

HOW TO DEAL WITH SIN

DEALING WITH YOUR PERSONAL SIN

1. **God is Faithful to Convict.** As you read the Word of God, study with a small group, or listen to a message being preached or taught, God will often convict of some sin. He wants us to come to Him, agree with Him about the sin, agree to turn from that sin, agree to turn to what is right in that area or in that relationship, and by faith receive His forgiveness and cleansing for that sin (1 John 1:5-9).
2. **Ask God.** If you think there is a fellowship break between you and the Lord, go to Him in prayer asking Him to show you what is displeasing to Him. Ask Him to reveal anywhere you have stepped over the line of His Word, anywhere you have grieved or quenched His Spirit. He promises to show us where there is sin (John 16:8-11).
3. **Watch Out for False Guilt and Lies.** The enemy, the evil one is also called the adversary—he is against God, against God’s people, and against God’s purposes. He is also the accuser against God and “*the brethren*”—all believers (Revelation 12:10). He is the father of lies and spreads untruth anywhere he can—lies about God, about God’s Word, about God’s people, about anything—to create division, discord, and distrust. When it comes to the lives of individual believers, he shoots “thought darts” to accuse—either of sin we have committed or even of sin which we have faced in temptation but have not committed—anything to confuse, frustrate, condemn, and make us feel guilty. Remember, to be tempted is not a sin, to have a tempting thought is not sin. It is not a sin until we act on that temptation, or continue to cradle a thought such as lust or anger. When we do, we need to confess it and make it right.
4. **The Spirit is Specific.** When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He is specific so we can confess specifically—“Lord, here is what I did, when I did it. I was wrong. I turn from it. I want to do the right thing. Thank You for forgiving me.” Satan is often general, condemning and confusing—“you are bad, weak, foolish, etc.” Trust God to guide in truth. “*The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy*” (James 3:17).
5. **God Does Not Remember Sins so as to Use Them Against Us.** The Holy Spirit does not bring up old sins. Those are removed, forgiven and forgotten. Satan uses instant replay to remind us, hassle us, depress us, defeat us. He nags at us—“Remember how many times you’ve done that. You will never change. You cannot do anything right. Remember.” Simply remember the promises of the Word of God and hold to them (Hebrews 10:17-18).
6. **Receive Forgiveness by Faith Not Feeling.** Trust the Word of God to be true, as true as the God of the Word. Deal with bedrock facts, not shifting-sands feelings. Jesus died to forgive, not condemn.

DEALING WITH YOUR PERSONAL SINS AGAINST OTHERS

1. **When Someone Has Something Against You.** First, if someone has something against you, you need to go to that person (or persons)—face to face if possible, by a phone call if not face to face (Matthew 5:23-24). If you cannot reach them either way, seek the next best way, the fastest way possible. Ephesians 4:26 says, “*Do not let the sun go down on your anger.*” In other words, deal with any sin, especially anger, on the day you face it. It is like household garbage; the longer you wait to get rid of it, the worse it stinks. What if he or she does not receive you or your attempt to get things right or does not forgive you? You are responsible for you. Let God deal with that person.
2. **The Circle of Confession** is as big as the circle of offense. If your sin is against God, confess it to Him. If you have sinned against an individual, go to that individual, confess, and make it right. If you have sinned against a group, make it right with the group.
3. **Restitution.** If there is need for **restitution**—financial, material, property lost or stolen, whatever—make it right as much as is possible. The burden may seem heavy now, but making it right makes the burden on your heart turn into wings for your soul.

DEALING WITH OTHERS WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU

1. **When Someone Sins Against You,** first have a forgiving, kind attitude toward that one, “*forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*” (Ephesians 4:32) What if he or she does not ask for forgiveness? You are responsible for you. Obey God. Show love. Let God deal with that person.
2. **Two Options.** To get things right, you have **one of two choices.** **Forget it** and do not mention it. The person may be unaware he has offended you in some way. “*Love covers a multitude of sins*” (1 Peter 4:8). **OR...Go to** him or her and point out the offense in order to restore the relationship (not in order to make the person feel bad or feel guilty) (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:15). God’s goal is oneness with Him and with one another—walk in harmony, peace—real love toward one another (1 Peter 3:8-18). “*As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men*” (Romans 12:18).