

GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

PART 4A: GRACE OVERCAME SIN

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PART 4A. GRACE OVERCAME SIN

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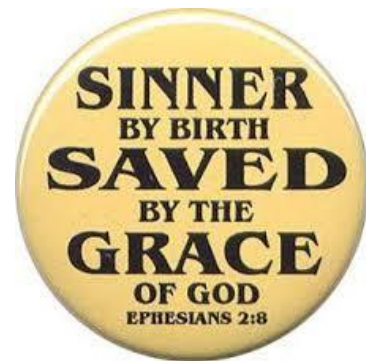
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INTRODUCTION

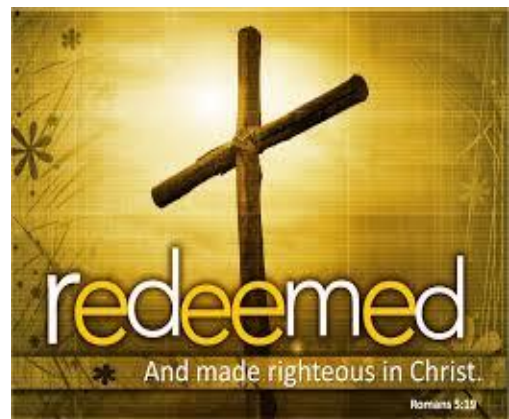
An important part of understanding the grace that is ours through the living Word, Jesus Christ, is that we have a firm Biblical foundation on which this grace is established. This is so that the intimacy, hope and blessings that come with Jesus' grace cannot be undermined. As you go through this study course we ask you to spend time looking up all the scripture references quoted in brackets and allow the Holy Spirit to establish the Word in your heart and mind.

1. JESUS DEALT WITH SIN ON THE CROSS

1.1 GRACE FROM "ABBA"

Eph. 1:6-8 "To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him Jesus we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding".

Under the New Covenant of grace we are called children of God. As such we should have a personal and intimate relationship with God as "Abba" (Ro.8:15) (which means daddy in Hebrew). Sadly many believers still allow sin and or feelings of unworthiness caused by an over consciousness of sin to separate them from "Abba". The issue of sin and our sinlessness in Christ is probably one of the most important and yet for some, the most controversial issues of grace. The Scriptures are clear that



because of "Abba's" love for us, through the cross and by grace, Jesus has destroyed the dominion of Sin, the power of Sin and dealt with all our sins, once and for all so that we can now live in an intimate, loving and confident relationship with "Abba".

As the great British Preacher, Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) said: *"The saints shall persevere in holiness, because God perseveres in grace".*

1.2 IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Mat 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

2Co 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The good news of grace is that Jesus has taken away the sin of the world. He has set us free of sin, we are forgiven and we have become part of Him, the sinless one. When we see Jesus we see a reflection of who we are in him (Col.3:3). Sin is no longer the issue or the focus. Those who are in Christ are righteous in God's eyes and that righteousness will work its way out in their lives. God no longer relates to us based on our sin or sinlessness but on the basis of our union with Christ and His righteousness imputed to us. Our sin identity, and the law of sin and death, is effectively done away with for those in Christ Jesus.



1.3 OUR SINS ARE FORIVEN AND FOGOTTEN

Heb.8:12 (Amp) For I will be merciful and gracious toward their sins and I will remember their deeds of unrighteousness no more. [Jer. 31:31-34.]

Heb 10:16-19 "This is the (new) covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus".

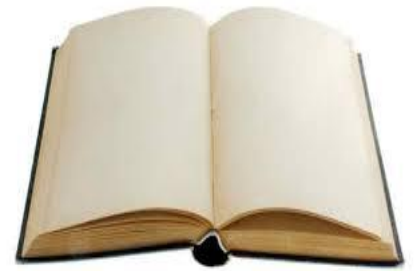
Rom 4:6 "David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered".

Col 2:13 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins".

Isa 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more".

This is the good news of grace and the New Covenant and also the offense of the New Covenant; ALL the sins of a believer are forgiven and forgotten by God. When God's Word say ALL God means all, not just confessed sins, not just past sins, not just known sins, but ALL our sin were dealt with at the cross, past, present and even future. The slate is wiped clean. On the final judgment day when the account books are opened (Rev.20:12) no sin will be found registered against our names. The only

thing accounted (2Co.5:19) to us is our righteousness in Christ. Not only does it say all our sin are forgiven but it says God's remembers them no more. We may choose to remember them and dwell on them but God doesn't and to be honest, we need to adopt the same attitude!



