

It Is Written

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I Struggle with Sin. Am I a Bad Christian?

By Mark McCrary

Every honest Christian knows this question: “I’m struggling with sin. Does that make me a bad Christian?”

The Bible doesn’t brush this concern aside. In fact, it describes exactly that tension between God’s call to holiness and our ongoing battle with sin. On one hand, God says, “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). That’s the standard—absolute purity, no sin. But then 1 John 1:8 reminds us, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” It’s in the middle of these two truths that our everyday lives take place.

Our goal is not to sin—John goes on to say, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1)—but he immediately adds, “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” In other words, sin is still real, but because of Christ, it’s no longer our master.

You Don’t Have to Sin Anymore

Romans 6 makes that crystal clear. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, believers have been set free from sin’s dominion. Paul writes, “Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). Yes, you will sin (1 John 1:8), but you don’t have to keep sinning. You are no longer chained to your old desires. Christ has freed you from the bondage of sin. Because of Christ, when you sin, you can stop. You can walk away.

Paul reminds us that faithfulness is part of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. You don’t struggle alone. As John promised, “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

That’s why the keyword in this question—“I struggle with sin”—is so important.

Struggle Means You’re Fighting

There’s an old preacher’s story about a young man who confessed, “I’m struggling with pornography.” The preacher asked, “How often do you look at it?” “About ten times a day,” the young man answered. The preacher paused, then said gently, “That doesn’t sound much like a struggle.”

He wasn’t trying to be cruel—just to make an important point: the word struggle demands we fight back. We hate what’s wrong. We repent when we fall. We don’t want to live in sin. Paul puts it this way, “Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you” (Colossians 3:5). You declared war on sin when you were baptized into Christ. You committed to holy living. But it isn’t a “one and done” thing. Following Christ is a commitment to fight that war every single day you live.

When Guilt Is a Good Thing

The reality is that the person who doesn’t struggle isn’t doing well. If sin doesn’t bother us, something’s wrong. The absence of struggle usually means the absence of caring—and that’s a huge problem.

But when sin does grieve you—when you feel that pang of conviction after you fall—that’s actually evidence of life. Paul calls it “godly sorrow” and says it “produces a repentance that leads to

salvation without regret" (II Corinthians 7:10). That sorrow isn't meant to crush you—it's meant to drive you to Christ. Guilt without grace leads to despair; guilt that turns to Jesus leads to growth.

There's Good News

If you're struggling with sin—bothered by it, fighting it—that's not a sign you're a bad Christian. It's a sign you're alive in the fight.

Take heart: the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you (Romans 8:11).

The more you grow, the more you'll see progress. Temptations that once owned you will lose their hold. Sin's voice will grow weaker, and the Spirit's voice stronger. You will become more like Christ—not overnight, but over time.

But remember: there has to be fruit. People who live in continual guilt without change aren't repenting. Real repentance is more than acknowledging sin—it's a genuine effort to change. God wants you to overcome sin, not be overcome with sorrow (II Corinthians 2:7).

So no, struggling with sin doesn't make you a bad Christian. Giving up the struggle would.

So, beloved, keep fighting. Keep repenting. Keep trusting Jesus.

He's not ashamed of the Christian who struggles—He's there to help them stand.

Three Kinds of Christians

By Greg Gwin

There are three kinds of Christians in any local congregation. Which kind are you?

1) There are those Christians you can always count on. When there is work to be done, when a volunteer is needed, when a need must be met, you can depend on these folks to step forward. They carry their own weight, and they help others carry theirs, too (Gal. 6:2,5). There is never a doubt about their commitment or dedication. Their obvious zeal serves as a positive source of encouragement to others. You just never are left to wonder where they stand - because they demonstrate their faith in every way. These Christians serve as the "core" of any faithful congregation. Without them, important work would never get done - crucial matters would be left unattended - the church simply would not do well. Thank God for all such brethren. We should all strive to be one of these!

2) There are some other Christians in the church that are absolutely "out of it." They have little if any connection to the real work of the local congregation. They never are around if there is work to be done, and they simply DO NOT volunteer to help with the on-going efforts of the group. It is even impossible to count on these folks to attend the services regularly. Almost anything can serve as an excuse for them to miss the assemblies. And, if they don't even assemble faithfully, we wonder if they are really doing anything in service to the Lord.

3) There is yet another group that is in evidence in the local church. These are the ones who are "riding the fence." They want to give the impression that they are faithful and involved, but in reality their lives are full of compromise. They vocally claim allegiance to Christ, but they can't be counted on to consistently put the Kingdom first.

Our Lord described these three kinds of Christians as "hot," "cold," and "lukewarm" (Rev. 3:15,16). Which term describes YOU?