

What does sin have to do with our hearts and prayer?

The role of sin in the Christian life is important to understand, because though we are forgiven, our sin still has its consequences. Knowing how sin affects our walk, and what to do about it, will make the difference between a successful walk and a failing one.

This is not an issue in opposition to our Salvation. Those in Jesus are Saved and fully forgiven, though still sinners. We are Justified now before God on the merit of Christ's Sacrifice. However, we are yet in the flesh, and we still suffer the results of our sin – all the way up to death or when Christ returns and we are Glorified in our new bodies.

Though we are sinners, as Righteous through Christ we may now approach the Throne of God in the Most Holy Place in Heaven. We may stand before God in the Holy Spirit, clean under the Sacrifice of the Lamb's Blood.

Yet, **James 4:1-10** tells us God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. We must approach God earnestly, in faith. Salvation is a good example; no one has ever been Saved in his own pride, but only in true humility before God.

Humility demands our recognition, confession, repentance, and our plea for forgiveness – if we are to be set free. This is the pattern for all good prayer. Prayer is for conforming us, and everything in this fallen world, to the desires of God. It is for our interaction with God. This humility is necessary for God to recognize the sinner's plea – be it a prayer to be Saved, or the prayer of an experienced Christian.

So then, how does sin impact all of this? It hardens us, it hardens our heart towards conformity to God's Will and everything He desires for us. Consider the issue and the effects of fasting on a heart preparing to go before God. Consider Jesus' words of having the heart of a child in order to see Heaven. Consider the 4 soils and the effect of sin, or the lack of, in the good soil. Consider the battle between the Spirit in us which speaks to our resurrected soul, and the sinful body we still occupy which wants to do just the opposite.

All of these issues speak of the Christian's heart. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is for the express purpose of the transformation of our heart, and thus our life. All that we do and are flows from the heart, and God's primary concern is our heart and the results following it. The nurture of our heart and our interaction with the Holy Spirit in us is our primary responsibility, and sin is the obstacle standing in our way.

The nurture of our relationship with the Spirit in us revolves around five things – the study of the Word to know the Person, Heart, and Will of God; prayer to God seeking our conformity to His Word; the deliberate pursuit of a holy life before God; our obedience to His Word, supported in prayer made profitable through a holy life; and our joy in obedience to God, bringing joy in experiencing Him. All of these issues are common and are seated in the heart. If these are necessary for our transformation to Christ's image, and if our heart is centrally involved, and if sin hardens our heart and so dampens our responsiveness to God – then the only reasonable thing to do is what God already demands. Examine yourself, see your sin in your reflection in Scripture, see what you are to be, be conformed in obedience under the help of the Holy Spirit, turn from your sin, and strive to be a useful slave to Christ in the Kingdom of God.

See sin for the blight it is. See its hindrance on your heart, the same heart responsible as the source of yourself and your Christian walk. Recognize God's despise of sin. Strive to be holy, for He is holy. Strive and live to obey His law written on your heart.