

A Common Struggle

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These are observations that have been made about sin in my own life, and hopefully, they can help you as well. When we struggle with sin, it is easy to get caught in a cycle of shame and self-loathing, expressing, "I can't believe I sinned again. God must be ashamed of me." The apostle Paul conveyed similar sentiments with regard to his own sin in Romans 7:24-25, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

It can give you peace to know that you are not alone in your fight against sin and the prince of this world. Paul is not the only one who understands our infallibility; Jesus knows it well too, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

In psychology, self-discrimination refers to being able to accurately describe, label, and identify one's emotions, behaviors, and experiences, and respond to them appropriately. If you are asked, "How are you feeling?" A common response is, "I don't know." The inability to accurately describe one's emotions is a problem that can lead to socially strained interactions with others because of not responding appropriately, like resorting to an outburst during a conversation without mindful awareness of how you are feeling.

As this pertains to our sin, our relationship with God, and our fellowship with one another, being able to accurately describe our experiences with sin, and how we feel about it, can help us respond appropriately to our sin by avoiding self-loathing, by avoiding pointing an accusatory finger at the Lord, blaming Him for our problems, and by helping us bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Throughout Job's ordeals, he expressed, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." (Job 2:21-22) We can be mindful of Job's example and not blame God. What's more, we are told in Mark 2:17, "On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." In your sinful condition, Jesus wants you and desires that you come to Him for repentance.

No matter the sin in your life, not only can Jesus Christ forgive you, and redeem you as

His own, but He can use you for good works as we read in 1 Timothy 1:12-16 of Paul's example, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life."

It is easy to get caught in a cycle of shame and self-loathing when we struggle with sin, yet let us remember, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). As brothers and sisters in Christ, we can take comfort in the truth of Hebrews 8:12, "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."