



HOW TO WIN AGAINST SIN

Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

How to Win Against Sin

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Introduction

I like stories. Just about the time I feel like I've read or seen every story, I come across another one. And this is one of the most fascinating stories I've ever come across—a true story about a man named C.D. "Bigboy" Blaylock, a giant of a man, 6 feet 6 inches tall, and a boxer at Louisiana State University in the early 1930s. Facing a stocky opponent from Mississippi State, he let loose with a devastating roundhouse right. But his opponent stepped in, and Bigboy's arm whipped around in a full circle, connecting with his own chin at full force. He staggered around the ring and fell flat. The only boxer in history to knock himself out with his own punch.

That's exactly what many Christians do in their battle against sin. We keep knocking ourselves out. But the truth is Jesus didn't die just to deliver you from the *penalty* of sin; He died so you might defeat the power of sin. Three times in Romans 6, Paul declares these liberating words: "set free from sin." On the cross, Jesus died for your sin, but at the cross, you can die to your sin. Everything about your freedom hinges on understanding four truths, and missing even one keeps you in the ring, getting knocked out over and over.

Notes

Key Points

1. Conceive the Truth with Your Mind

When Jesus died on the cross, something happened that most believers don't fully grasp. You died with Him. Paul explains it this way, "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin" (Romans 6:6-7, NIV). The moment you put your faith in Christ, the old you died and was crucified with Jesus. Jesus didn't just deal with the penalty of sin for your past; He dealt with the power of sin for your present. Sin is a bully that will tell you, "You can't beat me." But you must



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change your thinking; the power switch of sin has been turned off. Sin may be resident in you, but it's not president over you. You were saved from sin because you are dead to sin.

Notes

Get this truth into your mind and keep it there. You are dead to sin and free from it through Christ's finished work on the cross.

2. Believe the Truth with Your Heart

Have you ever wondered why knowing the truth doesn't automatically change your life? Conceiving truth in your mind is one thing; believing it in your heart is entirely different. Paul says, "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11, NIV). The word "count" is a bookkeeping term meaning to stake your life on a fact. You don't really practice what you know; you practice what you believe. My father once cut the head off a chicken, and it ran around frantically. Dad said, "Son, you know what's wrong with that chicken? She's dead; she just doesn't believe it." You may not feel like you're dead to sin, but feelings don't change facts. When you gave your life to Jesus, the old you died with Him. Take what you've conceived in your mind and turn it into a conviction in your heart.

Stop living by feelings and start banking on the fact that you are dead to sin. Believe it so deeply you would stake your life on it.

3. Receive the Truth with Your Will

Once you conceive and believe the truth, you must start acting like it's true. Paul commands, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God... and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness" (Romans 6:12-13, NIV). Sin has no control over your body except when you allow it. Whether sin sits on the throne of your life is



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entirely up to you. Sin is not just a bully; it's a bluff. And you need to call its bluff every time. Your body is a weapon that can either fight for sin or fight for righteousness. Just like parents teach children they don't always get their way, you must teach sin that it doesn't get to have its way in your life.

Notes

You don't have to let sin reign in your body anymore. When you choose today to surrender every part of yourself to God, you become an instrument of righteousness.

4. Achieve the Truth with Your Life

When you conceive, believe, and receive the truth, here's the result: "For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14, NIV). Once you give your life to Jesus, you're not under the law; you're under grace, with a completely different Master. The law shows you what you should do and, in turn, reveals what you can't do on your own. If you're under the law, you'll remain enslaved to sin. But grace doesn't just free you to do what you should do. It gives you the power to do it. Take whatever sin enslaves you right now and say, "Sin, I'm dead to you, and I'm free from you. You're no longer my master. I'm under grace, and by God's grace, I'm saying 'No' to you and 'Yes' to God." Many believers are free but living in bondage, not receiving the truth that would set them free.

Live in the freedom Christ purchased for you! You are dead to sin, alive to God, and empowered by grace to walk in victory every single day.

Key Takeaway

On the cross Jesus died for your sin, but at the cross you can die to your sin. When you conceive this truth with your mind, believe it with your heart, receive it with your will, and achieve it with your life, you'll discover the promise of Jesus that you have been set free from sin. And now you can live free in Him.



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Reflection Questions

1. What specific sin keeps “knocking you out” in your spiritual battle? How would your fight change if you truly believed you are dead to that sin and free from its power?

2. What would change this week if you “counted” yourself dead to sin as an unshakable fact?

3. Sin is a bluff that you need to call. What would it look like practically for you to stop letting sin reign and instead surrender every part of yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness?
