

# 1 Peter 2 (Part 1) :1 • Our new relationship to sin

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We're going to be in first Peter today. I know it's Palm Sunday, but we're going to be in 1 Peter anyway, and I hope you don't mind, but I'm just going to read one verse today. I mean, we're going to talk more than that, you know me, but we're only going to read one verse this morning. And the reason we're just going to read one verse is because I think it has a lot to say, especially in light of the fact that today is Palm Sunday and that we are just one week away from Easter Resurrection Sunday. It's pretty much impossible to mark these special days without being reminded of what Jesus came to accomplish on the cross. I was very appreciative of all the songs that we sang this morning in worship, that were all very Christ and cross centered, which I is really in keeping of what we're going to be talking about today.

When we talk about what Jesus accomplished on the cross, and somebody might be thinking, well, that's easy. Pastor Paul, I know what Jesus accomplished on the cross. He came to pay the penalty of our sins. And my response is, yes, he did. And if that were all he did, that would be enough. Amen.

But Jesus came to do more than that and that's what we want to talk about today. Here's the summary, okay. He came to set you free from the power of sin, and that's what we're going to discuss. And I think that's an important topic. The one verse we're looking at here at 1 Peter 2 it is the first one, and it goes like this.

*<sup>1</sup> "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander."*

And with that, I'll ask you to pray with me. Father, open our hearts. Open our hearts, a drop of speech, an ocean of truth. Fill us Lord, with grace and understanding. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

The reason I'm just focusing on this one verse today is because I want to share some things with you about which I find many Christians to be ignorant,

because it has to do with what Jesus accomplished in your life concerning your new relationship with sin,

And I use the word new very purposely because when a person comes to Christ and they receive him as their Lord and Savior, a fundamental shift takes place in our life concerning sin. The whole relationship to sin is completely changed. And this shift affects how we understand sin and how we deal with sin in our lives and with our old sinful nature.

And the reason that we're going to discuss this today is because not understanding it, not understanding this foundational fundamental shift in, in what Jesus has done for us related to our sinful nature; I find causes believers to stumble over verses like the one we're looking at here in 1 Peter 2 verse 1

And so we're taking this verse and rather than looking, and we'll look at the verse certainly, but we're going to look at what it's all about and we're going to look at why it's important to see, and we're going to look at understanding what's behind the verse and why you can look at a verse like this and embrace it in your life. Because you see in this verse, you'll see, again, Peter's exhorting us, but he's exhorting us to do something.

And what he's exhorting us to do is to put away several things. Notice he says, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. I always find that whenever we're looking at things like this, it's always good to refresh ourselves on word definitions. So, I'll put up on the screen the definitions of these key words that we're kind of looking at here today.

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- **Malice** – The intent and determination to do evil to someone (In other words, malice of forethought, we call it in the legal system, when someone plans to do something like that).
- **Deceit** – The act of deceiving someone by being purposefully misleading.
- **Hypocrisy** – claiming to be morally opposed to specific sins that one is secretly committing. (Hypocrisy, interestingly enough, this word in the Greek was used of actors on a stage and it means claiming to be well, biblically speaking, it means claiming to be morally opposed to some specific sin, while secretly engaging in that same sin).

- **Envy** – a resentful longing for someone else's possessions, gifts or qualities
- **Slander** – making a false spoken statement with the intent of damaging a person's reputation.

Now that we've defined all those interesting words, we can look at what Peter now is telling us to do with them.

He says, so, put them away. That's really what he's telling you and me to do. And the Greek literally means to put it off or to lay it aside, kind of like you would take off a old rotten garment and just set it aside. And that's the essence of what put away means. But I want you to notice that Peter doesn't say all these things have been automatically laid aside when you came to Christ.

Wouldn't that be nice? He doesn't say, now that you're a Christian, thank God you don't do any of those things anymore. What he does say is, now that you're a follower of Jesus, you need to, and here's where the verb comes in to put away, you need and you know that from your grammar verbs or action words, there's some action that is required.

Put away, do this, lay it all aside, lay all these things that I've just mentioned, lay them aside.