We can now come to God with confidence and boldness (Heb.4:16) as his beloved, children knowing that he sees us as sinless because we are in Christ (1Jn.4:17). It sounds too good to be true - that is the offence of grace and that is why some people just can't receive grace, they just can believe that God is that good and that graceful.

1.4 SIN WAS THE BIG PROBLEM

Let's be clear sin is evil, harmful, ungodly and destructive. Sin is a big problem and in no way do we promote, encourage or underestimate the terrible effects of sin. Licensiouness has no part in the Christian life (Ro.6:1-2).

God's solution to sin was the cross and the grace of Jesus Christ. Unbelievable as it may seem to many Christians, the Scriptures are clear; living by the Law produces sin, while grace destroys sin. Jesus came to set us free from both sin and the Law that gives sin its power (1Co.15:56). The cross of Christ and the grace that came through Jesus is the only truly effective antidote to sin. There is no other effective solution, there is no other sacrifice that can set us free from sin. This is the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ. Without Christ and his grace we are all lost and dead in our sins.

Grace was costly and there is no such thing as "cheap grace" (as some people are prone to intimate), Sin was so bad that the Son of God himself, Jesus Christ, was humiliated and put to death to destroy Sin's power and domination - that is the cost of God's grace to us. The cross declares that the solution to sin is Jesus - not our self-effort, self-righteousness, law keeping, good works, or adherence to the Ten Commandments. To reject what Jesus did on the cross and to revert back to trusting in our good works or Law keeping as an atonement for our sins, is to crucify Christ over and over again (Heb.6:6) and the Scriptures warn that those who hear this message and reject it will never change their minds and be saved, stern stuff indeed!

2. MAN'S SINFUL NATURE

2.1 MANKINDS SIN NATURE; THE FLESH, THE LEGALISTIC NATURE

Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned....."

Sin is powerful and deadly. Many ask "Why does God allow terrible things to happen?" The truth is that it's not God but the fallen nature of creation that manifests in the sin, evil and catastrophes we see all around us. All of creation is fallen and has been corrupted by sin and all of creation is longing to be redeemed from the affects of sin and be made anew (Ro.8:20-12) (Rev.21:5).



Likewise humankind is fallen and has a sinful nature which is evidenced in mankind's actions of war, murder, abuse, greed, pollution, crime, etc. etc. We all live and suffered the consequences of the fall; sadly, even those of us who are saved. Scripture teaches that through Adam all became sinners (Rom.5:12) i.e. we have all inherited both Adam's natural genes and his diseased spiritual condition called the sinful nature. Adam's choice to trust himself, his ability and his intellect totally polluted both him and his offspring. Mankind became spiritually dead to the spiritual things of God and our noble, Godly, character became totally warped. Sin killed us off spiritually and physically - and still does today. The Law of sin and death has been at work in all mankind since Adam (Rom.8:1): You sin you die. We inherited a sin nature (The Greek word is *sarx*) from Adam. This sinful nature (Rom.7:18) is also referred to as "the flesh", the fallen nature, the carnal nature or the law nature. The flesh, or sinful nature, is highly self centred, independent, religious and legalistic. It is fed by the accumulation of the knowledge of good and bad (Gen.2:17) and the application of this knowledge in avoiding the bad that harm us and embracing good that blesses us. This is done through living by rules, regulations and techniques; systems of control which are manipulated for self gain and independence - producing the ultimate "self made man". Such a self made man or women simply does not need God's input or guidance.

2.2 JESUS DIED FOR ALL TYPES OF OUR SIN

Rom 4:25 " Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification".

Isa 53:4 -5 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions , he was crushed for our

iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (A prophetic picture of Jesus on the Cross).

There are a number of different types of sin.

We normally refer to them all under the generic term "Sin". Jesus died for all our sins and all types of sin, once and for all.



1. Sin. Greek: αμαρτία hamartia. Thayer defines sin as, to be without a share in, to miss the mark, to err, be mistaken, to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong, to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin, that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act. Collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many. Sin is used 174 times as a noun and 42 times as a verb in the New Testament. The Greek Septuagint uses this word in Isa.53.

2. Trespasses or transgressions. Greek: παράπτωμα paraptoma. Thayer defines this as to fall beside or near something, a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness, a sin, misdeed. Its' used 9 times in the New Testament.

3. Iniquities. Greek: ανομία anomia. Thayer defines this as the condition of without law, because ignorance of it, because of violating it, contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness. Strong defines this word as; illegality, that is, violation of law or generally wickedness. Iniquity, transgression of the law, unrighteousness. It's used 25 times in the New Testament. The Greek Septuagint uses this word in Isa.53.

2.3 THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS US OF THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

John 16:8-9 (Amp) "When the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict and convince the world and bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness and about judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me]..."

