

## Overwhelmingly Conquer

Franklin Church of Christ  
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AM Worship

### Introduction:

"I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin" (**Romans 7:14**). However, I desperately desire to conquer sin. What is someone like me to do? Sadly, the gospel message of victory over sin and Satan has often been distorted whether purposely or inadvertently. Two mistaken concepts have vehemently warred against each other and God's straight and narrow way has too often gotten lost in the commotion.

### Discussion:

- I. The Failure of the Pharisees.
  - A. In **Romans 7:14-23**, Paul revealed his approach to dealing with sin before coming to Christ. Considering **Philippians 3:4-6**, Paul's approach represents the best of the Pharisees. He knew God's law, agreed with God's law and was committed to God's law. But he kept on sinning.
  - B. We could, no doubt, spend an entire lesson on the fallacies of Pharisaism. The Pharisees began with great intentions around the time of the Maccabean revolt as an attempt to combat the worldliness, materialism and Hellenism of culturally compromising Jews. However, over time, their initial desire was marred by a mistaken foundation. Notice the common thread in **Romans 7:14-23**. 31 times in 10 verses Paul says, "I...me...my..." The heart of the Pharisees' approach, even from the best among them, was a trust in self. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in **Luke 18:9ff** was told to the Pharisees who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous." I will overcome. I am strong enough. I am committed and I will be obedient. I will win the victory over this sin. This ruggedly individualistic American Christianity is destined for failure.
  - C. Do we see this attempt at overcoming sin today? I fear we do. When we say we expect heaven because of what we have done, we are making this same mistake. When we teach that our biggest defense against temptation, sin and Satan is our determination to obey God, we are making this mistake. When our biggest piece of advice to people is just buck up and do what they are told, we are making this mistake. When our concept of helping people be holy means drawing lines, dotting i's and crossing t's for their every decision, we are making this mistake.
  - D. With this mindset, our approach to sinners has been, "Quit your sinning." No doubt, some hypocrites need to hear that message. However, a whole lot of people are just like Paul, just like me and just like you. You don't have to tell them to quit sinning; they have already told themselves that a hundred times. They have committed themselves to quit repeatedly, but repeatedly they found the law of sin and death governing their members. These ended up doing one of two things. They either gave up because they figured they must not have what it takes to be a Christian or they made the second mistake about dealing with sins; they sold out with the Gnostics.
- II. The Sellout of the Gnostics.
  - A. In **I Timothy 6:20-21**, Paul opposed Gnosticism saying, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge'—which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith." Gnosticism taught the flesh was utterly evil. When redeemed by Christ, only our spirit is redeemed. The Christian will continue to sin because flesh is evil. Don't worry; Jesus died to redeem us from our sinful flesh if we know His will. Some Gnostics even said the more our flesh sins the better because God's grace increases as our sins increase. No doubt, Gnostics would happily twist Paul's statements in **Romans 7**. To do so, however, they had to ignore **Romans 6**.
  - B. **Romans 6:1-2** shuts down this approach to dealing with our bondage to sin. When we enter Christ, we die to sin. We are not to live any longer in it. Read all of **Romans 6**. Jesus did not die to forgive our sins but leave us in bondage to them. Rather, He died so we might die to sin. He was raised so we might be raised to walk in newness of life. We were slaves to sin, we are now slaves to righteousness. Grace does not let us continue sin but redeems us from it.
  - C. Paul wrote of this again in **Ephesians 4:17-24**. Now that we are in Christ, we are to be renewed in the spirit of our mind and put on the new self. Even **Ephesians 2:8-10**, one of the most well-known passages teaching salvation by grace, points out when we become Christians we are created to walk in God's good works. God has not bestowed His grace to let us continue in sin but to help us walk in His good works, delivered from our bondage to sin.

- D. Do we see this attempt at overcoming sin still today? Absolutely. Whenever we justify our sins by saying we are only human, we are taking this approach. Whenever we allow ourselves to continue sinning because, “Well, that’s why Jesus died, isn’t it?” we are taking this approach. When we start to believe once saved, always saved, we are taking this approach. Whenever we overlook our sins because God overlooks them through His grace, we are taking this approach.
- E. With this mindset, serving and glorifying God is not about becoming more like Him. Rather, we become satisfied to be just a little better than the world or even just like the world but think we are glorifying God because His grace will be bestowed. With this mindset, worshipping God ceases to be about worshipping God, but about having an experience that makes us feel good even though we know we are still sinning. Jesus didn’t die for us to remain in sin.

### III. Overwhelmingly Conquer through Christ.

- A. **Romans 7:14-23** demonstrates we cannot overcome sin. We cannot white knuckle it. We cannot commit enough to overcome. That is doomed to failure. Let’s face it, if Paul could not pull that off, we won’t either. **Romans 6:1-23**, however, demonstrates God will not just let us stay in our sins. It also teaches we are responsible. God will not simply flip all the switches in our heart to immediately quit everything into which we have been sold into bondage. Where is the victory?
- B. **Romans 8:37** provides the answer. “But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” No matter what Satan hurls at us, we will overcome through Jesus Christ. Jesus will not present us to the Father as holy and blameless, if we are complacent in our sins. However, neither has he left us to battle sin on our own. We have noticed Paul’s victory before in **Philippians 4:13**. “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”
- C. Paul had said earlier in **Philippians 2:12-13**, “So then , my beloved...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Too often we argue the two halves of this statement against each other. Instead, let’s take them together. We must work. We must work in fear and trembling, lest being complacent we fall from the living God (**Hebrews 3:12-13**). However, we can keep up this work in confidence and boldness because we are not working alone. God is working within us to will and to work for His good pleasure. We are too weak to win, but God is not (**Ephesians 3:20**).
- D. No doubt, the next two questions are, “Exactly what are we to do?” and “How is God working exactly?” I don’t know. I would like to present a sermon that contains all the answers to these questions, but I simply don’t know them. Maybe in several years I can present that sermon, but right now I can’t. However, while we are studying, remember that as we step onto the battlefield against Satan and his minions each day (see **Ephesians 6:12**), we are like David stepping on to the battlefield against Goliath. In **I Samuel 17**, did David know exactly what he was supposed to do all the way along? Did he know exactly what God was going to do? When it was done, did he know exactly what God had done? David knew this, “The Lord...will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine...You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts...This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands ...” (**I Samuel 17:37, 45-46**). Satan has defied God and God’s people. If we will step out onto the battlefield, our slings in hand, God will deliver us from the hand of Satan and will deliver him into our hands. We will win because that is how powerful our God is.

### Conclusion:

I’m sorry I cannot answer all our questions. You will have to do what I am doing, delve into God’s word. I do know this. I know where the process of deliverance begins. **Mark 16:16** says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” **Acts 2:38** says, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” In **Romans 6:3-4**, as Paul began talking about all we have studied today, he wrote, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” I don’t know everything you are going to have to do for the rest of your life. But I do know where it begins. Do you realize you are a sinner in need of a Savior? Then step on to the battlefield today by submitting to Jesus in baptism for the remission of your sins. Be baptized into Christ’s death so you may walk in the newness of life.