

A Hard Sinner

How would you describe your life in Christ in terms of the difficulty of living apart from sin? Do the words of Paul describe you (*“For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”* **Rom. 7:19**)? If so, consider this difficulty as evidence of the depths of sin you once were in. Have you ever heard it said that someone has “lived a hard life”? ‘Hard’ could be understood in two ways. ‘Hard’ could be a result of poor choices. Yet, ‘hard’ could simply refer to difficulties faced by things beyond our control. Hard times present two choices—become responsible, or irresponsible.

Were you a ‘hard’ sinner? Sin is addictive. Sin enslaves. The apostle Peter wrote, *“for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage.”* (**2 Peter 2:19**). Repentance is ‘hard’. The difficulty one faces in repentance depends upon how ‘hard’ of a sinner you were. Jesus urged us to “count the cost” of discipleship (**Luke 14:25-33**).

Forsaking all is ‘hard’. It requires firm commitment and strength of faith. Both are developed from endurance of trials, afflictions, and persecutions. In this way, God will remold and reshape us into “fitness” for the kingdom of God. (**Luke 9:57-62**). You are not alone in your struggle. Remember all of Jesus’ apostles vowed they would never deny Jesus, yet they did (**Matt. 26:35**). Likewise did John Mark (**Acts 15:38**); and Demas (**2 Tim. 4:10**). However, the apostles overcame their fears, proclaiming Jesus as the Christ to all the world (**Col. 1:23**). John Mark repented as did the Corinthians (**Col. 4:10; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:11**).

No matter how 'hard' your life as a sinner was, you too can change. Sin is your choice. You have another choice *“...as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the 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 sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (**Rom. 6:19-23**).

A 'hard' sinner can become 'hard' in another way. It will ensure his hope of eternal life. That is by choosing to trust in the promises of Jesus. What Isaiah wrote of him

will be true of you. *"For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame."* (**Isa. 50:7**). As the prophet Ezekiel was, through the power of God's Spirit, made stronger than the hardness of the Israelites (**Ezek. 3:7-8**), so will you, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit conquer Satan's 'wiles' and 'fiery darts' (**Eph. 6:11, 16**).

Steadfastness of faith always ensures victory. The beloved apostle of Jesus boldly assured us: *"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* (**1 John 5:4-5**). rdb