

# I'M A SAINT ACTING LIKE A SINNER

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## INVITATION

*What if becoming a Christian impacts your life now,  
and not just when you get to Heaven...*

Last time in *Rescued For Righteousness*, we learned about being born in Adam, into sin. And the good news that at the point of salvation we were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ! The eternal life that we are given is not just a ticket to heaven when we die, it is something we can experience right now because Christ is in us. We are now made righteous. We are saints, not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ did for us on the cross.

While we are new creations, we don't always feel like new creations. Sometimes the internal struggles we experience seem to beat us up, and other times we still act like sinners. That's why many times life feels all tangled up. Scripture tells us our old man has been crucified and buried — we don't drag him around with us anymore. But there is still a battle we face, and if we don't understand what that battle is we will live in constant frustration!

Today we will look at this battle, understanding that it's the flesh against the spirit, not me against me!

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Galatians 5:17).

When we understand what the fight is, we can more fully enjoy this eternal life we have been given!





## THE KNOT

If I am a saint, why do I keep sinning? It feels like I'm fighting against myself. Paul says in Romans:

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:12-13).

This is such a foreign concept for us. We think, *Here I am, I'm a new creation in Christ but I still have this chaotic mess to deal with.* We are tempted to keep doing what we have always done to try and untangle things. We try to control our environment or get people to like us and accept us. We are so used to these old habits and patterns, and when we believe the lie that we need them, we actually allow them to have power over us. But we've got to go back to the truth. Romans says, my old man is dead, right?

“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” (Romans 6:6).

You are no longer a slave to sin — you are alive to God. But you still have the flesh. The flesh is your own attempt at trying to get your needs met apart from God. The flesh can feel like you, because you are so used to behaving that way — but it is not who you are. It is not your identity. So you have a choice, to walk out of your true identity in the spirit, or respond to the chaos of life from the flesh.





## THE UNTANGLE

We tend to define ourselves based on what we do. Isn't that sad? Perhaps without even realizing it, we can do this to God too! In our first module, *Does God Really Care?*, we talked about our personal concept of God, and how we may appropriate God's character based on what He does. For example, we may interpret that if God rescues the child that fell in the well, then God is good. If He doesn't, then He is bad. When we do this, we have attributed His goodness to His behavior. We do this to ourselves as well — if I do good then I am good, if I do bad, then I am bad.

Though our behavior should reflect who we are, it sometimes looks more like who we *used to be*. If you don't understand your new identity as a saint, you may struggle to function like one! Our spirit is our true identity and our soul is the battleground.

We can yield it to the flesh, or we can yield it to the spirit. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, we have a choice. We are free to sin, and we're also free to live according to the spirit. The spirit within us is already perfected for all time. Now we are in the process of learning to rest and trust our spirit and not trust what's familiar in our flesh. This change in behavior and response to chaos and circumstances doesn't just happen overnight. We are creatures of habit. But as we begin to experience the truth, we begin to walk by the spirit and it starts to feel more natural. Walking by the spirit is consistent with who we really are!

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

It was for freedom that He set you free, and if you are not walking in freedom, then there is a truth yet to be revealed. It's not just information, it's a revelation: Christ is actually your life. He has changed you, exchanged you, and given you His righteousness and taken your sinfulness upon Himself. God is pleased when we are resting and trusting Him. The New Covenant says that God has already blessed us and now we live in response to that. We do not have to earn it — we already have it! Philippians tells us:

“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).



It is Christ at work in us when we yield ourselves to the spirit and choose not to present our bodies to sin. We no longer have to try to get our needs met through our own effort. Instead, we are called to trust God to meet our needs.

When we sin, do we have to run to God and ask for His forgiveness? Not anymore! We simply receive it. When we see that we have sinned, we agree with God, confess it, and then thank Him that the behavior is not who we are anymore. Sin has consequences, but our forgiveness was already dealt with at the cross. We may need to ask for forgiveness from others when we sin against them, but in relationship to God we can just say “thank you.”

What about condemnation, is it from God? The short answer is “No.” The flesh will condemn you when you try to live up to certain standards and fail. That’s not God. “I need to perform to be okay” is an old concept from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Scripture clearly tells us:

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

We are free from condemnation and can now experience His peace and rest. That’s the spirit-life in us — the connection that we lost when we were in Adam and Eve, but have now regained because we are in Christ.

Remember that shame wants us to believe that there’s something wrong with us — with who we are. It’s a belief that we are defective. Guilt is a little different, it tells us that we’ve done something wrong. When guilt comes we can take it to God. If it’s from Him, it will be specific to something we have done. If it is from God it will never be condemning. Jesus has dealt with both our sin and shame! He dealt with guilt through forgiveness, and He has dealt with our shame by giving us a new identity. It is no longer about *what I have done*, but rather *who I am*. And who I am has been taken care of at the cross. It is now our choice whether we will live out of our own strength or choose to live in the truth that we are now saints.





## HEART WORK

Let's look at the people and events in our lives and the ways that we have learned to cope in order to get our needs met. What things cause you stress? Do you see unhealthy patterns of behavior in yourself?

As you examine these patterns and behaviors, ask God what they are accomplishing for you. What need are you trying to meet? Then invite God to show you how He has already met those needs for you.

Refer back to module 2, look at your personal tree of knowledge. Identify how you coped and fill in the column below:

Example

*Over achiever*

*People pleasing*

Identify the need that your behavior seeks to meet. Love acceptance worth or security?

Example

*Value*

*Love*

Invite God to speak. How does He meet your needs fully?

Example

*He values me as much as Jesus, sending Him to redeem me.*

*He loved me while I was still a sinner, sending Jesus to die for me.*



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

God is the One we are to look to for our acceptance, worth, and value. He is our Creator and *His* opinion is the only one that matters. Salvation and righteousness are a free gift from God. We are no longer sinners, we've been given a brand new identity — we are saints — even though we may not always feel like it. May we live each day remembering that it's His love and kindness that woos us — it is His love and kindness which gives us life. He will guide us to walk and behave through the spirit. We simply get to enjoy the journey and share it with others.

*Papa, You have given me and the world an amazing gift. You have given us Life. Saying, "thank you" seems so inadequate. Even though we do not always live out of our righteousness, we are righteous nonetheless. Show us that the way to actually act like a saint is to receive and believe that your word is true and that the work You accomplished on the cross was enough to change us from a sinner to a saint. I ask that you continue to renew our minds to the Truth that will set us free.*

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Are you feeling bogged down and tangled up in your circumstances? It happens so easily in this world. Regardless of where you're at in your journey, Life Untangled wants to help you experience the love and power of God in a truly meaningful way. God sees you and your circumstances, and He longs to heal your wounded soul and lead you to a place of hope. If you would like to speak with someone on our team you can do so by contacting [www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us](http://www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us).

We offer a safe place where you can find hope and help on your journey of healing. Our experienced Christian counseling staff helps you discover God's good intentions for your life, especially when your life feels tangled. We guide men, women, and couples through understanding unwanted behaviors, difficult emotions like anxiety, depression and anger, and most importantly, to experience God's design for victory in life.

You are not alone.

### References:

All Scripture taken from the NASB version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