Unlike the teachers of the Law, the Pharisees, Jesus did not point to peoples moral sin but to the sin of unbelief in the goodness and love of God. The New Testament scriptures make it clear that the real sin issue between man and God is the sin of unbelief. It is a lack of trust and faith in a loving and kind God that leads to rebellion and moral sin. Many teach that the Holy Spirit convicts believers of moral sin. It's almost as if the Holy Spirit has come to replace Satan as the accuser and condemner. They conclude this from quoting John 16:8 out of context. John 16:9 explains that the sin the Holy

Spirit now convicts us of is unbelief not moral sin. We need to urgently repent of this wrong teaching and thinking as it brings condemnation and guilt. The issue that the Holy Spirit wants to help us all to deal with is "where are we living in unbelief?" - for unbelief is sin. The affects of unbelief is apparent throughout Israel's history. They chose to disbelieve God (Heb.3:19) (Ps.78:32) (Ps.106:24) and His goodness and trust in themselves or other god's. The result was that they fell into moral sin, great evil and were cursed. Likewise with Adam and Eve, it was their sin of unbelief in God's goodness and promises that was the root of all other sins and the loss of their blessings. Our sinful, fallen nature is intrinsically one of unbelief and a distrust of God, but when we are in faith and believe, all the promises of God are ours through Christ and his grace (Jn.1:16) and moral sin can be overcome.

2.4 OUR SINFUL FLESH NATURE WAS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Gal 5:24 "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh (sarx) with its passions and desires".

The flesh (sin nature) embraces sin and opposes the will and the Spirit of God (Rom.8:3-8).

The only way to be freed from the sin nature is to die to self, and to be "born again" (Jn.3:5-6).

The good news is that the sin nature of those who have turned to Christ has been nailed on

the cross with Christ (Gal.2:20). We have been baptised into Christ's death (Ro.6:3) and therefore the sin nature of a true believer is dead. It's memories and habits may still plague and tempt us but our sin nature is dead in Christ. However we do need to allow our minds and thinking to be renewed (Ro.12:2) and our actions sanctified by the Word and the Spirit. This takes time.

Col 2:11 "In Christ you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ"

Rom 2:29 No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

The Scriptures also describe freedom from our sin nature in another way; circumcision. Just as Jewish men had their useless flesh physically cut away so we who are in Christ have been spiritually circumcised. The fleshy fallen part of our inner person has been cut way and cast off. Our hearts have been circumcised of their old sin nature.

Gal.2:17-21 (The Message) "Have some of you noticed that we are not yet perfect? No great surprise, right? And are you ready to make the accusation that since people like me, who go through Christ in

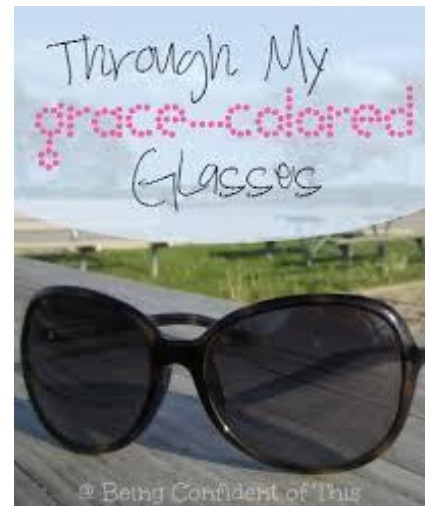


order to get things right with God, aren't perfectly virtuous, Christ must therefore be an accessory to sin? The accusation is frivolous. If I was "trying to be good," I would be rebuilding the same old barn that I tore down. I would be acting as a charlatan. What actually took place is this: I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn't work. So I quit being a "law man" so that I could be God's man. Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that. Is it not clear to you that to go back to that old rule-keeping, peer-pleasing religion would be an abandonment of everything personal and free in my relationship with God? I refuse to do that, to repudiate God's grace. If a living relationship with God could come by rule-keeping, then Christ died unnecessarily".

