**Sacred Cows**

**Part 1 of 6**

**“Overcoming Sin”**

**Hebrews 10:1-12**

The Word of God is awesome! It has all the power we’ll ever need for every situation in our lives. All we have to do is mix it with faith. (Heb. 4:2)

I know some of you are thinking, “*It isn’t that easy. I believe God’s Word and I’m doing everything I know to do, yet things still haven’t worked out*.” I’ve experienced that too—personally and with many people I’ve ministered to.

So, what’s the problem? Actually, there are many problems, but I think most of them can be summed up by what Jesus said in Mark 7:13: “*Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions* [sacred cows]*.”*

What a shocking statement! Wrong teaching—specifically religious doctrines—makes God’s Word of no effect.

The most significant revelations I’ve received from the Lord all have to do with renewing my mind from old ways of thinking

that unfortunately I learned growing up in church. As I was freed from the traditions, the simplicity of God’s Word set me free. Jesus said it this way in John 8:32, “…you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

We’re starting a new series called *Sacred Cows* to counter a number of traditions that void God’s Word. It’s heavy stuff. I’ll try to be as gentle as possible, but there isn’t a gentle way to kill a sacred cow.

It’s like the man who saw a cow with two wooden legs. He was so shocked; he stopped his car and asked the farmer about the cow. The farmer said this was a very special cow. He told stories of how the cow saved him and his children’s lives more than once. The man was impressed, but that still didn’t explain why the cow had two wooden legs. Finally, the farmer said, “You can’t eat a special cow like that all at once!”

Unlike that farmer’s cow, sacred cows can’t be done away with gradually. You just need to kill them and deal with the fallout. So that’s what I’m doing.

I think one of the most dangerous sacred cows in the body of Christ today is the belief that we need to focus on overcoming our sins.

One could easily come to the conclusion that the most important subject among believers is sin based on the widespread popularity of the topic in popular Christian books, sermons, and Bible studies. Sin management often seems to be the reason for preaching, and it appears to be the most important goal many who follow Jesus have embraced for their lives.

Overcoming sinful actions in life consumes the thoughts and energy of many sincere Christians. They’re completely dedicated to stopping the wrong things they do and replacing them with actions that glorify God. Their motives are certainly pure, but their goal and focus are completely misguided.

Surprisingly, scripture doesn’t call us to direct our attention toward our sins and exert our energy on eliminating them. In fact, this approach will not only be ineffective in reducing sinful actions but will also INCREASE wrong behavior in our lifestyles. This sacred cow needs to be killed! Consider three New Covenant truths regarding overcoming sin. These truths will put this cow down!

***1. GIVE JESUS YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.***

To the Colossian church, he wrote in chapter 3:2, *“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”* He warned the Roman church in chapter 8:6, *“To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit**is life and peace.”*

***2. TRUST THAT WHAT JESUS DID WAS GOOD ENOUGH.***

Romans 7:5*“sinful passions…were aroused by the Law.”*

1 Corinthians 15:56*“the power of sin is the Law.”*

Hebrews 10:1-3 says, *“Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it**can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshipers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? But in these sacrifices, there is a reminder of sin year after year.”*

Hebrews 10:4 says that it was *“impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*

Hebrews 10:9. *“I have come to do your will.”*

***3. START ENJOYING THE FAVOR OF GOD BECAUSE OF YOUR PRIVILEGED POSITION IN CHRIST.***

Hebrews 10:11-12 says, *“And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ**had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, ‘he sat down at the right hand of God.’”*

Ephesians 2:6, “*God raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus*.”

Romans 6:11, “*Reckon yourself dead to sin.”*