

No Sin November

by Bryan Gibson

Lots of men are presently participating in what's called "No Shave November." But here's a new campaign in which both men and women can participate—let's call it "No Sin November." That's right, let's see if we can avoid sin in November—at least what's left of it, and then let's see if we can extend it into the months that follow.

This campaign to avoid sin does have Scriptural precedent. **"Go and sin no more"**—that's what Jesus said, both to the man whom he had healed of an infirmity, and to the woman caught in adultery (John 5:14; 8:11). **"So that you may not sin"**—that's one of the reasons John wrote his first epistle" (1 John 2:1). "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, **striving against sin**" (Hebrews 12:4)—that's how seriously we must take this endeavor.

What's sad, though, is that for at least some people, this effort has no chance to even get off the ground. Some, because their heart is so far from the Lord, "cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2:14). Many have become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13); they've become so "accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23) that they are "past feeling" (Ephesians 4:19)—their once tender conscience has now been "seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). The only thing that can save them is a heart transplant—a "new heart" (Ezekiel 18:31), a heart that says "show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths" (Psalms 25:4), a heart whose "aim" is to be "well pleasing to Him" in all things (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

With that kind of heart in place, let's get started with "No Sin November." Here's our seven step plan of action: 1) Remove stumbling blocks—anything that might cause us to sin (Matthew 18:8-9). 2) Pray diligently (Matthew 6:13; 26:41). 3) Guard our minds, because what goes in will come out, in some form or another (Proverbs 4:23). 4) Choose our friends carefully, because they can lead us astray (Proverbs 12:26). 5) Keep our anger in check, because many sins are committed in the heat of anger (Ephesians 4:26-27). 6) Flee, or run away from temptation and sin—just like Joseph did (Genesis 39:7-12), and just like we're taught to do in God's word (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Proverbs 22:3). 7) Study God's word diligently, because it gives us the strength to overcome temptation and sin (Psalms 119:9-11).

Okay, we don't want to discourage anyone, but here's the reality. We will fail, at least at some point (1 John 1:8, 10). We may not even make it through the rest of November without sinning. And the sin we commit may not be what we've done, but what we've left undone. "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Let's make sure, though, that when we do fail, it's not for lack of effort. It's those who hate sin, who diligently strive to avoid it, who will come back to the Lord with a "broken and a contrite heart" (Psalms 51:17). One who has this kind of heart will acknowledge his sin, seek the Lord's forgiveness, and once again determine to "sin no more" (John 5:14; 8:11).

Who's in?