3. SAINTS NOT SINNERS

3.1 GOD NOW SEES US AS SINLESS

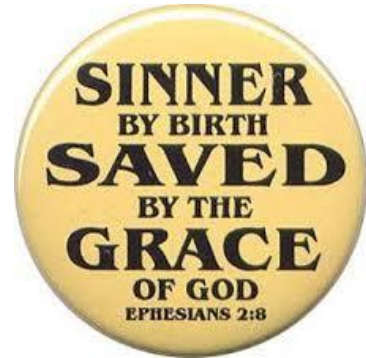
Grace is all about our identity in Christ and about us choosing in faith to see ourselves as God see us. If you are "Born Again" by the Spirit of God, you are the righteousness of God (2Co.5:21) and as such you are qualified for blessing, to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and to reign and rule in this life from a place of rest and peace. This issue of taking our eyes off our sin and putting them on Jesus righteousness is the foundation to living the abundant life of Christ. Lots of people in the Old Testament tried to be sinless and they always failed (Rom.9:30). There were exceptions and amazingly both David & Abraham (Gen.15:16) knew that true righteousness and sinlessness depended on them believing and trusting in a good God. David understood and received God's grace and after God's forgiveness of David's adultery & murder David saw himself as righteous – just as if his sin never existed (2Sam22:12). That's the offence of the cross and Jesus grace. Even though he was under the Covenant of the Law (Gal.2:21) David prophetically foresaw God's grace for the forgiveness of his sins, as did Abraham, and they both took hold of it. God considered David (Acts 13:22) to be a man after his own heart! Likewise today (Rom. 3:21) Jesus has made us righteous and sinless in God's eyes and see believers as men and women after His own heart. I guess that's why



grace makes a lot of religious people really angry, as it's seen as being unfair or unjust. This is the good news of the gospel and it will bear mighty good fruit as you allow the truth to renew your thinking. 1Jn. 4:17 "In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him" i.e. holy and sinless.

3.2 WE ARE NOW SAINTS NOT SINNERS

Nowhere in the New Testament does it address believers as sinners, except in the past tense. Believers are referred to as the "saints" (Ro.16:15) or as brother and sisters in Christ. We need to look more at our identity, we need know who we are and describe ourselves accordingly. For those who are saved and born again, all our sins are forgiven, past, present and future, without conditions, we don't have to do anything further.



Understanding the difference between a sinner and a saint is important as if we refer to ourselves as sinners we will act like sinners. A sinner is someone that is unsaved, unrighteous and enslaved by sin. On the other hand sinners who have given their lives to Christ are now righteous and are "saints" or "holy ones" separated unto God. Believers identities are no longer dependent on their actions, either good or bad, but on who they are in Christ, Therefore we now humbly talk about ourselves SAINTS (Heb.10:10) not sinners. We do however recognize that without God's grace and our union with Christ we would still be sinners, it's only in grace that we are identified as saints, it's nothing of ourselves. (More about our new identity in part 6) .

We may be saints that sometimes sin but that's a big difference from being a sinner who cannot help but sin. Sadly many liturgies still put our focus on our sin and on our old identity as sinners, this leads to a constant sense of unworthiness and condemnation. We are not sinless because we never sin, we are sinless because through Jesus and his grace God has chosen to do away with the system of keeping records of believer's sins. Under the New Covenant God does not relate to us anymore on the basis of our sin or lack thereof, God now relates to us as sinless children who are right with him through Jesus. God remember our sins no more so why should we? Under the New Covenant God's only issue with believers sinful actions is that they have horrible consequences, they hurt and rob the Father's children and others of His blessings and well being and therefore there is still a case for us to deal with the sins we commit so as to bring freedom, healing and reconciliation (Jm.5:16).

3.3 WE WERE SANCTIFIED (PAST TENSE)

1Co. 6:9-12 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God".

(MSG) "A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about, for not so long ago you were on that sinners list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit".

The Greek word sanctified is *hagiazō* which Thayer defines as to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow, to separate from profane things and dedicate to God, consecrated things to God, dedicated people to God, to purify, to cleanse externally, to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin, to purify internally by renewing of the soul.

The above scripture says we were sanctified. It's past tense. We were sinners but we were washed clean when we came to Christ, that's now our spiritual position in Christ. Sanctification is a position in Christ that then works its way out through a process of the renewal of our minds and the changing of our actions (2Co.7:1) as we live by God's Spirit within us. Some have misunderstood our holiness and based it on our actions instead of on who we are in Christ. Before God, Jesus is now our sanctification and holiness (1Co.1:30) not our actions or Law keeping. We are sanctified and yet we are still busy sanctifying our thoughts and deeds as we live by God's Spirit within us.

3.4 GRACE IS NOT A LICENCE TO SIN

Rom 3:8 "Why not say--as some slanderously claim that we say--"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just!"

Rom 6:1 "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!

We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"

As in Paul's day, those who oppose grace claim that preaching grace is a license to sin or do evil. This is because Jesus' grace is offensive to the religious spirit that relies on carnal, soulish, thinking (1Co.1:12-16), laws, self will and self effort. Grace can only be accepted in one's spirit by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. God's grace always offends and confuses all who ultimately exalt carnal knowledge and logic above Spirit revealed, scriptural, truth. There is no worldly logic in God's grace.



