

The Yo-Yo Experience or Relationship

The yo-yo relationship is considered very undesirable when it relates to human to human relationships. We are advised to get out of yo-yo relationships immediately, if not sooner! Is it not odd then, when it comes to one's relationship with God, that there is a different standard? Let's stand back and honestly look at this.

Why would we counsel someone not to tolerate a yo-yo relationship with the opposite gender when looking for a spouse, and at the same time, tell someone who is having an on and off relationship with God not to worry? Have you thought about this?

Are we not taught that salvation depends on having a saving relationship with God and this includes confession, repentance and surrender? This is true and is supported by Scripture. It is called the New Birth experience where we die to self and receive a new heart, new motives and desires from Christ.

Instead of them teaching us that we can have victory and how to have it, most teach a message that focuses on our weak human frame and our inability to gain the victory over sin. They inform us that when we surrender to God, confessing our sins and asking Him to forgive us, this puts us in a saving relationship with God. This much is true, but, the next thing they tell us is that it is inevitable that we will sin again, but in doing so we haven't broken the relationship. Doesn't this sound like 'once saved, always saved'? At the same time they teach that when we sin we need to repent, in order to regain a right standing with God. One wonders why they say this, if we haven't lost our saving relationship? Isn't relationship all that matters?

Thinking that they are encouraging us, they teach that God is OK with an on-again, of-again relationship, where a born again person falls and recovers over and over all his life. But what is the point of Christianity if it doesn't really change us? Our attention needs to be on Christ, not ourselves, because what we focus on is what we become. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18

Many take the words of Jesus in Hebrews 13:5 where He says "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." and misapply them. They use this to insinuate that we are OK, not lost in sin, because He will not leave or forsake us. Where does one's freedom of choice come in? Isn't God bound by our choices? We are free to leave Him, and this verse doesn't deal with that aspect at all. It is simply stating that Christ does not leave us. It is we who leave Him.

Many count on the notion that as long as they maintain their relationship with Christ, their sins will not break that relationship. They bolster themselves in this thinking by reasoning that God does not play yo-yo with them, meaning we do not cycle in and out of salvation. This can be subtle. Salvation is equated in many people's minds with simply having a relationship, inferring that we have no sin if we have a relationship – at least no sin that separates us from salvation. But sin is not a broken relationship. Sin is what breaks the relationship! "For sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) - not the breaking of a relationship.

I agree that God doesn't play yo-yo with us. But many times we play yo-yo with God, with fearful results. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." Isaiah 59:2 Clearly, this one verse teaches us that we are responsible for breaking our relationship with God -- not He. And how does God relate to this situation? Thankfully, He does not leave us or forsake us! Rather, He does everything He can to restore us and the relationship.

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1 Jesus, our advocate, pleads our case before God and asks God to give us another chance, even before we ask for it ourselves. We receive the amazing grace and mercy of God when we sin, Him protecting us from His justice.

Satan would love to end our lives when we are found in sin. This would guarantee our separation from God

forever, but God in His love and mercy toward us also protects us from him, giving us ample time to repent and restore the relationship. What an incredible God we have! How many of us would do this for our fellow man when we are wronged by them?

What a different picture we get when we look at more than just a few texts. So, is there power available to keep us from sinning and breaking the relationship? John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, has quite a bit to say on this topic. Here is 1 John chapter 3. The whole chapter will give us the right context.

He says, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**

Little children, **let no man deceive you:** he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **He that committeth sin is of the devil;** for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because **he is born of God.** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. **And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,** and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” 1 John 3

I don't see anything here that would suggest a powerless experience resulting in a yo-yo relationship with God. I only see power from God to love and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. He gives the obedient a divine power that keeps him from sin and gives him victory over sin. It makes it very clear that if we are having a yo-yo relationship it is because we have not been born of God. It also warns us not to let anyone deceive us into thinking otherwise.

So, why don't we have victory in our lives? We have this promise, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.” Jude 24, 25 There are many factors, but the bottom line is really unbelief! We will not believe Christ is able to keep us from falling. We prefer to believe we are in control when we are absolutely beaten, helpless, and so dependent on God for everything.

Paul taught the same thing in Romans chapter 6:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. **How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: **Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. **For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.** I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6

We are promised, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13

Beware of those who tend to use Romans 7 to excuse sin. Romans 8 makes it obvious that there is no room for sin in the born again life. Romans 7 is not the experience of the born again. The rest of Paul's writings make this perfectly clear. What is he then sharing? He is relating to us his frustrating, powerless experience as a Pharisee before his conversion and then how he became free of that in Romans 8 through his conversion. A little study of his writings and the other writers of the Bible will make this perfectly clear.

Ellen White completely agrees with these thoughts when she writes:

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. **The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct.** Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” Desire of Ages 555

“As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him, and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, "Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish." His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.

But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, **no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God**

requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

James writes of Abraham and says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:21-24). **In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.**" Selected Messages (Volume 1) 365, 366

We are wrong when we teach that God will save anyone in sin. God will never allow sin into heaven again and if He were to save someone with unconfessed or unforsaken sin in their lives He would be bringing sin into heaven. It doesn't matter how "good" we are, at times, or if our trend is upward. One cherished sin left unconfessed will keep us out of heaven. What matters is what we are doing habitually, continually.

"Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die:.... **he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered**. Ezekiel 3:20

"That religion which makes of sin a light matter, dwelling upon the love of God to the sinner regardless of his actions, only encourages the sinner to believe that God will receive him while he continues in that which he knows to be sin. This is what some are doing who profess to believe present truth. The truth is kept apart from the life, and **that is the reason it has no power to convict and convert the soul.**" 5T 540

"Accepting Christ as a personal Savior, and following His example of self-denial--this is the secret of holiness.

Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting in God in trial, believing in His promise in the darkness as well as in the light. Religion is to walk by faith, as well as by sight, trusting in God with all confidence, and resting in His love.

Sanctification is a state of holiness, without and within, being holy and without reserve the Lord's, not in form, but in truth. **Every impurity of thought, every lustful passion, separates the soul from God; for Christ can never put His robe of righteousness upon a sinner, to hide his deformity.**

. . . There must be a progressive work of triumph over evil, of sympathy with good, a reflection of the character of Jesus. We must walk in the light, which will increase and grow brighter unto the perfect day. This is real, substantial growth, which will finally attain to the full stature of men and women in Jesus Christ. . . .

Conformity to the likeness of Christ's character, overcoming all sin and temptation, walking in the fear of God, setting the Lord continually before us, will bring peace and joy on earth, and ensure us pure happiness in heaven." Our High Calling 214

"True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God. Rebellious thoughts and feelings are overcome, and the voice of Jesus awakens a new life, which pervades the entire being. Those who are truly sanctified will not set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They are not bigoted or self-righteous; but they are jealous of self, ever fearing, lest a promise being left them, they should come short of complying with the conditions upon which the promises are based....

Bible sanctification does not consist in strong emotion. Here is where many are led into error. They make feelings their criterion. When they feel elated or happy, they claim that they are sanctified. Happy feelings or the absence

of joy is no evidence that a person is or is not sanctified. There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last. Those who are battling with daily temptations, overcoming their own sinful tendencies, and seeking for holiness of heart and life make no boastful claims of holiness. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Sin appears to them exceedingly sinful.

Genuine sanctification ... is nothing less than a daily dying to self and daily conformity to the will of God.”
My Life Today 248

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ, and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; **Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** Said the beloved John, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And do not forget the words of Christ, "The Father himself loveth you." John 16:27. **He desires to restore you to Himself,** to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And **if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. All sin ... may be overcome by the Holy Spirit's power.**” Faith I Live By 118, 119

Our shortcomings and mistakes as well as our willful sins separate us from God. This separation is why Jesus is interceding for us, desiring to restore us into relationship with the Father. Obviously, something goes awry when we sin. God's will is that we stay submitted to Christ, by the Holy Spirit's indwelling power, and reject temptation, not depending on our ability and falling for them. Sin must become hateful to us.

Some misunderstand the previous statement to mean we are saved in sin. If one does not lose his salvation when he falls into sin, then why are we told that He desires to **restore us to Himself**? What is there to restore? Why does Jesus need to intercede for us if our salvation has not been lost? God's word is perfectly clear. There is no excuse for sin and there is no salvation of any kind in known sin. God has provided us with ample power to overcome every sin if we will but ask.

Unknown sin, or the sin of ignorance, is a different story, but God has even instructed us as to how we are to deal with this.

In Numbers 15:24, 25 we find God instructing the Hebrews as follows: “Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:”

So we need to come to God for forgiveness of even our sins of ignorance, following this example from the Hebrews. The moment unknown sin becomes known, it too must be repented of in order for the relationship with God to be restored. Sin in the life is serious business and to understand its seriousness and handle it properly is a life and death matter.

Paul tried to make it perfectly clear in Hebrews 10:26, 27 when he said: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

God is incredibly longsuffering towards us. He loves us, and because of this He will protect us from death so we can repent, but that fact should never be equated with salvation. It is very dangerous to presume on God's mercy. There are many stories in the Bible showing the terrible results of doing so.

Pastors, teachers, fellow believers, we all have been warned. I believe the time is now to present God's truth clearly. I believe it has been distorted and a new doctrine has settled upon some of God's people. This careless attitude about sin will keep us and others out of heaven. Jesus died to save us from our sins not in them.

“When I (God) say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou (you) givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Ezekiel 3:18

Dare we ignore this strong warning?

Would people feel less comfortable with the proverbial “yo-yo” analogy if it were instead compared to someone running in and out of a burning building just because they weren't sure where they would rather be? Why on earth would someone think that they were just as safe in either place, as long as their preference was to be on the outside and that they were working toward that? We would call them crazy lunatics, right? And we would do everything we could to convince them to stay outside!

The belief that they are safe in either place is a lie! Everyone knows that it is never safe to play with fire, yet we continue to listen to Satan's lies. Few spend the time and energy to study God's word themselves, but are satisfied to take a pastor's or teacher's word for gospel truth. But some pastors and teachers have not done their own study, either?

When will this all end? God is waiting to return. When will there be enough people living by every word instead of doing their own thing? When will people who claim to be Christians avail themselves of the power God makes available to them through the Holy Spirit, finding victory over temptation? We must choose to stop sinning. Our tendency is to simply ask God for help in overcoming, but will never work. We must ask Him and expect Him to give us the victory. He will give us the victory if we truly want it and ask for it.

Satan is doing his utmost to confuse and pacify. We must expose this. Jesus was victorious at the cross. All we must do is come to the cross and give Him permission to take the 'self' out of us, dying to self, and He will! He has promised to. The problem is not with God, it is with our unbelief. We are often unwilling to let sin go and this is necessary before we can receive the gift Christ offers us. God wants His people to reflect His character perfectly, by His grace, and He will accomplish this in those who are surrendered and believing. Jesus will come and He will have a perfected people. The question is, will we be among them?

Be encouraged as you “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.” 2 Timothy 2:15, 16

God Bless,

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