

## “Go and Sin No More”

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**T**hus, Jesus spoke to a woman caught in the act of adultery. Her accusers wanted to corner Jesus with this woman who had been so accused. This is recorded in **John 8:1-11**.

Through His ministry, Jesus put the leadership of Israel on notice concerning the righteous mercy of God and their own unrighteousness. Consider these previous events from the **book of John**:

- Jesus drove the money changers and sellers of livestock from the temple (**2:13-17**).
- He taught that God did not send His Son to condemn but to save (**3:17**).
- A Samaritan woman was given hope (**4:6-29**).
- A man was healed on the Sabbath (**5:1-16**).
- The leadership of Israel was criticized for scratching each other’s backs while rejecting the truth (**5:36-47**).

It appears they sought to expose Jesus for His light touch regarding sinners and seeming inconsistency to the Law: *“Now Moses, in the law commanded us that such should be stoned (see **Leviticus 20:10**). But what do You say?”* Jesus remained silent, “as though He did not hear,” writing with his finger on the ground. They continued to press Him. Jesus *“raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.”* Here they came, making a big spectacle, and Jesus treated it as insignificant. There was no outrage or lengthy speech. He just put words on the ground with His finger. Their foolishness was exposed.

This account is very attractive. All have sinned. And the idea of sinners condemning sinners...well, it is encouraging to see this attitude put in its place. These men weren’t faithful to God, even according to the Law. The fact they did not produce the woman’s accomplice, contrary to the Law, strongly suggests he was one of their own. They departed, beginning with the oldest, convicted of guilt.

When Jesus said, *“Go and sin no more,”* it was one of the many examples where Jesus prepared people for the covenant He would soon bring in. *“Go and sin no more,”* expressed God’s desire to save the lost. Redemption from sin came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Though the seal of redemption had not yet been applied, this woman was being prepared for salvation. *“Go and sin no more”* came from *“God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (**Romans 4:17**)*. Jesus’ words pointed to the fulfillment of God’s promise, *“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (**Genesis 12:3**)*. The apostle Peter revealed the reality of this blessing, *“God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities” (**Acts 3:26**)*. Jesus came to free us from the bonds of our guilt, a Savior for lost humanity.

A cloud sometimes covers our hearts. The blessing of redemption can seem veiled behind these words: *“sin no more.”* Ah, the forgiveness we can gladly accept. But *“sin no more,”* how can this be? Two elements of God’s grace come to mind:

- Through grace, we can receive strength to go and sin no more.
- We have an Advocate as we learn to apply this standard.

A sample from Romans, chapters six through eight teaches what it means to go and sin no more:

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:12-14).*

According to these words, strength is committed to “not let sin reign.” Through Jesus, the things which once enslaved us, are now under our control. This is exemplified when Paul wrote, “God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14). In other words, he was able to crucify the impulses of his flesh, to subdue them and kill them. The other part is that he was bound to be in the world bearing the burden of the love of God, crucified to the world. There is a real prospect for change in one's life through Jesus. What hope! The liar, drunkard, thief, fornicator, adulterer, homosexual, proud, and unyielding can be forgiven and given the capacity to maintain innocence.

Yet, we are but children and must grow in grace. John wrote,

*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 2:1-2).*

Jesus taught about forgiving our brother seventy times seven (see Matthew 18:21-22). If God expects this of us, how much more can He do this for His children? For those of us who struggle with sin after being converted, there is assurance that God is willing for our Advocate to stand on our behalf seventy times seven. He stands for the sake of our forgiveness and growth. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and victory is assured, if we will but confess and repent of our sins. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

“Go and sin no more” speaks of the power of God to forgive. Also, it speaks of His power to give us life. Within this new life is the power to sin no more. “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’” (John 8:12).