Now, the obvious conclusion that we get from this is that Peter thinks that we're capable of doing that. He doesn't say, try it, really, I don't know how it's going to work, but try, he just says, do it.

Lay these things aside.

And the reason he says that is because he is right. Now we can lay them aside because part of being a child of God is understanding that you have a new relationship to your sinful nature and the sinful desires and the sinful impulses that would otherwise and did otherwise before you came to Christ, control your life.

Now you've entered into a new relationship. It doesn't mean that relationship is automatic. It just means that there are now great possibilities, wonderful abilities that have been given you through your relationship with Jesus. Let me, I want to explain this stuff because, we all know that before we came to Christ, just like everyone else, we were captive to our passions.

We were captive to our sinful impulses, the desires of our sinful nature. Here's how the Apostle Paul explains it. Let me put this on the screen for you. Romans chapter 7, I'm going to be quoting a lot from Romans. He says:

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**Romans 7:5 (ESV)**

*For while we were living in the flesh ((and he's talking about before we came to the Lord), our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members (and members means our body, our parts, our, well, that which makes us up, he says, to ultimately) to bear fruit for death.*

And this is the way we lived, this is the way we lived before Christ. Our sinful passions were aroused, and we carried them out, we walked them out.

We, we, we did them. But Jesus came to do something, and you'll notice that. He basically tells us here that when we were living in the flesh, we were captive to the flesh, but Jesus came to do something about that captivity. Do you guys remember when Jesus was just starting his earthly ministry, he went back to Nazareth, and he got up in the synagogue and they asked him to share. So he got up, opened up the word of God, and he read a prophecy. That was very much a prophecy of his ministry. Let me put it on the screen. Here's what he read. It says:

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**Luke 4:16-19 (ESV)**

*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. (I want you to take note of this next sentence) He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty (to who?) those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

So, he says there very specifically that he came to liberate those who are captive. Is he talking about political captives? No, he's talking about those who are captive to sin. He came to set at liberty those who were captive to sin. So how exactly does this work? Well, we go back to Romans 6:3-4. Check this out, Paul writes:

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**Romans 6:3-4 (ESV)**

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were (actually immersed or) baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him (by this immersion) by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

And Paul is describing something very powerful that happens in the life of the believer when they come to Christ and receive him as Savior and Lord. Paul says in this passage that we actually become joined with Christ.

Listen, in his death. Isn't that interesting? We actually join him in his death, and you might be thinking to yourself, why do we need to be joined with Jesus in his death? I mean, that sounds rather morbid when you stop and think about it. Well, the reason is because when our first parents sinned in the garden, they brought the curse of the law upon all of us.

And the law, as you'll recall, the Bible tells us is the expression of God's righteousness, his holiness. The problem is none of us can measure up to it because of sin. We can't measure up to the holiness and righteousness of God. We fail every time, and because we fail, we're under the curse of the law and the curse of the law is death. But I want you to see how Paul goes on to explain in Galatians 3, that...

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**Galatians 3:13 (ESV)**

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us....*

In other words, he took our curse so that we could be forgiven. Wonderful, we're forgiven, praise the Lord. But even though we're forgiven, we still have this stinky, rotten, sinful nature.

We still have this impulse that we were born with that has this gravitational pull towards sin and it can dominate our lives. In fact, before Christ, it did dominate our lives. Well, it's one thing to come along and say to somebody, you're forgiven. That's wonderful, that's great. And like I said before, if that's all he ever did, that would be enough.

But it's not all he did because he knew that he had to go beyond simply saying, I forgive you. He had to go on and say, I free you. I free you from this hold, that sin has on your life. Look at what he says in Romans 7. I love this passage too. He says:

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**Romans 7:1, 4-6**

*...do you not know, brothers - you...died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another...now we are released from the law (And what he means by that is released from the curse of the law, okay?), having died to that which held us captive...*

All right? That is the captivity that Jesus came to set you free from, to set me free from. That's it right there. And as Paul goes on to say in Romans 6:6, I'm going to roll through a lot of scriptures, and he says:

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**Romans 6:6 (ESV)**

*We know that our old self (that's the old sinful nature) was crucified with him in order that the body of sin (the sinful nature) might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.*

So you see, this is the deal, as Christians, you are no longer enslaved to sin, and that's what he came to do, in addition to forgiving your sins and that's what we focus on the most, isn't it? I find that Christians, there's a good number of Christians, they have a hard time getting past that first step that they've been forgiven, they struggle with that.

