



Jesus said to his disciples, "Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the person through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him." And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to (this) mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

Introductory Prayer: I believe in you, Lord Jesus, as the only one who can fill my heart. I believe in the power of faith to change my life and the lives of others. I trust that you will grant me the light and strength to cast out sin from my life. I come to you in prayer so that I can love you even more with a firm but serene opposition to sin.

Petition: Lord, may I desire "death before sin."

1. Causing Others to Sin: The negative effects of sin are many: offending God, damaging my conscience and soul, hardening my heart, forming bad habits, losing grace and will power, creating distance and difficulty in prayer, etc. But no result of sin is more damaging than that of scandal, where my sin leads others to sin. Why is this so serious? As a Christian I am called to live and teach Christ's life to others. Scandal falsifies and contradicts my vocation and mission in life. We all have "little ones" entrusted to us: children, family members, those new to the faith, those searching, those who are especially weak.... If I am truly dedicated to lead them to Christ, then sin and scandal will have little room. How real and determined is my dedication?

2. Rebuke and Forgive: We must fight sin wherever we find it. How much more difficult does this become in a world where tolerance is ranked above virtue! Even in family life we are tempted to let things go and not create friction and uneasiness. But if sin is our greatest enemy, then we must always cast it out. The key is to do everything with the heart of Christ, a heart of love: ready to forgive the sinner, never judging their heart, but never minimizing an evil action. How well do I teach moral truth? Do I distinguish the sin from the sinner? Is Christ's love always my motivation and dominant message?

3. Faith Uproots Sin: All of this -- fighting personal sin and helping others conquer it --

seemed a bit much for the apostles. They begged for an increase of faith. Faith of any size embraces God's understanding of the evil of sin and seeks to live accordingly. Yet sin is not overcome easily, and mere understanding is not enough. We must uproot sin from our lives and reject it constantly in the lives of others. Only Christ's love provides the strength we need, and often the perseverance in battling the same sins over time only comes through the strength that comes from Christ's love. Only through Christ can our hearts be filled and not return to old habits of sin.

Conversation with Christ: Give me, Lord, the courage to fight sin in my life. Grant me your heart, Lord, so I can fight and suffer without cowardice, without taking time out and without discouragement, even if others do not understand or thank me. Help me to uproot sin from my life and put you first.

Resolution: I will fight to eradicate sins against charity in my family or work life. I will avoid it and call others to do so too in a gentle but firm manner.