

Christ Gives Us Mastery Over Sin

By Maggie Fischer

“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

(Genesis 4:7 NIV)

As a young child, my parents had my sisters and I memorize Genesis 4:7 to teach us the important lesson of mastery over sin. They would remind us of this verse when we were tempted to fall into the sins that children often give into: sibling tiffs, selfishness in wanting our own way, and talking back to our parents, just to name a few. I am thankful for my parents’ wisdom in taking this approach with teaching us this important life lesson that is just as applicable in my life today as it was when I was 8 years old. But now seeing this verse as an adult, I can see even more depth and richness in the lessons it has to teach. Isn’t this the beauty of Scripture? Basic truths we learn in the infancy of our faith continue to grow and expand as we mature in our Christian walk.

The basic message of this verse is, as I mentioned just previously, mastery over sin. But studied more intensely, I can see God’s message to Cain can be delved into much more deeply. The first thing that caught my attention is the word “accepted.” Our world today is full of talk of acceptance and loving without judgement. This can be a very controversial topic and it is not my intent to open up that discussion in the context of this article. But I think it is important to note that it is a “hot” topic among Christians and unbelievers alike. From a human perspective, each one of us would be lying to say we did not care about our standing before our fellow man. Desire for acceptance is a concept instilled within us from our earliest days. But Christ tells us in Matthew 10:28 our focus should not be on our standing before our fellow man but rather on our standing before the Lord of All. He [Christ] says, *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both the soul and body in hell.”* In this statement, Christ is reminding us whose opinion really matters. It should be of little importance to us what the world thinks of us. What should be of first importance is how acceptable we are before God. Yet for me, and many others, this can often be easy to accept as the truth but much harder to put into practice. I challenge you to prayerfully ask the Lord to remind you to “[fix] *our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith*” (Hebrews 12:2) and to be freed from the burden of striving for the acceptance of man. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:34: *“Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus Who died – more than that, Who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”* If we are right before God, then no one has any right to speak against us. And this truth should spur us on!

The second message I find in this verse is victory over sin. Sin is a disease we are all dying from. But Christ came to earth with the life-giving vaccine: His own life blood. And even though Christians have received this salvation, we are all still affected by the sin nature we were physically born into. Yet all hope is not lost. Christ gives us the ability to fight sin and overcome it. Satan wants to deceive us into thinking our sins have victory over us. But this is not what Christ tells us! Paul teaches us in Romans 8:37 that *“in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him [Christ] Who loved us”* and also in Philippians 1:6 that *“He [Christ] Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”* On our own, we cannot have mastery over our sins. But through Christ we can. He gives us the strength we need to fight against the attacks of Satan and our own sinful desires and

come out victorious. When you are tempted to fall into discouragement over sin's hold on an area of your life, remind yourself of these teachings and ask God to give you strength to fight the devil's attacks.

I am so thankful to have this verse written on my heart. I am far from being able to say man's opinion does not matter to me or that I always have victory over sins in my life. But by memorizing Scriptures such as this one, I am more prone to ground myself back in the Truth and Word of God when I fall short. Our Christian walk is a life-long journey and the seeds planted in us along the way will grow and develop in maturity if we allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate and nurture them in our lives. I thank God every day for blessing me with Godly parents who planted so many of these seeds in my heart. I pray that the message of this verse has encouraged you today as much as it has encouraged me throughout the years.