – righteousness
2. A. Debt
3. Those who do not work
4. Believe
5. His faith
6. B. Apart from your works
7. Lawless deed are forgiven  
and whose sins are covered
8. To whom the lord shall not impute sin.
9. Forever
10. a. Put my laws into their hearts and minds  
b. Their sins and lawless deeds I will  
I will remember no more
11. No more
12. A. Abundance of grace  
B. Gift of righteousness
13. The blood of Jesus Christ
14. Deceived and without truth
15. a. He is faithful to forgive us  
b. Cleanse us from all unrighteousness
16. If we say we have not sinned
17. He forgives my sins
18. Compassion
19. My iniquity
20. Forgiven  
Covered all
21. As far as the east is from the west
22. All
23. To the cross
24. Never
25. Forgave our sins
26. Your sins are forgiven you or  
take up your bed and walk?
27. Your sins are forgiven you
28. Healed him physically
29. Certainly not
30. You will be a slave to whoever you yield  
yourself and obey
31. All
32. By His grace
33. To demonstrate His righteousness and to  
justify the one who has faith in Jesus

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS (Additional Information)

Romans 10:14: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Paul had just conclusively proven that salvation was not according to a person’s performance but according to his acceptance of God’s grace by faith in Christ Jesus. This is great news! Yet this great news will not do anyone any good if they don’t know it. The gospel has to be heard to release its power (Romans 1:16).

Verses 14 and 15 of Romans chapter 10 show a number of things that must happen for a person to be born again. The individual must believe, but he needs to have something or someone to believe in. Therefore, someone has to share the gospel with him. But for that to happen, others have to send the ministers to the uttermost parts of the earth. So there are three areas of responsibility for salvation. An individual has to believe, someone has to preach, and others have to send them out. Satan tries to harden a person’s heart through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13), to the point that the gospel will not penetrate. If people are faithful to the two other responsibilities, salvation still will not occur if the individual rejects the good news.

Many times people are hungry and ripe for salvation, and still there is no one to share the good news with them. If Satan can stop people from preaching the gospel, because of a lack of preachers or a lack of people who will send them, then he can stop the individual from being saved.

As Christians we cannot take responsibility for peoples’ reactions to the gospel, but we must take responsibility for preaching the gospel and giving so others can preach the gospel.

Romans 3:26-27: “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. <sup>27</sup>Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

(Romans 3:26) Paul restates this amazing truth that it is the righteousness of Jesus that has been given us. We don’t just have enough righteousness to slip into heaven. We have been given Jesus’ righteousness. First Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Jesus is my righteousness! Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(Romans 3:27) Boasting, bragging, or pride about our holiness or spiritual accomplishments are sure signs that we don't understand justification by grace through faith as Paul taught in this verse. If we acknowledge that we are no better than anyone else, regardless of our conduct, and that the only way we obtained peace with God was through putting faith in what Jesus did for us, then there is no room for boasting about our achievements. It was the accomplishments of Jesus that saved us.

Pride is the root of all divisions in the church today. Therefore, the prevalence of division in the church is a painful testimony to the lack of this foundational truth of justification by grace through faith.

Notice that Paul refers to the Law of faith. Faith is governed by law, just as gravity or electricity. If we would view faith as a law, rather than something that sometimes works and other times doesn't, we would begin to get very different results.

The law of electricity has been on earth since creation. Man has observed it in such things as lightning and static electricity, but it was not until someone believed that there were laws that governed the activity of electricity that progress was made to put it to use. Likewise, none deny the existence of faith, but it is only when an individual begins to understand that there are laws that govern faith, and learns what those laws are, that faith begins to work for him.

Romans 4:1-2: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."

(Romans 4:1) The question is, "What good then were Abraham's works?" Paul answers this indirectly. Paul states what Abraham's works were not good for. They were not good enough to grant him justification in the sight of God—that came by faith. He shows that Abraham's works or efforts didn't earn him anything from God. Abraham was justified by faith for over thirteen years before he performed the act of circumcision that the Jews insisted was necessary for right standing with God.

(Romans 4:2) Our own good works will only allow us to boast if we're comparing ourselves with other people. However, in the sight of God, not one of us has anything to brag about. We have all come short of the glory of God.

Romans 4:6-8: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, <sup>7</sup>saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

(Romans 4:6) King David was living under the Old Covenant law. However, this scripture that Paul quoted from Psalm 32, as well as the things David wrote in Psalm 51 when repenting for his sins against Uriah and Bathsheba, show that he had a tremendous revelation of the salvation by grace through faith that was coming with the Messiah.

(Romans 4:8) The Greek word that is translated “will not” in this verse is what is called an emphatic negative and it means “not ever.” This is the strongest language possible that says that those who receive forgiveness will not ever have their sins held against them. He didn’t just say “did not” or “does not” but “will not” implying that even future tense sins have been dealt with, through the sacrificial offering of Jesus, once and for all (Hebrews 10: 10,14).

Most Christians have the concept that the sins they committed before they professed faith in Christ were forgiven at salvation, but any sins that were committed after that time are not forgiven until they are repented of and forgiveness is asked. That is not the case.

All our sins—past, present, and future—were forgiven us through the one offering of Jesus. If God can’t forgive future tense sins, then none of us can be saved because Jesus only died once, nearly 2,000 years ago, before we had committed any sins. All our sins have been forgiven.

Why then, 1 John 1:9? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is not speaking of the eternal salvation of our spirit but rather the salvation of our souls (James 1:21, and 1 Peter 1:9). It’s our spirits that are born again at salvation, and sin will never be imputed to our born-again spirits. They have been sanctified and perfected forever (Hebrews 10:10,14; 12:23), and cannot sin (1 John 3:9).

However, we are still in the process of our souls being saved (James 1:21, and 1 Peter 1:9). When we sin, the devil has a legal right to bring his forms of death into our soulish area (Romans 6:16). How do we get the devil out once he has come in? We confess our sin, then God brings that forgiveness that is already a reality in our born-again spirits out into the soulish realm and the devil has no right to stay.

If we had to confess every sin committed after our born-again experience to maintain our salvation, no one would ever make it. What if we forgot to confess some sin? That puts the burden of salvation back on us.

We must remember that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24) and we must worship Him through our new born-again spirits. Therefore, we truly are blessed because God will not hold any sin against our spirit. Our spirits are clean and pure (Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 12:23, and 1 John 4:17) and will not change due to our performance.