

- I. He who commits sin is the slave of sin.
 - A. John 8:31-38 . . . So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." [33] They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" [34] Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. [35] The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. [36] So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. [37] I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38] I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."
 - B. Prayer

- II. Choosing to sin is choosing to serve sin as the slave of sin
 - A. John 8:33 . . . They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"
 1. At the time these Jews said this to Jesus, Israel was under Rome's rule – which means they were in servitude to Rome. And in the past, Israel was in servitude to Babylon and the Medes and Persians. So these Jews certainly were not talking about political slavery.
 2. However, in spite of their political slavery, no conquering government had been victorious in forcing them to abandon Jehovah worship and begin worshiping other gods.
 3. Therefore, the freedom they claimed had been theirs all along was religious freedom, and their point was that Jesus could not set them free because they were already free.
 - B. John 8:34 . . . Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."
 1. However, Jesus was neither offering them political nor religious freedom, but freedom of the heart, the mind, and one's behavior from slavery to sin. And so to clarify the freedom He was offering, He said, "everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

2. Now I think we can all agree that this statements creates a bit of discomfort, and this sense of discomfort might motivate us to move on and leave this statement behind. However, I am convinced we ought to make an honest effort to understand what Jesus is saying. And to do this, we must consider these words in light of other things Jesus said and other portions of scripture that deal with committing sin and slavery to sin.
- C. Therefore, we will begin by confirming several truths about sin that are stated in the Bible.
1. First, everyone has sinned, all sin bears the penalty of eternal damnation, and Jesus died to pay the penalty for sin on our behalf (Romans 3:23; 6:23, 5:6-11).
 2. Second, beyond paying the penalty for sin, Jesus died to break the power of sin over us so that upon being born again, we no longer have to sin. Therefore, with the exception of sin we don't yet know is sin, any other sin we commit after being born again is either unintentional, careless, or deliberate – and this includes the sinful desires, thoughts, words, and actions we are working hard to kill off and replace with Christ-likeness. Consider the following two scriptures.
 - a. 1 John 3:5-6 . . . You know that [Jesus] appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. [6] No one who abides in Him (*deliberately*) sins; no one who (*deliberately and unrepentantly*) sins has seen Him or knows Him.
 - b. Romans 6:1-7 . . . What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? [2] May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? [3] Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? [4] 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. [5] For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, [6] knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; [7] for he who has died is freed from sin.
 3. Third, the Bible distinguishes between unintentional sin and deliberate sin, occasional sin – which you confess and repent of and sin you are not repenting of – which includes the practice of sin.

- a. For example the difference between unintentional and deliberate sin is spoken of in –
 - (1) Numbers 15:27-30 . . . If one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. [28] The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray [by sinning] unintentionally ... that he may be forgiven ... [30] But the person who does anything defiantly (*knowingly and deliberately*) ... that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.
 - (2) Hebrews 10:26-27 . . . For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.
 - (3) But if we intentionally pursue a life of godliness, then in spite of sins committed along the way, these words in 1 John 1:7 apply, “If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
- b. The Bible also addresses the difference between the occasional sin which you confess and repent of, and sin you are not repenting of – which includes the practice of sin. For example –
 - (1) 1 John 3:4 . . . Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.
 - (2) Matthew 7:22-23 . . . Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
 - (3) 1 John 3:7-8 . . . Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; [8] the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (*Notice that in the spiritual realm, your father determines your nature.*)
4. Fourth, the Bible teaches that the repentance and confession of sin leads to God's forgiveness, but deliberate, unrepented sin is not forgiven.

- a. Psalm 32:5 . . . I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.
- b. 1 John 1:9 . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- c. Ezekiel 33:11-16 . . . "As I live!" declares the Lord GOD, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live ... [12] The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day of his transgression, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he will not stumble because of it in the day when he turns (*repents, confesses*) from his wickedness ... [13] When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die. [14] But when I say to the wicked, "You will surely die," and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness, [15] if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without (*deliberately*) committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. [16] None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live."

D. Without losing site of these four truths, let me remind you that we are talking about Jesus' words, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

1. The first words, "Truly, truly," means we are to pay close attention to and give extra thought to Jesus' next words. "Everyone who (*knowingly and deliberately*) commits sin is the slave of sin."
2. For some reason, Jesus did not add any qualifiers or exclusions to these words. And whatever His reason, we should give serious consideration to the fact that He – the all-knowing, all-wise, perfectly just, and loving God – added no qualifiers or exclusions.
 - a. However, even though we are the ones who want to add qualifiers and exclusions, adding them does not have to be a bad thing as long as our qualifiers and exclusions remain true to all of God's word – not just the verses that support our preferred perspective.
 - b. And as you may have noticed today, I myself have added a few qualifiers which infer a few exclusions to the scriptures I've read.

