

Brief Recap:

We have been dissecting failure over the past three weeks. Failure, for our purposes, has been synonymous with SIN. Sin is a separator and it invites death into our lives. We are all born with a sinful nature but we can also commit sinful acts. We commit sin when we step beyond God's commandments.

God erects boundaries and He puts up "Caution Tape" which are His commandments, and when we cross those lines we are in sin. We can slip across the line (Trespass), we can step across the line (Transgression), or we can stand on the other side of the line (Iniquity).

I feel God wants me to put it this way. Our **sinful nature** will take us to Hell someday, but **sinful actions** will not only *take* us to Hell, they will *bring* Hell to us.

But Jesus came to Earth and shed His blood to **erase every sinful action** and give us **a new nature!** We access this wonderful forgiveness and the promise of a new nature by repenting, being baptized in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

On this last night of Epic Fail, let's talk about failure on ...

The Other Side of Salvation

1 John 2:1

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, **that ye sin not**. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

It almost seems like John was trying to soften the blow of what he was about to say. John says some very pointed things in his writing. In the next chapter, John says:

1 John 3:4-10

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God**, neither he that loveth not his brother.

John was being very direct because he was writing about something very important. He was writing about people dealing with sin on **the other side of salvation**.

He was letting them know that even though they were baptized in Jesus' name and were now in Christ, if they repeatedly committed sin they were of the devil! This is very straightforward teaching to say the least.

It's important how we live on **the other side of salvation**.

It is not God's Will that we keep on sinning after we have been forgiven. This might seem like a no-brainer for most of us, but for many people, this has been a big issue. Most of the NT writers had to confront the idea that it is ok to sin after your saved (Paul, John, Jude, and others).

Many Christians and Christian groups have pondered this question over the past 2000 years since Jesus died: Does it matter how I live after I'm saved?

This is a tricky subject to dig into. There are two extreme views:

1. People who think they're saved by grace so it doesn't matter how they live. They love to quote verses like Isaiah 64:6 (righteousnesses as filthy rags) and Ephesians 2:8-9 (by grace are ye saved, not of works). They use God's grace to their advantage to live however they like.
2. People who think they are saved because they live so righteous and they do good works. These people tend to act like Pharisees. They think that it's their goodness that got them and is keeping them saved.

Neither of these views are true **by themselves!**

There needs to be a **balance** between the two. *Yes* we are saved by grace, and *no* we aren't saved by good works, but the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace **UNTO** good works. So if good works aren't present, it lets me know that our understanding of grace is distorted.

Titus 2:11-12

11 For the **grace** of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

What teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly? **GRACE!** Grace leads to righteous living!

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by **grace** are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- Lots of people with extreme view #1 love to quote these verses, but they tend to stop right here. They need to read verse 10.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Grace, if understood and applied properly, **will always lead to righteous living**.

There is this balance that exists between grace and good works. You need to live right in the middle.

I don't live righteously so that I *can* be saved, I live righteously because I *am* saved. It is in **response** to God's grace, His unmerited favor, that I live righteous.

And there is a **big** difference!

Doing good works *to* be saved is nothing more than keeping a list of rules so that God will accept me. Doing good works *because* I am saved is a celebration of God's goodness in my life. Doing good works out of obligation is drudgery and even leads to rebellion. Doing good works in response to God's grace develops a strong love for God in my life!

Let's continue to unpack the question:

Does it matter how I live on the other side of salvation?

Paul wrote of a powerful principle in Romans 5:20. He said that where **sin** abounded, **grace** did much more abound! But immediately after he wrote this, he clarified something. Just two verses later, Paul said:

Romans 6:1-2

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Paul would also write to Christians in a city called Galatia:

Galatians 5:1, 13

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only **use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh**, but by love serve one another.

God's grace and mercy is so sufficient that you can sin after you are saved and if you will repent, God will forgive you again. There were some people in Paul's day that were using this to their advantage. They were using their liberty "for an occasion to sin". They were "continuing in sin so that grace could abound". Another apostle like Paul named Jude would later write about men who would "turn God's grace into lasciviousness" (loose living). They lived however they wanted to and presumed on God's grace.

Paul's answer to this kind of mentality was "God forbid" you live like that and let your life be tangled up in sin once again. Yes, God will forgive you but why would you want to deal with sin again. Sin still causes baggage and shame. Sin will still bring death. Sin still weighs you down.

Paul was emphatically saying "Yes! It does matter how you live on the other side of salvation!."

But even Paul knew what it was to fall. Paul knew what it was to fail from time to time. He was transparent in his writing about his struggles. One of my favorite passages from Paul is in Romans 7. It shows the humanity of Paul. He was just as human as you or I.

Romans 7:18-21

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

- This is the guy that wrote two thirds of the NT, went on missionary journeys preaching the gospel and saw thousands upon thousands saved. And here he is saying there is nothing good in him?

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

- What I want to do, I don't. What I don't want to do, I do.
- Because of this observation, Paul came to a conclusion:

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Even after your saved, there is still an old sinful nature that you have to deal with.

Before you were saved all you had was your sinful nature. After you get saved, God gives you a new nature. Your old sinful nature is called the **FLESH** and your new nature is called the **SPIRIT** and they are both within you!

When you get saved your old sinful nature isn't eradicated, it is merely subdued. If it is not kept in check, it can grow strong and cause you to sin.

Galatians 5:16-17

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

On the other side of salvation there is a war that goes on inside. It's a war between the flesh and the spirit. These two things are contrary to one another.

Our two natures are like two **sumo wrestlers & two dogs**.

The one that wins will be the one that is fed the most.

When I see sin present in my life or any other Christian, I know that the flesh is being fed and is growing strong. If I look a little closer I will realize that my prayer life and Bible reading is fading. I haven't been doing anything to feed my spirit and it is growing weak.

The best way to stop lusting after the flesh is to not simply cut out sinful activities, but to replace them with spiritual activities and lust after the Spirit. A lot of times we try to stop sin in our lives without beefing up our prayer time. That's a waste of time! You will fall right back into sin. It's not enough to simply starve the flesh, we must also feed the spirit!

Replace your lust of the flesh with a lust for the Spirit. Lust after God! Imagine having the same lust for God that you used to have for sin! The same passion for God that you once had for movies, sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.

The Psalmist had lust, but it wasn't for sin, it was for God!

Psalm 42:1-2

1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: **when shall I come and appear before God?**

The Psalmist was so desirous of God, that he couldn't wait until the next moment he would be in his presence. Some people can hardly wait until they get their next drink, their next hit, their next one night stand, their next time on the Internet, etc. they lust after the flesh. We need to lust after the spirit and after God with the same fervency!

In conclusion. When we first get saved, there is a strong passion and love for God. Its easy to say no to sin initially. But as time goes by, our first love fades and we begin to start loving other things. But if we could fall in love with Jesus again, it would solve a lot of our problems.

1 John 5:3

3 For this is the **love** of God, that we keep his **commandments**: and his commandments are not grievous.

I believe that loving God and keeping His commandments are intrinsically connected. If we want to continue in righteousness on the other side of salvation, we can never lose a passionate, fervent love for God!