

The Key to Successful Christian Living

We need to know that God loves us and accepts us as we are. We all have "sins" that we are not yet willing to let go of. Destructive behaviors are like "addictions" and are extremely difficult to overcome. And it seems that no matter how hard we try to be better, there is always more that we could do. We deal not only with "sins" of "commission" but also with sins of "omission." I had the hardest time earlier in my life learning to believe that God wanted to bless me despite my unwillingness and/or inability to live up to what I have now come to realize are impossible standards. I do believe the Apostle Paul was onto something as he repeatedly emphasized the fact that our standing with God is based on grace rather than good works. Technically, in the words of Paul, *"all things are lawful."* God doesn't hold our sins against us. Successful Christian living flows from our relationship with God. It's not the other way around. Although I hate much of Augustine's theology, he hit the nail on the head when someone asked him how to make correct moral decisions. He answered, *"Love God and do as you please."* First God loves us and saves us. Then He helps us deal with our sin. It's not the other way around. He loves to give good gifts to His children. When we look up at Him and pour out our soul to Him and ask for His blessings and help, it melts His heart. Yes, God has emotions. He will always give us, in those moments, exactly what we need.