**RISE UP** in 2021

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**The Grind**

***Living In The Tension***



**To Grind It Out** - To make a persistent effort in doing something that is difficult even when it seems laborious, unpleasant, tedious, painful and even uninspiring.

The struggle is **real**.

Living into righteousness and resisting sin feels like a **grind**. There is no getting around it ... we all struggle with sin in this life.

**Why is this the case?**

It is because as Christ followers, we live in **tension**. There is a war that is going on inside of us between …

1. The **real** us.
2. **Sin** living in us.

We know … Sin is **bad**.

*“Sin is a cloud, a thick cloud, that spreads itself over the face of the soul. It takes away all sense of the privilege of our adoptions; and if the soul begins to gather up thoughts of consolation, sin quickly scatters them.”* – **John Owen**

When we feel like we are losing the battle, we can become disappointed, discouraged, feel despair, experience a sense of hopelessness about ourselves, hear the voice of shame that condemns us. Some of us may even begin to feel like we lose a sense of our identity ... and even begin to doubt our salvation.

But this grind, this tension that we find ourselves in actually produces something good. It produces an acute awareness of **sin** and our constant need for a **Savior**.

If you find yourself living in this tension, I will encourage you by saying that you are in good **company**.

Even the great apostle Paul lamented over his ongoing struggle with this tension in his life. In chapter 7 of Romans, he says this…

*For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions.* ***For I do not do what I want****, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now* ***it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me****. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For* ***I do not do the good I want****, but* ***the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing****. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.* **Romans 7:14-20**

**So I find it to be a law** that **when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.** For **I delight in the law of God**, in my inner being, **but I see in my members another law waging war** against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! **Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

**Romans 7:21-24**

You are in good company. Not because Paul was grinding it out just like you, not because pastors are grinding it out just like you, not because every other Christian is grinding it out just like you. You are in good company because of who Paul says is there to help us in verse 25:

Thanks be to God through **Jesus Christ** our Lord!

**Romans 7:25a**

You are in good company because Jesus is your **Savior** ... and that is who will deliver you from your body of death.

Paul closes out verse 25 with these words ...

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. **Romans 7:25b**

We are **already** ... but not **yet**.

1. We are positionally **justified**.

***But God****, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses,* ***made us alive together with Christ****—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him* ***and seated us with him*** *in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

**Ephesians 2:4-6**

1. We are eternally **secure**.

Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes** **him who sent me** **has eternal life**. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

**John 5:24**

1. We have not yet **arrived**.

*Beloved, we are God's children now,* ***and what we will be has not yet appeared****; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

**1 John 3:2**

* Saints, yet sinners.
* Free from sin, yet we sometimes yield to it.
* Saved, yet working out our salvation with fear and trembling.
* Beautiful, yet wretched.
* We know the love of Christ, yet it still surpasses our knowledge.
* Not what we were, yet not what we will be.
* We have seen Him, yet not in all of His glory.
* We are on the journey, yet we are not home.

*Beloved we are God’s children now,* ***and what we will be has not yet appeared****; but we know that when he appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.*

**John 3:2**

On that day the tension in our lives will finally cease.

The grind is the **process** of making **progress**.

God cares more about our **character** than He does our **comfort**. Our flesh cares more about our **comfort** than our **character**.

In his memoir *Confessions*, Augustine recounts that he would pray:

“*Lord make me good, but not yet.”*

*“Lord make me good, but not entirely.”*

*“Lord make me good.”*

What are we to do?

1. Be **honest** about ourselves. **(1 John 1:8)**

Public self

Private self

Secret self

1. Do not try to grind it out **alone**. **(Hebrews 10:25)**

Life In Circles

Accountability

Encouragement

1. Keep on **grinding**.  **(Hebrews 12:1-2)**

Our inheritance is sure, but our calling to resist sin is just as certain.

Process of progress

You are not who you were.

You are not who you will be.

**What is God gently showing you that He is concerned about?**

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.* **Romans 8:5**

**Keep Grinding!**