

Everyone Who Makes a Practice of Sinning

Taylor Houser / Devotional

Happy Friday everyone, and good morning to everyone. I pray that this week has gone by without issue for you. Today I would us to ponder this verse from James. [James 4:7-8a](#) “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” While we will never be entirely free of our sin nature, that old self as Paul calls it, until we go to be with the Lord, we still have an obligation to try to live a holy life in accordance to God’s commands. And here James gives practical and actionable advice.

Immediately we run into an issue with the first part of his instruction. Submitting ourselves to God is much, much harder to do than it is to say. Sure, we find it easy to submit to God when it comes to things like His prohibition on murder, but it becomes harder the more we stray into things which few people today have strong convictions about. How many of us regularly break the law by speeding or downloading copyrighted material? And yet God has commanded us to obey the laws of our government. Or how hard it is to submit when God has ordained some large and uprooting change in our lives which we neither wanted nor expected. And yet, James tells us we have to submit ourselves to God fully and wholly. When you feel it tough to submit to God’s will, either in His ordinances or His plan for you, remember that trust is an action. You can choose to trust and submit even if you don’t agree with or understand everything yet. Recall that man, with the terribly oppressed child, who cried out to Jesus, “I believe; help my unbelief!” The next step is likewise hard—resist the devil. Sin, by its very nature, is tempting and alluring. Satan preys on our weaknesses to lead us away from God. However, Christ broke our chains to sin. We are now empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit to deny Satan and instead do good works. But just because we can, does not mean it will be easy. It is hard to fight off the old sinful passions. When we are tempted, it is often best to get up and change the situation. Counter-intuitively, dwelling on it and trying to logic yourself out of it can lead you to giving into it instead. Sin wins when you give it a seat at your table. Don’t hesitate to message or talk to your prayer partner that you’re struggling against temptation. And try to figure out what brought upon the temptation to sin in the first place. If you can avoid situations and

scenarios that incline you to sin, you can avoid the worst of the fighting in the first place. For example, it is easier for someone who suffers from alcoholism to resist going to the bar than it is for them to resist drinking when they're already at the bar. Lastly, but the most wonderful part, when we put in an effort to walk with God, God responds to our efforts. As sin begets sin, so does holiness beget holiness. As we live a life in the spirit, emulating Jesus Christ, it becomes easier and more natural as time goes on. The old sinful self begins to wither and die, while the new man flourishes. When we don't cover ourselves in the dark and dirty robes of sin, the brilliant light of Christ shines brighter out from us.

Lord God, merciful Father, please help us in our daily struggle against sin. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to live blameless and upright lives in the likeness of your Son our Lord. Let us trust in you at all times, be it in health or sickness, wealth or poverty, and in times of great uncertainty. Jesus Christ, please be with us in our struggle against the flesh, the world, and the devil. Let us do your will rather than our own selfish desires.