

Look to Jesus and Him Only

"Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace... Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do." Romans 8:5-7,12-13 NLT

The Message Bible translates Romans 8:5-7 this way, "Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, and ends up thinking more about self than God."

There are many components to overcoming sin, such as godly sorrow and repentance. However, I want to talk about one of the key roadblocks to conquering a nagging sin problem, and that is focusing on the failure. In our desire to please God, we often fixate on our sin problem rather than fix our gaze on Him.

A Bible teacher gave this example: a young man hated how his father had treated him, so the son pledged to never be like him. However, because of a constant fixation on not being like his father, the son became like his father. The lesson here is that you will gravitate toward, and become like, what you focus on. The more you turn your heart toward God, the more you will gravitate toward and become like Jesus. As you surrender to God's love song to you, the enticement that sin offers will fade and lose its power over you.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Refocusing our gaze on God's love, mercy and grace is the life-giving way to turn from sin. When we do, we deny sin its power over us. This is also a key takeaway when studying chapters, 6, 7 and 8 in the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul explained in great length to how trying to fulfill the law only frustrates our ability to walk in victory over sin. When we try to overcome sin through self-effort, we commit ourselves to a cycle of defeat. The only way to be delivered from your besetting sin is through a transformed heart, and only God can transform a heart. God changes you from the inside out; something you cannot do for yourself.

One of the most unrealized revelations within Christendom is this: Only God can accomplish His redemptive work in us. This is because He is the only One who can change us from the inside out—something our self-effort cannot do.

Jesus often made examples of the Pharisees, who made every effort to faithfully live a sin-free life. In the eyes of the public, they were righteous, but Jesus pointed out that the religious elite looked good on the outside but were rotten on the inside, calling them "whitewashed tombs." The lesson here is that Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and, in Him, we can become whole as we look to Jesus and Him only. The Apostle Paul said this, "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord." NLT

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"Heavenly Father, I receive Your Word for me today; I know it is for me. Thank You for drawing me ever closer to You. Thank You for knowing me and loving me in spite of my pride and failures. LORD, I want so much to be victorious over my nagging sin problem, so help me nurture the Seed of Your Rhama Word planted in my heart, today. Help me turn to look full-on into Jesus' wonderful face so that He can transform my heart and change me from the inside out. I ask You to work the truths of this message into my heart. Lord, I give You permission to prompt me, lead me, nudge me and to remind me, so You can do Your perfect work in my life, for Your glory. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.