No logic in the fact that God himself died for sin and then freely pardons all our sins. God's heavenly wisdom, thinking and ways are simply not man's ways (Isa.55:8). God's way of grace offends the flesh and fleshy thinking but exalts the Spirit within that reveals the deep truths found in Christ alone and confirmed by the scriptures. Having said that, it is clear that some people misuse grace, just as many under Law based Christianity continue to sin in secret and cover it up. We are warned that there will be false teachers who preach grace and promote licentiousness (Jude 1:4). However because some misuse grace it does not nullify grace. The scriptures are clear that grace is the power to say no to sin (Titus 2:12)(Rom.6:14), grace is not a licence to sin. Those who are truly in Christ and living in His grace will find that sinful actions and thoughts becomes less and less of an issue as grace has its affect.

3.5 SIN IS NO LONGER OUR MASTER

Rom 6:6" For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin".

Before we were saved Sin was our master whom we were compelled to obey. The unsaved sinner cannot help but sin, it is their nature. Mankind does not sin through choice but because of our inherited Adamic sinful fallen nature. Those in Christ have a new nature (2Co.5:17) and a new master, Jesus and we are no longer slaves to sin. Christ has redeemed us from slavery. A "Christian" who says that they cannot stop sinning and are enslaved by sin need to be either founded in grace and their identity in Christ or need seriously to ask a very real question "Am I saved, am I born again?"



4. THE POWER TO SAY NO TO SIN

4.1 THE LAW PROVOKES SIN

Rom 7:7-8 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.

Rom 5:20 "The law was brought in so that sin might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more".

Just as grace is the power to overcome sin, the Law provokes sin. In grace we uphold the Law as the Law is good and powerful when used for its correct purpose (as stated in part 4) , the Laws purpose is not to make us holy but to emphasis and expose sin, especially the sin of unbelief and self righteousness. When the Law is preached it actually stirs up and provokes moral sin. Tell someone not to touch something and sees what happens. The mixing of Law and grace effectively nullifies the power of grace to overcome sin, because the Law stirs up sinful desires that grace is putting to death. The solution to this problem is simple, get rid of the Law from your belief system and life, replace it with Jesus centred grace and sin's addiction will be broken.

4.2 GRACE EMPOWERS US TO STOP SINNING

Rom 6:18 "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness".

Tit 2:12 "Grace teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age".

Freedom from the Law and abiding in grace breaks the power of sin addiction and slavery. It is grace that empowers us to say no to sin and temptation not the law. In the New Covenant the Holy Spirit leads believers from within. He shows us the way to live righteously without sin. No longer do we rely on external laws and rules. Instead the Spirit lays Gods ways on our hearts and governs our thinking (Ro.8:5-9). We know within ourselves what is right and what is wrong and how to live this out. We are now slaves to righteousness and have to obey our masters promptings and commands within us. When we were unsaved we could not help but sin, as were slaves to sin, now that we are slaves to righteousness and grace we cannot help but do what is right. Righteousness is now our new nature in Christ. As we believe so we do, believe you are in grace and righteous and you will find you live righteously, believe you are a sinner and you will sin. When we are fully established in grace and our identity as God's children we find that we have the power to put off our old sins of immorality, lying, stealing, hate, anger, etc. - we can put off the sin that was of our old self because it now no longer has a foundation within us to feed on and support it. This is the process of working out our salvation and sanctification in practical and real terms from the truth that in Christ we are sanctified, righteous and holy.



The great British Victorian Preacher, Charles Spurgeon, nailed it when he said, *"When I thought God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I beat my breast to think I could ever have rebelled against One who loved me so and sought my good"*.

4.3 JESUS NOW DEFENDS US

1Jn 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence—Jesus Christ, the righteous One.

Heb 7:24-25 Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Rom 8:33-35 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

We all sin at some time, even though we don't want to. The good news is that if and when we sin Jesus defends us against any accuser, he declares us as not guilty. Jesus interceded on our behalf (Heb.7:25). He is not only our high priest but also our advocate who is constantly declaring us innocent and the our sins paid for by his own blood. Jesus is the heavenly administrator and dispenser of God's grace. No longer can Satan or anyone else bring a charge against us because of our sin. We are not like Job whom God allowed to be accused and afflicted by Satan, Satan no longer has any rights to accuse or afflict us (Ro.8:1). Job longed for someone to defend him (Job 9:33) - in grace, we have Jesus to do just that.



Knowing that we are free from the power of Sin and that we have the ability to say no to sin now empowers us to live in a holy and righteous way, not through self effort but by abiding in Christ and being lead by His Spirit within us. The next section will look at holy living.