A good majority of Christians struggle right there. Are you forgiven of your sins? Well, I hope so. Well, are you or aren't you? Based on what Jesus did on the cross. Have you been forgiven of all of your sin? Yes, I've been forgiven of all my sin. Wonderful. Was that, is that the end of the story?

No, because there's this ongoing issue of how sin has dominated my life. And now I need to move beyond this elementary understanding of the fact that I've been forgiven. We've been forgiven because Jesus took our curse. And now move on to the reality of the freedom that he has given us from captivity to sin.

And if we don't get this, we're going to have problems. Let me show you. Galatians 5:24. I love this verse too. He says:

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**Galatians 5:24 (ESV)**

*...those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Now, I want to, we're going to leave this up for a little bit because I'll tell you right here at this point, Galatians 5:24 is where a lot of Christians tilt and they'll give you a blank stare when you read through verses like this.

They look at a passage like Galatians 5: 24 that says that we've crucified the flesh and they say, we have, I have I crucified the flesh? Have I done that? Because this, in, in this verse, it seems pretty clear that crucifying the flesh is not something done to a believer, but it is done by the believer, you see, that's what Paul's saying there. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh. He's saying it's something that they've done.

So, if somebody says, how in the world do you do that? How in the world do you crucify the flesh?

Well, like everything else in the Christian life, it begins by faith. Does that surprise you? Here's where most Christians stumble. They believe that crucifying the flesh is carried out by works, and that's why they're in this cycle of failure because they're told in the Bible that their sins are forgiven, and at least for a while, they embrace that and believe it, but then they see sin rising up in their lives.

And they, they have faith, faith that's either very weak or even lacking related to that. And they realize that sin is still alive in their members, like Paul talks about. And they begin to think, well, maybe I'm not saved, maybe I'm not saved.

And it really is, a very vicious cycle. But it begins with faith. It begins with faith. Let me show you Romans 6:11.

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**Romans 6:11 (ESV)**

*...you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

That's such an important verse for Christians to get a hold of. And the key word in this verse is the word "consider." It's a very important word in the Greek. It

literally means, "to take something into account." If you have a new King James, perhaps that you read from, it uses that word reckon. Now, not in the old western way of, 'I reckon it's time to go get the cows in,' but in this case, reckon means to believe.

Have faith, Paul is saying, believe that you are dead to sin and alive to God. You say, well, pastor Paul, it sounds like nothing more than positive thinking. Oh, it's way more than positive thinking. It is positive, I'll grant you that, but it's not just a positive confession of something that doesn't really exist.

You see, Jesus truly did the work of setting you free from your captivity to sin, but you've got to walk it out by faith. You see the things in the Christian life has to be walked out by faith. That's the challenging part. We want to see it first. I want to see it, and then I'll believe it. But you see, in the Christian life, you have to walk it out to see it.

You have to exert faith in order to get down the road. So Paul starts in this whole process of being free from the captivity of sin by saying now, Reckon yourselves, consider yourselves, believe yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Such an important reminder because you see, Satan wants very desperately to convince believers that you are still very much captive to sin.

And he will emphasize every time you make a mistake, every time you fail, every time you mess up, and some of us mess up wildly in front of others, and the enemy is right there to accuse. You know that's what he does, right? He's the accuser of the brethren, he accuses you. He says see what you did there? What's that tell you? Yeah, you're captive, you're captive. It's incredible the number of believers I talk to who believe, not that they've been set free, but believe very much that they are still captive, and faith hasn't even been exercised. There is no reckoning themselves dead to sin because the enemy has convinced them beyond a shadow of doubt. They are in fact captive.