And I trust they have only helped make things clearer without making sin more tolerable or excusable.

3. When Jesus speaks of being a slave of sin, He is not talking about being forced into slavery against your will, but rather knowingly and willfully choosing to commit sin – which in turn means you are knowingly and willfully serving sin just as a slave serves a master.
 - a. Paul affirms that our slavery to sin is the result of a free-will choice in Romans 6:16, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”
 - b. Peter adds these words to this truth in 2 Peter 2:20-22 . . . For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. [21] For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from (*implies a free-will choice to turn away from*) the holy commandment handed on to them. [22] It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."
- E. One of the challenges we Christians face today is the often repeated idea that sinning is inevitable, that is, that it is impossible for Christians to avoid sinning.
1. Certainly it is impossible to avoid sinning when committing sins you do not yet know are sin. And we may not be able avoid unintentional sin – at least the first or second time we unintentionally commit a particular sin.
 - a. But careless sin, deliberate sin, and the ongoing practice of a particular sin or group of sins are avoidable, which means they are not and can never be inevitable.
 - b. Besides, God promises to stand between us and temptation, and in so doing, prevent us from being tempted beyond our ability to resist. And not only that, He will open up a way of escape so that we can remain faithful servants of righteousness in spite of the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 2. What this means is that neither the devil, nor the world, nor your old nature can make you sin.

- a. They can tempt you, they can make it seem like sin is your only sensible choice, they can make it very hard not to sin, and they can even strongly suggest you are helpless to resist.
 - b. But the reality is, Jesus Christ has set you free from the power and practice of sin. And beyond this, the promises and power of God enable you to live godly, the Word of God teaches you the ways of godliness, and you have the Holy Spirit within you – which means you have the divine nature within you, and it is not God’s nature to sin.
3. Therefore, no matter what any well-known theologian or popular pastor or best selling book says to the contrary, God’s word proclaims that when it comes to known sin – whether committed carelessly, deliberately, or repeatedly – you do not have to sin.
- a. You might sin – which is why God provides the means to confess our sin and be forgiven (1 John 1:9), and why God provides an advocate in Jesus Christ who intercedes on our behalf with God when we do sin (1 John 2:1-2).
 - b. But these gracious provisions are not there because we have to sin, but because we – sad to say – just might choose to sin. And to this sad reality, Jesus adds that choosing to sin is choosing to serve sin as your master.
- F. There is one more thing I want to say before moving on to vs 35. If you are struggling with a particular sin even though you have been making a worthy effort to drive it out of your life and replace it with godliness, don’t despair. Persevere!
1. And if you will persevere in this fight, you will – in time – gain victory, you will become a new creation in this area of your life. And this will happen by the same power, assistance, and presence of God that gave Israel victory of the inhabitants of the Promised Land.
 2. For as Philippians 1:6 says, “He (*that is, God*) who began a good work in you will continue perfecting it until the day of Christ Jesus.” He will not give up, and neither should you.
- G. However, if you know of sin in your life, if you know you have an area of weakness, or an area of unbelief, or an area of selfishness or pride, or if you know you have accepted or tolerated a particular practice of sin for years, then I urge you to follow the instructions James provides in James 4:7-10 . . . Submit to God. Resist the devil. Draw near to God. Cleanse your hands of sinful deeds, purify your heart of double-mindedness. Be miserable and mourn and weep – that is, let your heart

break and your eyes shed tears over treating God and others so poorly; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom – or in other words, stop diverting your attention to the things that are fun or easy and start giving serious attention to doing the hard work of putting off your sin and putting on Christ-likeness. Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord, show Him by your actions that He is your God, that He is the love of your life, that you live to please Him, and He will exalt you.

- H. John 8:35-36. . . The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. [36] So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.
1. We know from vs 37, that these Jews were in on the plot to murder Jesus.
 - a. Therefore, their willingness to intentionally break the sixth commandment (*You shall not murder*) was proof that they were slaves of sin.
 - b. And as slaves of sin, they could have no part in the eternal kingdom of God – even though as Israelites they were part of God's earthly kingdom.
 2. Therefore, for them to be free indeed, that is, free to enter God's eternal kingdom, they needed to be set free from their slavery to sin, and not just the penalty of their sin. And the only one who could and can do free any sinner is Jesus Christ.
 - a. He is the only son who has been and will continue to be with the Father forever.
 - b. He is the only son who can free the slaves from their servitude.
 - c. And He is the only son who can turn freed servants into sons and daughters of God.
 3. So if and when the Son makes you free, you are truly free.

III. Conclusion

- A. Everyone who (*knowingly and deliberately*) commits sin is the slave of sin.
- B. Therefore, may we as Christians flee this kind of slavery and pursue the freedom of godliness made possible by Jesus Christ.