***“Stop Sinning”***

That’s what Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth (1Cor.15:34), though it was preceded with the admonition to *“Become sober-minded as you ought,”* and added that such instructions even being necessary was *“to your* (their) *shame.”* Given these things, one of two things is possible: 1) Paul was speaking exclusively to Corinthians about the specificsins he previously outlined in the letter, and thus the command doesn’t apply to us; or, 2) we present-day Christians are far too comfortable with OUR sin(s), probably because we’ve been convinced or have convinced ourselves that *“stop sinning”* is a noble notion as a goal, but practically impossible to accomplish. (Pause for a minute or three if you want to think about it before proceeding.)

Some things on which we can ALL think further:

* We don’t “have to” sin, we ***choose* to sin,** or we ***allow temptation to overcome us***rather than *overcoming temptation,* cf.1Cor.10:12 and Jas.1:2-4,12. We do sin, all-too-often for most of us, and God lovingly and graciously makes provision for our forgiveness we do, 1John 1:7-10. And “yes” there are times when our *“spirit is willing”* but our *“flesh is weak”* (Matt.26:41), but we ***can***and ***should***do better, including me!
* Do we even ***want*** to *“stop sinning”?*  Put another way, do we really want to *please God* (Eph.5:10), or are we content with just *pleasing ourselves?* Note Phil.3:18-19 in this connection, *“For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction,* ***whose god is their appetite***(lit. *“belly”* referring to *‘desires’*)*, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”* We won’t *“stop sinning”* as long as we want to *please ourselves* more than we want to *please God.*
* Are we willing to **avoid the *people, places,*** and ***activities***that make it difficult to *“stop sinning”?* Put another way, are we willing to change our habits and associations that make *sinning* easy or at least “easier? Consider what Paul wrote to Roman Christians, *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and* ***make no provision for the flesh*** *in regard to its lusts,”* Rom.13:14. We won’t *“stop sinning”* as long as we continue to make Satan’s job effortless for him by going places, doing things, and associating with people who make sin easy for us.
* Are we ***actively******working*** to *“stop sinning”?*  It’s not just a matter of “not doing” some things with some people. We need positive or pro-active people, places, and pursuits also. It’s the “not, but” principle. For instance, it’s easier to avoid the *“works/deeds of the flesh”* and *crucify* “*the flesh with its passions and desires”* if we’re actively pursuing the *“fruit of the Spirit,”* cf. Gal.5:16-24. “Not” these, “but” those. Likewise, it’s easier to rid our minds of sinful thoughts and desires if we’re filling them with *true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, (spiritually) attractive, excellent,* and *praise-worthy* thoughts, cf. Phil.4:8. We won’t *“stop sinning”* unless we start *living/walking “by the Spirit,”* Gal.5:16.
* Are you ***getting better*** at *“stop sinning”?* Progress is important. A baby doesn’t begin to walk and run without a few falls. But with *“practice,” growth* and *“maturity”* enable our *“senses”* to not only *“discern good and evil,”* but to do a better job of *avoiding evil* and *doing good,* Heb.5:14. But to *get better,* which in this context means making progress toward *“stop sinning,”* we have to actually *want to “stop sinning;”* we have to be willing to *stop doing* things with people who make *“stop sinning”* harder; we have to *start doing* things with people who make *“stop sinning”* easier; and we have to be willing to continuously make progress toward *“stop sinning”* through a genuine desire and commitment to “do better next time.”

So, are you willing to commit to *“stop sinning,”* or content to comfort yourself with excuses and presumed justifications? Think again about what the Holy Spirit through Paul told the Corinthians, *“Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame,”* 1Cor.15:34. What would the Holy Spirit have to say to you and me???