

## **Sin is Lawlessness and Lawlessness is Sin**

### **4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.**

First John 3:4 says, “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” The word translated “lawlessness” comes from the Greek word *anomia*, which means “an utter disregard for God and His laws.” From this Greek word we also get the word antinomianism.

### **Antinomianism**

Antinomianism is the false belief that there are no moral laws that God expects Christians to obey. It’s the conviction that that believers are freed from the demands of God’s law by depending upon God’s grace for their salvation. In the Bible, there is always a balance between Law and Grace. It’s always been this way.

### **Easy Believism is Not Christianity**

Believers, who emphasize the unconditional promises that God makes when covenanting with His people, but then downplay, ignore, or even seek to eliminate any expectation of righteous living, are trying to justify an “easy believism” kind of faith. If you can be truly happy living like the world, I’d say that you’re probably not really a Christian. Christians have the Holy Spirit within them urging them to live righteously all the time. John 16:8, NASB: **8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world regarding sin, and righteousness, and judgment: 9 regarding sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and regarding righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer are going to see Me; 11 and regarding judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.** So, the Holy Spirit *elenxei* expose, reprove, convince with solid evidence, expose to be guilty the world of sin, but also believers of righteousness, as well as the enemy of his final judgement. It is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Paul, and John, Peter, and all those New Testament writers urge us to walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh, to rid ourselves of all the old sinful practices by cooperating with the Holy Spirit’s urging. For instance Paul in Ephesians 4 beginning in verse 20 says **20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.** So we know that “easy believism” is contrary to the scriptures.

Continuing in verse 25 of Ephesians 4, Paul is basically saying that if you are really a Christian, then you will cooperate with the Holy Spirit in changing you to look more like Christ.

Rid yourself of Falsehood—Ephesians 4:25 **25 Therefore, ridding yourselves of falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are parts of one another.** You can’t build trust in your relationships, if you’re not being trustworthy in your relationships.

Rid yourself of Anger—Ephesians 4:26 **26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.** Anger is an emotion, it comes from deep within us. But what we do with that feeling; how we control it, is up to us.

Rid yourself of theft-- **28 The one who steals must no longer steal; but rather he must labor, producing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need.** Paul is urging us to work for a living, not steal for a living. And he is also urging us to be diligent in our work, so that we will have the means to be generous when we encounter someone with a need.

Rid yourself of slander and gossip—Ephesians 4:29 **29 Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear.** Unwholesome words here are *sapros* rotten, worthless, unfit for use, “of poor or bad quality”.

In summing up, Paul continues in Ephesians 4:30 **30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be**

removed from you, along with all malice. **32 Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Greek word here *lupeo* means to cause pain, to grieve, to vex, to distress, to make sad. How do you feel when you cause pain to someone you love? How does making someone you love sad, or distressed feel? When we realize what we're doing, it makes us feel sad, doesn't it?

And so, professing Christians whose lives have not changed at all, due to this urging of the Holy Spirit within them, over a long period of time, should take Paul's advice in 2 Corinthians 13:5, **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?** In other words, the simplest explanation for a life that has been unchanged by God, despite "accepting Christ" is that you haven't repented of your sins, and made a commitment to follow Jesus, based on The Way that He has made possible by dying for your sins on that cross. And therefore you're not really saved.

A saved person has this witness of the Holy Spirit inside them who is grieved by sin, and therefore it makes us sad and even distressed to sin, and we want to come to Jesus to confess our sins.

**Lawlessness? We're under Grace not the Law, right?**

Where we get pushback from those who want to live any old way that they want is that they say "well, I'm not under the obligation of the law, I'm under grace, right? While Paul says in Gal 5:18 **18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.**, we must look at the context. Just before the verse, Paul says plainly in Gal 5:16-17 **16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want.**

**In Christ, the Fulfillment of the Law**

And, if we are to look at our position, related to the Law, we must consider Jesus' words about the law in Matthew 5:17-20. **17 "Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not [a]the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished! 19 Therefore, whoever nullifies one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness far surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.** Again, this is Jesus talking here. And does this sound like a man who is saying "live whatever way that you want?", no, again, he is antagonistic to this view. The view of these lawless people is diametrically opposed, and diabolically opposed to the teaching of Jesus. Continue to sin, because we are saved by Grace, not by works? No. (see Paul's words in Rom 6:1-7 Paul clarifies that God's grace brings liberty from the slavery of sin and not liberty to sin.