I want to share a couple more passages from Romans that I, that, that use a particularly interesting phrase. One is from Romans 1. This is great, Paul says:

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**Romans 1:1-5 (ESV)**

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus...through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,*



Now, the reason I wanted to read that passage to you, and by the way, that's not all verses one through five, I truncated that a bit just to give you the essence of what I wanted you to see. But the phrase that I really want you to take note of is that phrase, 'the obedience of faith.' Very very important.

Paul doesn't speak here about the obedience of works. Did you catch that? He didn't talk about the obedience of effort. He doesn't talk about the obedience of gritting your teeth and just bearing it out. He calls it the obedience of faith, and in Romans he does it again at the end of the letter, let me show you in the sixteenth chapter. He says:

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**Romans 16:25-26 9 (ESV)**

*Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations (look at here now), according to the command of the eternal God (to bring about what?), to bring about the obedience of faith—*

In other words, the obedience that comes from faith. Isn't that amazing? You thought faith was only really something that got you saved? Were saved by grace through faith. Well, that's great, but you know what?

Faith is also what helps set you free from sin. That's why the Bible tells us we live from faith to faith. It's all putting our faith in God, our trust in him. One of the most important things you can do when you've got an area of sin in your life that just is stubborn, is to come to the Lord.

And we're going to talk about this in a moment, about how confession is so important, but to tell the Lord in essence, I can't, apart from you, I can't break free from this, but I believe that you've set me free from captivity to sin. And so I'm going to trust in you to bring this about in my life. I'm not going to trust in my own self effort or my own ability to have a mindset that is sufficient, to break free from sin. I'm going to trust in you, I'm trusting you, God. I just want you to know I'm putting my faith in you. God's never going to squirm under that kind of pressure. Somebody sitting next to you might, if you put that kind of pressure on them, God won't squirm You won't kind of go, well, no, wait a minute here.

In fact, I think you're going to find that the Lord is going to meet you at that place of faith and meet you in a powerful way. And that's the first and most important thing related to the how to of crucifying the flesh is to walk in faith. Listen, Christians, we've got to come to the place of believing. Just Jesus did something powerful on the cross for us.

We have to, beyond forgiveness of sin and when I say beyond forgiveness of sins, please don't think that I'm minimizing how He suffered to forgive us of our sins. I mean, oh, thank you, Jesus. I relish that, I love it every day, I thank him that I, my sins are forgiven, but that's not where he stopped.

He didn't stop there. And it's so important to see this faith. Faith, putting your faith. Lord, I trust you. I trust you to transform my life. Right, but there's more. Right after, Paul tells us to consider or reckon ourselves dead to sin. In that very same chapter of Romans 6, he goes on to say:

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**Romans 6:12-14 (NIV84)**

*Therefore do not let sin reign (or rule you) in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin (look at this) shall not be your master, because you are not under law (any longer, you are), but under grace.*

And this is the reason this is at the end of Paul's letter to the Romans, not at the beginning. The beginning is, reckon yourselves dead to sin. Consider that you are dead to sin. Now we get to the end of the book, we go on to act out that faith, that reckoning of death unto sin.

We begin to walk it out through confession and repentance, which is turning your back on sin and on the passions and desires of the old life.

And this is where we come full circle back to what Peter is saying here in chapter 2 when he says, so put away all these things. You see, if you haven't done the study that we've just done, telling you that you can put away that by faith this work has been accomplished in your life, and now you have the power through the spirit to say, I'm not going to surrender my members, my body to these sinful desires and passions.

Now that I can do this, now that I've been enabled to do this, I can read this verse and I can understand it, and I can say yes, yes. Put these things away. What happens if you don't have the understanding? We've just gone through in all these various passages from Romans, Galatians, and so forth.

You look at a passage that says, put away these sinful passages. You go, boy, I got to try harder. I got to get back to, I need to, you know what I need? I need some good rules, I need some good rules for my life. And God, I'm going to make you a promise right here and right now. I'm going to promise I'm never going to do that again. God, I promise I am sick and tired of doing this, and I promise you, Lord, you ever said that, I promise I'll never do this again for the next 24 hours, because that's about how long that promise is probably going to last. See, that's self-effort.

