

# New Year, New Me

John Cole / General

Sanctification; Spiritual growth / 2 Corinthians 5:9–17

While we all struggle with the inherent sin problem of human nature, God offers the wherewithal to overcome the power of sin and live above reproach. This New Year, overcome some areas of weakness by God's grace.

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## › INTRODUCTION

### **10,000 Sermon Illustrations** Judah Ben Hur

Judah Ben Hur

If you were born after 1950, you might not know the story of Ben Hur. This classic book written by a Civil War general, Lew Wallace, in 1899, was turned into a movie starring Charlton Heston, which won the Academy Award for best movie in 1959. It is a towering story of love, of suffering, of the struggle of good against evil, and finally of triumph. Judah Ben Hur, the story's hero, grows up with his boyhood friend, Marsalla. They are ancient, Mideastern Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Judah is, of course, a Jew, and Marsalla, a Gentile. Judah is the heir of a very great and wealthy house in Jerusalem. Marsalla is a promising military man who trained in Rome as a soldier, then returned to Jerusalem as the leader of the Roman occupation forces.

## We have faults

### A flawed human nature

**Romans 7:14–23 KJV 1900**

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

See also Ga 5:17; Eph 2:3; 2 Pe 2:18

## Human weaknesses and failings

**Romans 15:1 KJV 1900**

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

See also Ro 8:28; Ro 14:1–2

## Faults in thought, word and deed

Ps 78:57 *disloyalty and unfaithfulness to God;*

Pr 14:21 *not showing concern for others;*

Is 53:6 *selfishness in going one's own way;*

*Ho 7:16 unwillingness to turn to God;*

*Jas 3:2 failure to control the tongue;*

*Jas 4:17 failure to do what is right*

## We are often good at finding fault with others

### Passing blame

*Ge 3:12 Adam blames Eve for his disobedience.*

*See also Ex 32:22–24 Aaron blames the Israelites for the golden calf;*

*1 Sa 13:11–12 Saul blames his troops' impatience and Samuel's late arrival for his disobedience;*

*1 Sa 15:20–21 Saul blames his soldiers for the failure to carry out God's instructions;*

*Mt 25:24–25 The man who buried his talent blames his action on his master's hardness.*

### Criticizing and judging

**Matthew 7:1–5 KJV 1900**

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt

thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

See also Jas 4:11–12; Jas 5:9; Jud 16

## Finding fault with God's appointed leaders

**Exodus 17:3 KJV 1900**

And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

See also Ex 15:24; Nu 14:2; Jos 9:18; Ac 11:2–3; 2 Co 10:1

## Finding fault with God's people

**Matthew 5:11 KJV 1900**

Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

See also Ex 5:16–17; Ps 41:6; Ps 71:10; Da 6:24

## Finding fault with God

**Psalms 78:19 KJV 1900**

Yea, they spake against God; they said,

Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

See also Ex 16:7; Nu 14:27; Nu 21:5; Eze 35:13

## Finding fault with Jesus Christ

**Luke 6:7 KJV 1900**

And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

See also Mt 9:3 *Jesus Christ is accused of blasphemy because he claims to forgive sin;*

Mt 9:11 *Jesus Christ is criticised for his association with "sinners";*

Mt 15:2 *Jesus Christ is criticised for failure to conform to ceremonial cleansing*

*traditions;*

*Mt 26:59–61 false charges brought against Jesus Christ at his trial;*

*Jn 9:16 Jesus Christ is accused of breaking the Sabbath.*

## We must confront human faults

### Accepting blame for one's own faults

**Psalm 51:3–4 KJV 1900**

For I acknowledge my transgressions: And my sin *is* ever before me.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in thy sight: That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *And* be clear when thou judgest.

See also Jon 1:12; Lk 15:18

### God holds his people at fault

**Jeremiah 17:4 KJV 1900**

And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, *which* shall burn for ever.

See also Heb 8:8–9; Je 31:31–32

### Faults cannot be hidden from God

Ps 19:12; Ps 44:21; Ps 90:8; Ec 12:14; 1 Co 14:25

## God can deal with human faults

### Freedom from the power of sin

Ro 6:11–12; Ro 8:3–4; 2 Co 5:17; Ga 5:16

**Romans 6:11–12 KJV 1900**

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.

## Strength for service

2 Co 12:9–10; Php 4:13

**Philippians 4:13 KJV 1900**

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

## Forgiveness

Ps 65:3; Eph 4:32; Col 2:13; 1 Jn 1:9

**Psalms 65:3 KJV 1900**

Iniquities prevail against me: *As for* our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

**1 John 1:9 KJV 1900**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

# We represent the only faultlessness One

## Faultlessness shown by Jesus Christ

**1 Peter 2:22 KJV 1900**

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

See also Is 53:9; Jn 8:46; Heb 4:15; 1 Pe 1:19; 1 Jn 3:5

## God's people are to be above reproach

**1 Peter 2:12 KJV 1900**

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

See also Ro 12:17–18; 2 Co 8:20–21 *Paul ensures that his handling of money*

*is above criticism; Php 2:14–15*

## **Leaders, in particular, must be above reproach:**

1 Ti 3:2; Tt 1:6

**2 Peter 3:14 KJV 1900**

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

## **The church will be presented faultless before God**

**Jude 24–25 KJV 1900**

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 Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

See also Eph 5:27; Col 1:22; 1 Th 3:13; 1 Th 5:23

## **We are new creatures in Christ NOW**

2 Cor 5:17

**2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV 1900**

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

## **New Year, New Me**