

## **You Don't Have To Take It Any More** *"Sin shall not be your master." (Rom. 6:14)*

I don't think that there can be greater heartache than knowing Jesus and yet still be a slave to sin. It's common knowledge that there are many churchgoers secretly addicted to pornography, alcohol, drugs and other sins. They don't want to be that way but don't know how to overcome their slavery to unrighteousness and their hearts ache because of the darkness that is hidden within them. They feel great shame but put on happy faces. Only they, and God, know the awful shame that is deep within their souls. They want to change but remain as they are because no one has ever told them that they don't have to take it any more, that is, they don't have to take sin any more. Jesus came to set the captives free so that no one has to remain a slave to sin. In John 8:34, Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin,"* BUT He continued on to say, *"if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8:36). So, if you are battling with the likes of pornography, alcohol or drugs, then you too can be freed and enter into the wonderful peace of God which comes when inner darkness is replaced with light. How is this done?

### **Firstly, Let's Look At Our Sinful Nature**

There is no question that we will be influenced by our sinful nature until we see Jesus but this does not mean that we have to give in to it. Many people say that we are only human and can't be free from slavery to sin despite the fact that Jesus says we can be. I once heard the following: "We have a body which gets hungry so we eat, a body which gets thirsty so we drink and a sinful nature so we will always sin." This is a terrible lie which leaves many souls burdened with the guilt of their sin. Jesus clearly says that He can free us. In Rom. 7:24-25, Paul openly admitted to the wickedness of his flesh when he said, *"What a wretched man I am!"* BUT he went on to say, *"Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* Plainly, Paul tells us that through Jesus he was changed and rescued from his fleshy body of death. In Rom. 6:14, he said, *"sin shall not be your master"* and this is made possible through the Holy Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit Empowers Us To Overcome Sin**

God knows very well how weak we are so when we repent and accept Jesus He sends the Holy Spirit to live within us to guide us and to empower us to overcome our lusts. Through the Spirit we can be freed from our sinful nature as Gal. 5:16 so clearly states: *"live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* This is not a fairy tale, it's God's Word and millions of Christians, past and present, can testify to being rescued from the worst of sins. The Bible says that God has no favourites so if you have not been rescued from your body of death then you can be sure that God is waiting to deliver you also. God has given us the ability and responsibility to live a holy life.

### **Ability And Responsibility**

Firstly, regarding our ability, the reason God sends the Holy Spirit to live within us is to transform our lives so that we are able live a life which pleases Him. Speaking about the Spirit, 2 Pet. 1:3-4 say, *"His divine power [the Holy Spirit] has given us everything we need for life and godliness [so that] you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."* From these verses we can see that the divine power of the Spirit gives us the ability to escape the corruption of sin and live a godly life (see Ezek. 36:25-27 also).

Next, regarding our responsibility, we are commanded to *"live by the Spirit."* We do this by repenting with all our heart, soul, mind and strength whenever the Spirit convicts us of sin. If, for example, pornography is a problem to you then the next time you desire it, fight it with all your might and call upon God to strengthen you to resist. You can be sure that God loves you as much as He loves any other person and will strengthen you to overcome when you are truly repentant. If your repentance is half-hearted then God will not deliver you because He sees that you love your

sin more than His righteousness. You have to come to the point where you hate your sin as much as He does. When you reach that point, and call out to Him in repentance, He will rescue you and change your heart attitude toward that sin so that you can resist it when tempted in the future. When temptation comes again, and it will, you have to stand firm and not give in to it in the least otherwise you will be hooked again and have to start over. James 4:7 says, *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* God does not lie so believe this with all your heart, resist sin with all your strength, and you will be freed.

Pornography, alcohol and drugs are not the only addictive sins. In a sense, all sins are addictive. Many churchgoers are addicted to gossip, hate, jealousy, etc. and these sins need to be repented of in the same way as pornography, alcohol and drugs. Gal. 5:19-21 lists many other sins which will exclude people from the kingdom of God.

### **Finally**

You don't have to take it any more. Jesus offers you freedom from the burden of sin. Don't believe the lie that has many thinking, "That's just me. I'm only human." If you are caught up in sin then I urge you to accept Jesus' loving invitation: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"* (Matt. 11:28-30).

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