That's Paul putting himself in the position of his own freedom as if I could, when Jesus has earned my freedom by inviting me to enter into his death on the cross so that I might be dead to sin and alive to him. But people, this is where my faith, this is where my faith, you see, takes action. And when we understand these things now, we get it. We get it.

The question really is, am I willing to take that action in my life? Because I do have to take action at some point. By faith, I believe it and then I have to walk out that faith. I need to confess my sin. I need to turn my back on sin, and I need to trust the Lord to do that work of transformation.

The question is, am I going to do that? Am I willing to do that? Because for a lot of Christians putting off sin happens when we're finally, sick to death of it, and we can't stand it anymore. I mean, in my own life, I always have to be careful about how much to say. I'm willing to bet it's probably the same for you. We get to the place rather than just being willing to confess sin and turn our back on it. I have to come to the place of just getting sick to death of it, before I finally do something.

And I'm so tired of the consequences and I'm so tired of the guilt and I'm so tired of the lack of peace that I have in my relationship with God you know. And it's then we start to truly offer ourselves to God and stop offering our body to sin. But I don't have to wait that long, you don't have to wait that long.

We need to daily learn what it is to daily put to death the sinful nature, and it starts with faith. Lord, I believe, I'm going to go back, even if I have to remind myself, I'm going to go back and I'm going to read again what you did. You said, you say in your word that you set me free from my captivity to sin.

Okay, fine. I'm going to believe that I embrace that. Now, I'm going to walk out that faith and I'm going to bring you this sin and say, Lord, I confessed this. This was wrong, and I'm going to turn my back on this sin now. And I want to walk toward you. I'm going to fill my heart with you and if I have to do this every day for the next 10 years, I don't care because it's worth it to be free from this thing so that I can walk in victory.

We want to go through the drive-up window of God's victory. Your meal in two minutes or your money back, your victory in one confession, or we'll double your sins back. I don't know. Something like that. Yeah. It doesn't, sometimes it doesn't come fast.

It doesn't come easy sometimes in our own lives, the lack of faith and whatever else added to it, it's just a struggle, isn't it? But the point is you're struggling. You're not just giving into sin and letting it rain in your mortal body. That's the point.

Pastor Paul, why am I struggling with sin? Because that's what it means to be a Christian. That's how we gain victory, we struggle every day, we keep struggling, we keep fighting, we keep battling by faith through confession and repentance. And filling our hearts with the word of God. That's how we crucify the flesh - to say no to the flesh. No longer will you dominate my life.

No longer will I obey these desires and passions. I long to be free, and I believe that Jesus has done the work. So Lord, empower me, strengthen me. To live out this freedom. Amen. That was pretty weak. Amen. Amen. Let's stand together.

So the reason I did all this is because I read this first verse in 1 Peter 2 and I thought to myself, wait a minute, I can't just read that verse and throw it out to them because I'm going to be handing people the law without the understanding. Do this, put off sin. Wouldn't they be great if that was all my message to you today. And pound the pulpit a few times and say, now put off sin.

Go out there and put off sin. Praise the Lord. And then said, Amen. Go home. You'd walk away feeling like you got the weight of the world on your shoulders. No, Jesus did the heavy lifting. He has set you free from captivity that dominating power and influence of sin. Believe it, and then walk out that faith!

Father, thank you so much for your Word. Thank you for your grace. Thank you for the power that sets us free from the flesh. Lord, I pray in Jesus' name that we would begin to walk it out. And by faith, just embrace the fullness of what you

have done for us, Lord, to free us from captivity, to enable us Lord, to live that life of victory.

And Lord, I pray particularly for those who've been struggling with that, the lack of victory in their lives. And I pray, Father, for those who have been hounded by the enemy and told that they are captive and they'll never get free.

Father, we renounce that word today in the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of the cross and what you came to do for us, and we believe, Lord God, that there is freedom from the dominion, the dominating influence of sin. And we pray and ask, Lord God, that you would enable us to walk it out by faith. Remind us to come quickly to the throne of grace, to confess our sin, to renounce its hold on our lives and to walk in freedom.

We asked that you would do this, Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said together, Amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.